

When Bad Things Happen to Good Interviewers: Lessons from the Field

Topic	Lesson
Failure of an Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ Failure to ask the right questions △ Not spending the time to develop rapport △ Using biased or leading questions △ Inappropriate probes – i.e., failing to notice comments, body language, etc. indicating discomfort △ Avoiding difficult situations
Getting to the Truth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ Plan the interview △ Take the interview seriously. If it's not worth your time to ask the questions correctly, then it's not worth the resident's/client's/staff's time to answer the questions honestly. △ Don't assume; get clarification △ Learn how to ask difficult questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compassion ○ Understanding ○ Empathy ○ Control △ Don't guess △ Keep the goal in mind △ Adapt to odd and difficult situations
Developing Rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ The time you take to develop rapport can make or break an interview △ Speak in a conversational tone △ Use active listening; let the interviewee tell the story △ Be professional (this means at the very least, ethical and objective) △ Know when to end
Avoid Bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ Don't make assumptions based on your familiarity with the situation △ Find out the facts – i.e., what the interviewee knows about the situation △ Do not express your own opinion or how you think the interviewee should respond. △ Do not suggest answers △ Repeat questions △ Ask questions more slowly △ Rephrase questions △ Let the person think about the answer; in fact let them know at the beginning of the interview that you will be happy to give them time to think before they respond △ Do not appear impatient or abrupt △ Do not use leading probes

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ Give the person an opportunity to express their own opinion in their own way
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ Let the person tell the story then go back and clarify △ A correct probe is a prompt that encourages further conversation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Probe for correctness, clarity, & completeness △ Repeat questions and responses △ Give feedback △ Allow reflection on the full range of a situation – e.g., not just good-poor, but instead excellent-good-fair-poor △ Probe in a conversational tone △ Tell the person how important it is to get their point of view △ Ask for specific responses or explanations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do you mean by that? ○ Tell me what that means to you? ○ Definitions: What do you mean by short-staffed? Missing meds? Was exhibiting behaviors? ○ Could you explain that? ○ I'm not sure I understand... △ Probe for completeness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fill in the spaces ○ Narrow the times ○ Seek more information on who
Difficult Situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ When the interviewee is upset, don't ignore him/her; provide some reassurance and emotional support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I'm sorry ○ I understand ○ It's OK to cry. ○ Do you need anything? △ Don't pity the person; be respectful and sensitive △ Don't make up stories △ Move forward with the interview △ Handle anger first; I know this is intrusive, but it has to be done. I'll help you through it. △ Others?