

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

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

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