

AGENDA

Learning Lab Interviewing Skills for Assessments



- A. Welcome and Introductions**
- B. Building on What We Already Know**
- C. The Assessment Process**
- D. Video Vignette and Exercise**
- E. Practicing Skills - The Thompson Case: The Rest of the Story**
- F. Using Interviewing Strategies**
- G. Practicing Skills: Carr Case Study**
- H. Closure**

INTERVIEWING METHODS CHART

| STRATEGY | PURPOSE | BENEFITS | LIABILITIES |
|---|--|---|---|
| Closed-Ended Questions Probing Questions Yes/No Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gather factual information regarding a specific content area To obtain answers to specific questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can obtain a considerable amount of information in a short period of time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limits potential responses of family members to those directed by the interviewer May be threatening to family members; may encourage evasiveness or lying |
| Open-Ended Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gather a lot of information about a wide range of topic areas To gain insight regarding a client's feelings and perceptions about the situation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worker may discover information that he may not have thought to ask about. Provides information to be used in the assessment; helps identify "process" level issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes considerable time Worker may need to sort through irrelevant information to identify pertinent issues. Person may use open format to digress and avoid discussing important topics. |
| Supportive Responses Active Listening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To communicate and demonstrate the caseworker's interest and concern To establish a positive casework relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds trust and communicates worker's interest and willingness to listen and help May have an enabling effect on the client Client may feel better for having talked. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client has considerable control of the direction of the interview. Little change may be generated; few goals set. Does not always promote action |
| Clarification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote insight into one's own behaviors and actions to enable change and participation in the casework process To enable the worker to better understand family dynamics, needs, and problems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps move to process level in interview Allows worker to make accurate assessment of causal and contributing factors to family problems, and family strengths Helps family gain insight into own situation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be threatening to family members, who may be unaware of, or not want to discuss issues raised by the worker May increase family members' resistance |
| Summarization Redirection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To keep the interview focused and on track To help the person organize her information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes efficient use of time by keeping the discussion focused on pertinent topics Helps family members organize thinking Prevents family being overwhelmed by details | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who are redirected may feel cut off, as if the worker is not listening. Overdirection by worker may lead to moving too quickly off a topic, thus missing important information. |
| Giving Options, Advice, or Suggestions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To offer a range of possible solutions to the family's problems To direct family members into positive action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides family members with potential solutions they had not previously considered Encourages families to try new solutions Keeps activities goal-directed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May prevent family from arriving at their own solutions to problems Worker may be blamed for failures if solution does not work. |
| Confrontation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To push family members to acknowledge problems, feelings, or behaviors, when other less directive interventions have failed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can precipitate movement quickly Can cut manipulations and digressions and focus on the critical issues Can help family members become aware of their own resistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot be used without a well-established and supportive relationship May increase resistance if not successful May require considerable follow-up support from the worker; takes time and commitment |

Assessment Factors - Worksheet

Instructions: With a partner, try to fill in as many blanks as possible.

Factors to Consider in a Safety Assessment

1. The child has received _____, inflicted, physical harm.
2. The caretaker has not, cannot, or will not _____ child from _____ serious harm, including harm from other persons having familial access to the child.
3. The caretaker or other person having access to the child has made a _____ threat that would result in _____ harm to a child.
4. The behavior of any member of the family or other person having access to the child is _____ and/or _____.
5. Acts of family violence pose an _____ and _____ physical and/or emotional danger to the child.
6. _____ and/or _____ use by any member of the family or other person having access to the child suggests that the child is in immediate danger of serious harm.
7. Behavior(s) of any member of the family or any person having access to the child is symptomatic of _____ or _____ illness or disability that suggests the child is in immediate danger of serious harm.
8. Caretaker is unwilling or unable to meet the child's immediate needs for sufficient _____, food, clothing, and/or _____ to protect child from immediate danger of serious harm.
9. Household _____ _____ suggest that the child is in immediate danger of serious harm.

10. Any member of the family or other person having access to the child describes or acts toward the child in predominantly or extremely negative terms and/or has extremely _____ of the child.
11. The family refuses _____ to the child or there is reason to believe the family will _____.
12. Caretaker has an unconvincing or insufficient _____ for the child's serious injury or physical condition.
13. Caretaker is unwilling or unable to meet the child's immediate and serious _____ or _____ needs.
14. Child _____ abuse and _____ exploitation is suspected and circumstances suggest that the child may be in immediate danger of serious harm.
15. Other safety factors such as: _____

Also consider:

_____ information

Child _____

Protective _____

Risk Assessment Factors

Factors to assess for neglect:

1. Whether the current report is for _____
2. Number of prior _____ (abuse or neglect)
3. Number of _____ in the home
4. Number of _____ in home at the time of the report
5. _____ of primary caregiver
6. _____ of either caregiver (parenting skills, mental health)
7. If either caregiver involved in _____ relationships
8. If either caregiver has a current _____ _____ problem
9. If the household is experiencing severe _____ difficulty
10. Primary caregiver's _____ to improve parenting skills
11. Caregiver(s) _____ to investigation and seriousness of complaint

Factors to assess for abuse:

1. Whether the current report is for _____ or _____ abuse
2. Prior abuse _____
3. Prior CPS service _____
4. Number of _____ in the home
5. If either _____ abused as a child
6. If secondary caregiver has a current _____ _____ problem
7. If either caregiver has a history of _____ _____
8. If either caregiver has major _____ skills problem
9. If child in the home has _____ _____ or history of _____

Criteria to Examine for Family Strengths and Needs Assessment

Category 1: Child Functioning

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Category 2: Adult Functioning

- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Category 3: Family Functioning

- 11.
- 12.
- 13.

Category 4: Historical

- 14.
- 15.
- 16.

What Would You Do?

Instructions: After viewing a short segment of the video, please respond to the following:

1. What interviewing strategies did the caseworker use?

2. What assessment factor (or factors) was the caseworker beginning to explore?

3. Develop three questions you would ask or statements you would make next. Briefly explain your choices.

Question or statement:

I would do this because:

Question or statement:

I would do this because:

Question or statement:

I would do this because:

Thompson Case- The Rest of the Story

Instructions: After reading the following case study, use the attached worksheet to determine which Family Strengths and Needs Assessment categories need to be explored with this family right now, and then develop two sample questions or statements you would use to assess the factors. Try to include examples for each interviewing method found on the chart.

As a child, Nancy's father hit her frequently. He used his leather belt and left multiple bruises, welts, and lacerations on her buttocks, legs, and back. Because of this treatment, Nancy ran away from home at least five times between the ages of 10 and 15. Nancy's mother never stopped her husband from hitting Nancy. At 15, Nancy went to live with her maternal aunt.

Nancy began drinking at 15. Although she never had any legal problems with her alcohol use, she did have enough problems at high school to result in her dropping out during her junior year. Her drinking continued to cause her to lose jobs because she failed to go to work. Nancy stated her drinking makes her feel better and helps her feel "pretty."

Nancy married Neil when she was 18 years old and he was 25. Nancy was already pregnant. Neil hit Nancy at least 10 times during their relationship, once sending her to the hospital with a broken arm. However, Neil never hit Andy. He played, held, and helped feed the child. Neil worked off and on at gas stations, providing some income, but never enough to pay bills. As a result, Nancy worked at numerous jobs, trying to earn enough money to pay the rest of the bills. Although she was regularly a month behind in paying her bills, she was able to pay rent and utilities, and buy food for the family.

Although abused as a child, Nancy never hit Andy and never hit back when Neil struck her. Nancy was afraid of violence and ran away from it by leaving for days or weeks at a time, leaving Andy in Neil's care.

Andy was behind in his shots because Nancy got tired of waiting and would leave before the doctor could see Andy. Although a premature baby, Andy currently was developmentally on target.

Nancy currently has no steady male companion; Neil no longer comes to the house to see Andy or Nancy. She continues to look for employment to pay her bills but begins drinking, does not show up for work, and gets fired from every job. Nancy leaves Andy in Ruth's care when she begins to look for work, but doesn't get home for weeks at a time. She goes from bar to bar, spending nights at motel rooms with men she meets at the bars.

WORKSHEET

| ASSESSMENT FACTOR | SAMPLE QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

The Forrester Family Transcript and Activity

Section One

0:56:46 **OPENING TEXT**

An individualized family assessment is the cornerstone of family-centered child protection. Without a complete and accurate assessment of family needs, contributing factors to maltreatment, and family resources and strengths, the service plan will not solve the immediate problems, much less generate positive and lasting family change. The family assessment is most effective when conducted jointly by the worker and family members in the context of a supportive and enabling casework relationship. The following videotape segment illustrates casework strategies that promote the parent's involvement in the assessment process, and generate critical information to be used in developing a relevant case plan.

0:57:45 **CAROL**

Oh no, you seem upset.

0:57:48 **MS. FORRESTER**

Yeah, I failed a test today at job training.

0:57:50 **CAROL**

Oh, no. No wonder you're upset. Why do you think you failed?

0:57:56 **MS. FORRESTER**

A lot of things. Especially you being on my case. And Jon being at my sister's. It's just too much.

0:58:05 **CAROL**

Well, I'm not surprised. I mean, you have been under a lot of stress lately. What happens when you fail a test?

0:58:13 **MS. FORRESTER**

They'll probably kick me out.

0:58:15 **CAROL**

Why would you think that?

0:58:17 **MS. FORRESTER**

Because that's the way things usually work out.

0:58:19 **CAROL**

No, that's not usually the way things work out. Look, why don't you call your advisor? Explain to him that you've been under a lot of stress lately, and see if they'll let you take a make-up test. I mean, is there anything I can do? I'd be happy to talk to your advisor.

0:58:35 **MS. FORRESTER**

No. I'll do it myself. Believe me, I'm not incompetent.

ACTIVITY

- 1. In your triads, role play this scene, picking up where Ms. Forrester left off. Remember, the purpose of today's interview is the Family Strengths and Needs assessment. When the trainer calls time, the coach has some instructions that will help you process your work. When finished, the trainer will start the video again so you can see how Carol handled the situation.**

Role Play Instructions – Section One

Instructions: Please read the following instruction that corresponds to the role you are assigned.

Client: When the role play begins, you are to pick up the conversation by stating, "I am not incompetent. You people all think you are better than me and I am tired of it!"

Caseworker: Respond to the client the way you think you would when doing a family strengths and needs assessment.

Coach: Your role is to observe the role play, help your team members process the role play, and provide feedback. At the end of the role play:

1. Ask the client, "What were you feeling while role playing Ms. Forrester? What did you think about the caseworker's verbal and nonverbal responses?"
2. Provide the caseworker feedback based on your observations.
3. Ask the caseworker if he or she has any thoughts regarding the feedback and what, if anything, would he or she have done differently.

If there is time, as coach, you could encourage your team members to try out anything they thought they would do differently.

The Forrester Family Transcript and Activity

Section Two

0:59:48 **CAROL**

First we have to understand how Jon gets hurt, and why that happens. Every family is different, and until we both understand exactly what happens in your family, we can't really choose the best possible solution. So, let's talk about what happened this last time.

You seem really anxious. Are you worried about talking about this?

1:00:12 **MS. FORRESTER**

No, I haven't done anything wrong. I was just trying to protect him.

1:00:17 **CAROL**

Okay, and I want to know about that. I mean, how you do that and then what happens. And I know this isn't going to be easy for you, so kind of tell me in your own way.

1:00:57 **MS. FORRESTER**

I've just been really stressed.

1:01:00 **CAROL**

What causes that stress?

1:01:03 **MS. FORRESTER**

A lot of things. I mean, I think that the divorce still really bothers me, and constant badgering from my mother, worrying about whether or not I'll pass the job training class, and if I'll get a job even if I do pass. Just trying to survive the day is hard.

1:01:23 **CAROL**

I know, just trying to get by is really hard. Okay, what happens when you get stressed?

1:01:29 **MS. FORRESTER**

I get mad.

1:01:30 **CAROL**

And you told me about that. You told me that you have a temper, and how easily it flares up. What happens when you get mad?

1:01:42 **MS. FORRESTER**

I don't know, sometimes I just yell and scream and curse. I don't know, if people get in my face, I normally shove them away, and every now and then, I'm even known to take a swing. I don't mean to, I just lose it.

ACTIVITY

- 2. In your triads, role play this scene, picking up where Ms. Forrester left off. Remember, the purpose of today's interview is the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment. When the trainer calls time, the coach has some instructions that will help you process your work. When finished, the trainer will start the video again so you can see how Carol handled the situation.**

Role Play Instructions – Section Two

Instructions: Please read the following instruction that corresponds to the role you are assigned.

Client: When the role play begins, you are to pick up the conversation by asking, “Why do you ask all of these questions?” When the caseworker responds, continue to push by saying things such as, “But why does all of this even matter?” “What if I don’t want to tell you private things about my life?” or “This seems noseey, why do you need to ask about that?” Keep on pushing until you feel the caseworker has adequately answered why the questions are important and why she or he needs to ask the questions.

Caseworker: Respond to the client the way you think you would when doing a family strengths and needs assessment.

Coach: Your role is to observe the role play, help your team members process the role play, and provide feedback. At the end of the role play:

1. Ask the client, “What were you feeling while role playing Ms. Forrester? What did you think about the caseworker’s verbal and nonverbal responses?”
2. Provide the caseworker feedback based on your observations.
3. Ask the caseworker if he or she has any thoughts regarding the feedback and what, if anything, would he or she have done differently.

If there is time, as coach, you could encourage your team members to try out anything they thought they would do differently.

The Forrester Family Transcript and Activity

Section Three

1:04:18 **CAROL**

Okay, I want to point out something that I feel is important. I asked you how you felt, and you were able to tell me that. You were also able to tell me exactly what causes that, and not a lot of people are able to do that. That's a valuable tool in being able to solve problems, and that's a strength.

Now I want to also make sure that I understood you. It seems that a lot of your anger is coming from feeling disappointment, and maybe a hurt from other people, especially your mom and your ex-husband. Is that right...someone hurts you, I mean really hurts you, and that makes you angry?

1:05:21 **MS. FORRESTER**

No, they can't hurt me any more. I learned a long time ago not to let people hurt you, or you won't survive.

1:05:41 **CAROL**

Sounds like you're saying that it hurts too much to hurt. It seems that you get tough to protect yourself, only that just makes you feel stronger for a little while. It doesn't really make the pain go away.

1:05:58 **MS. FORRESTER**

No, it doesn't.

1:06:01 **CAROL**

Can you tell me anything else that will help us understand exactly how Jon gets hurt?

1:06:08 **MS. FORRESTER**

I guess I get mad more than I should. But, Jon asks for it! He really deserves what he gets sometimes!

1:06:19 **CAROL**

Okay, tell me a little bit more about that.

1:06:24 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, it's like he does these things to make me mad. He does it on purpose, and I yell at him. It's like he looks through me, like I'm a brick wall. I mean I say red, he says blue. I say sit, he says run. It's a losing battle with him. I think it's in his blood. Jon's a lot like his father. I don't know. I thought after his dad left, that he'd listen to me more, things would get better. You know, they say how you treat a child is important. It helps them grow up better. I don't think it matters. I really don't think that it matters. I sound just like my mother now. She always used to say, "You're too much like your own father for your own good."

ACTIVITY

- 3. In your triads, role play this scene, picking up where Ms. Forrester left off. Remember, the purpose of today's interview is the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment. When the trainer calls time, the coach has some instructions that will help you process your work. When finished, the trainer will start the video again so you can see how Carol handled the situation.**

Role Play Instructions-Section Three

Instructions: Please read the following instruction that corresponds to the role you are assigned.

Client: When the role play begins, you are to pick up the conversation by stating, "I hate it when my son does not do what I say. I just really thought it would get better after his dad left."

Caseworker: Respond to the client the way you think you would when doing a family strengths and needs assessment.

Coach: Your role is to observe the role play, help your team members process the role play, and provide feedback. At the end of the role play:

1. Ask the client, "What were you feeling while role playing Ms Forrester? What did you think about the caseworker's verbal and nonverbal responses?"
2. Provide the caseworker feedback based on your observations.
3. Ask the caseworker if he or she has any thoughts regarding the feedback and what, if anything, would he or she have done differently.

If there is time, as coach, you could encourage your team members to try out anything they thought they would do differently.

Case Study: The Carr Case

Adults

Mrs. Thelma Carr, mother (32 years old)
Mr. Henry Carr, father,(34 years old)

Children

Dolores Carr (7 years old)
Laura Carr (4 years old)
Mindy Carr (2 years old)

The Presenting Problem

Last Saturday night, at 11:00 PM, Mrs. Thelma Carr brought her three daughters (Dolores, 7; Laura, 4; and Mindy, 2) to the police station. She did not wait to speak with an officer, but the children told the officer on duty that their mother could not take care of them right now and that she would be back for them. That same night, the police turned the children over to CPS for placement. When parents and extended family could not be located, all three children were placed in the same emergency foster home. Monday morning the agency received an ex parte order from Juvenile Court for placement. Tuesday, at 2:30 PM, Mrs. Carr appeared at the agency with a babysitter she had just hired and asked to take the children home.

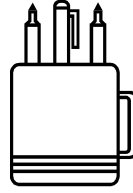
Family History

The Carr's have a history of separations, unemployment, and financial difficulties. They separated the first time before their youngest child was born. That separation lasted three months. During one of their separations, Mr. Carr appeared at the babysitter's home and took away one of the daughters, Laura, without his wife's knowledge. The uproar that ensued resulted in the children being placed temporarily in foster care for the first time.

The family's second involvement with CPS resulted from a report from a neighbor. The neighbor reported that the Carr's did not make adequate provision for the children, that they were poorly fed and supervised, and were sometimes seen outside late at night. The children were also seen at least once per week outside without proper clothing for inclement weather (shorts and T-shirts during snowy conditions). Several neighbors were convinced that the children were not developing normally, especially Laura and Mindy, the youngest two. The girls were examined at Lassen Hospital where the attending pediatrician noted that all three children were filthy. He also diagnosed Mindy, the two-year-old, as failure to thrive who had had poor nutritional and hygienic care. The girls were placed in foster care for six months. In care, Mindy gained weight and improved.

About a year ago, when Mr. Carr lost his job as a taxi driver, the family applied for public assistance, but Mr. Carr found work and public assistance was terminated three months later. A few months later, Thelma and Henry separated, and she and the children stayed with her parents for two months.

Carr Worksheet



1. What decisions need to be made at this point?
2. What else do you need to know? How will you learn it?
3. Are these children in immediate danger of serious harm?
4. What is your plan for how to proceed?