

Corporation for National & Community Service
Montana State Office

IN-SERVICE TRAINING








Learning Circle B:

INTERVIEWING THE COMMUNITY

LC: INTERVIEWING THE COMMUNITY

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of this session, participants will be able to:

	Understand the components of an effective community interview.
	Identify key stakeholders in their community whom they should interview.
	Develop a draft of interview questions specific to their VISTA project.
	Create a timeline and expected outcomes for their own interview process.
	Understand that interviewing is a tool for both the VISTA and the community to listen to each other and gain trust to begin their work together.



PROPOSED AGENDA:

1. Learning Circle Set-Up

- ✓ Welcome, introductions
- ✓ Session overview, packet, working agreements

2. Community Interviewing Basics

- ✓ Participant check-in: community assessment
- ✓ Interviewing components
- ✓ Benefits and limits of interviewing methods

3. Designing an Effective Interview

- ✓ Design with the audience in mind
- ✓ Developing project-based questions

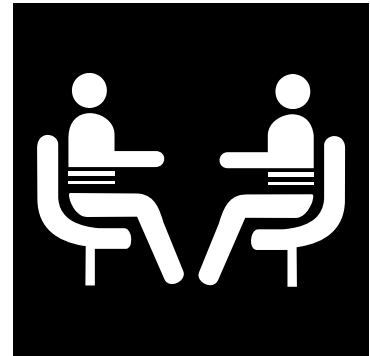
4. Interview Lab

- ✓ Practicing interview skills
- ✓ Receiving feedback from peers

5. Learning Circle Close-Out

- ✓ Summary of session, reflection
- ✓ Closing remarks

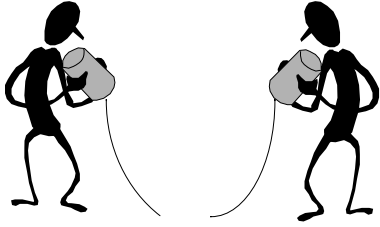
WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?



An interview is a conversation with a purpose. Interviews can be formally structured, loosely structured, or not structured at all. The style of interviewing you will adopt will depend on the kind of result you're looking for. © KU Community Toolbox.

Think about all the different purposes of interviews. When can an interview be formal, and when can it be informal? What are the benefits and setbacks of both?

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS	FORMAL OR INFORMAL? (Circle one)		
<u>Volunteer Interview</u> : to determine a volunteer's interests to assign an appropriate assignment	Formal	Informal	Could be either
<u>Historical Interview</u> : while integrating into the community, to learn about community members' past experiences and project history	Formal	Informal	Could be either
<u>Stakeholder Interview</u> : gaining support from community members, getting buy-in, understanding project and community dynamics	Formal	Informal	Could be either
<u>Job Interview</u> : hiring a new employee	Formal	Informal	Could be either
<u>Media Interview</u> : providing information to the news media (for TV, radio, or print)	Formal	Informal	Could be either



INTERVIEWING ETIQUETTE

It may seem redundant to be told about etiquette when interviewing other people – especially for professionals and adult learners. However, it's always useful to review basic etiquette for engaging people in conversation, especially when that person is giving you their time, and you are seeking an outcome that suits your purposes. *(From the KU Community Toolbox: <http://ctb.ku.edu>)*

DO

- Practice! Make sure you are familiar with your questions, subject, and are comfortable.
- Smile and make eye contact – be friendly! Make small talk! Be natural!
- Dress accordingly – look your best, be professional.
- Listen actively and be prepared to ask follow-up and clarifying questions.
- Stick to your outline and questions – remember your purpose and be sure to meet it.
- Keep an eye on their body language – be responsive and ensure the interviewee's needs are being met.

DON'T

- Assume you will be able to “wing it” on the spot, even if you've done it in the past.
- Overdo it – people can tell when you're being fake.
- Look sloppy. Your dress and appearance make an impression.
- Avoid eye contact or respond with “Hmmm” or “Yeah” – these are signs you're not listening.
- Take “yes” or “no” as answers! You have a reason to be there, get the info you need.
- Ignore “red flag” body language – frowning, folded arms, flat voice tone, turning away from you, or ending the interview abruptly.



FRAMING YOUR INTERVIEWS

Before you undertake an interview, it is important to plan out the content, objectives, and outcomes.

Date:		
Interview Objective: <i>What is your overall goal for this interview?</i>		
Interviewee(s):	Organization:	Role(s) in community:
A. Desired Outcomes: <i>What are you hoping to accomplish by interviewing this person/people?</i>	1. 2. 3.	
B. What kind of information are you hoping to gather <i>(i.e., what general community info, what specific answers to specific questions)?</i>	<i>Brainstorm with your partners and list some answers or information you hope to gather:</i>	

Avoiding Traps! Developing Great Questions



Everyone gets caught in the quicksand of questions – the best way to get out of that situation is to avoid it altogether! Here are some tips for asking the right questions at the right time:

Type of Question	Potential Trap	Potential Solution
Intimidating questions	These questions bring up emotional responses, usually negative. <i>Ex: “Do you always discriminate against women and minorities, or just some of the time?”</i>	Try to ask things in a more relaxed manner, especially if eliciting this information is critical to your success. <i>Ex: “The local media has recently covered incidents of blatant gender and racial discrimination in our community. What are your views on these community events?”</i>
Two-in-one question	These are questions that ask for two answers in one question. <i>Ex: “Does your company have a special recruitment policy for women and racial minorities?”</i>	Separate the issues into two separate questions. <i>Ex: “Does your company have a special recruitment policy for women?” “How about for racial minorities?”</i>
Complex questions	Questions that are too long, too involved, or too intricate will intimidate or confuse your interviewee.	Break down the question and make it concise.
Question order	Starting out too early with sensitive or complicated questions can also be a problem.	Try to start the interview with mild and easy questions to develop a rapport with the interviewee. As the interview proceeds, move to more sensitive and complex questions.

KU Community Toolbox, <http://ctb.ku.edu>

Interview Draft:

Interviewee:

Objective:

Questions:

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

iv. _____

v. _____

EVALUATING YOUR WORK

How do you know that you achieved your goals?



Did you meet your goals?

Did you reach your goal and meet your target?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What would you do different next time?

What worked?



INTERVIEWING CHECKLIST:

Before you set out on your interviews, look through this checklist and be sure you've covered all the points:

DO YOU:

Know what an interview is?

Understand why you should conduct interviews?

Know when interviews are not the best option?

Understand the problems that may arise from interviews?

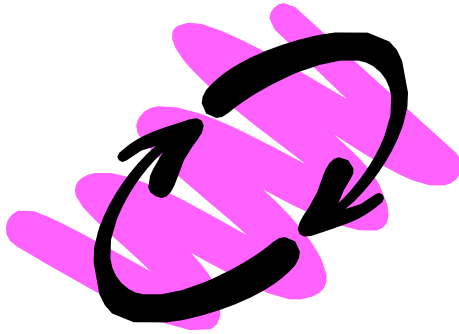
Know whom you should interview?

Know how you should conduct interviews?

Understand how questions can create problems?

Know all the tips to start, conduct, and end an interview?

From the KU Community Tool Box, <http://ctb.ku.edu>



INTERVIEWING PRACTICE AND FEEDBACK

How did you do? What areas of your technique need improvement? In this lab, we'll be doing some practice so you can get right to work on your skills!

Round 1		Round 2		Round 3	
<i>Interviewer:</i>		<i>Interviewer:</i>		<i>Interviewer:</i>	
+	•	+	•	+	•

Notes:

Notes: