

WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

- Interviews can be defined as:
 - *A conversation between two people in which one tries to direct the conversation to obtain information for a specific purpose.*
 - An art, rather than a skill or science.
- Supplements other available information.
- Interview skills can only be mastered by practice.

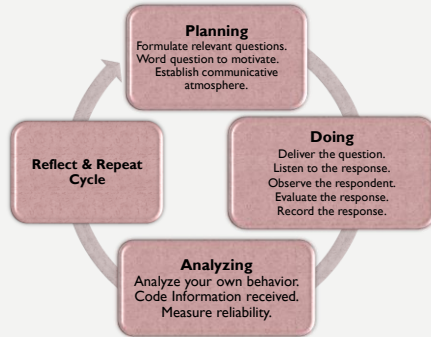
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INTERVIEW STYLES

- Informal, Conversational Interview
 - Complaints
- General Interview Guide Approach
 - Eligibility
 - Informal Hearings
- Standardized, Open-Ended Interview
 - Rent Determination
 - Annual Re-Examination
- Closed, Fixed Response Interview

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THE INTERVIEW CYCLE



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PLANNING

- Formulate relevant questions.
 - Clearly define the objectives of the interview.
 - Translate each objective into specific points of information needed.
 - Translate each point into questions to be asked.
- Word question to motivate.
 - Make the respondent more willing or more able to answer the questions.
- Establish communicative atmosphere.
 - Setting

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DOING

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the question. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Delivery depends on non-verbal factors accompanying the question – Interviewer's body language. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye contact • Facial expression • Tone of voice • Listen to the response. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe the respondent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Non-verbal clues provide clues to the meaning of verbal responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body posture • Movements of hands & feet • Facial expressions • Eye movement • Evaluate the response. • Probe the response • Record the response. |
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ANALYZING

- Without critical analysis, the interviewer may remain unaware of mistakes and assume the information obtained was relevant, complete and accurate.
- Two reasons to code the information received
 - To help interviewer remember points that need to be probed later
 - To store the responses
- Classify the information
 - Winnow out the relevant from the irrelevant
 - Determine which responses were too vague

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TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

- Tips to make phone interviews successful:
 - Keep it short, about 10 minutes
 - Be motivating - people tend to be less willing to open up over the phone.
 - Identify yourself and offer credentials.
 - Write down information as you hear it; don't rely on memory.
 - Speak loud, clearly, and with pitch variation.
 - Finish the conversation cordially, and thank interviewee.

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THE PHONE INTERVIEW

- Same advantages as face-to-face, but you cannot observe non-verbal behavior.
 - Skype and similar formats are more desirable than phone.
- Follow same interview protocols that you would in a face-to-face interview.
- Use the previously provided completed application form as an interview guide.
- Ask permission to record the interview
- Take notes and ask follow-up questions

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E-MAIL INTERVIEWS

- Advantages and drawbacks are similar to phone interviews.
- E-mails are far less intrusive than phone.
- May be considered impersonal.
- Contact interviewee.
- Send questions.
- Follow-up received answers with a thank-you.
- Chances for probing are VERY limited.
- Must be clear as to what you need when contacting interviewee.

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FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

- Advantages are:
 - You have more flexibility.
 - You can probe for more specific answers, repeat questions, and use discretion as to questions asked.
 - You have control over the physical environment.
 - You can record spontaneous answers.
 - You know exactly who is answering.
 - You can make sure all questions are asked.
 - You can use a more complex questionnaire.

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PHYSICAL SETTING

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| • Desk arrangement | • Amenities |
| • Chair placement | • Visual props |
| • Lighting | • Note taking |
| • Quiet | • Tape recording |
| • Privacy | • Dress and Grooming |

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BEFORE THE INTERVIEW BEGINS

- Explain the purpose of the interview.
- Address terms of confidentiality.
- Indicate how long the interview usually takes.
- Tell them how to get in touch with you later if they want to.
- Ask them if they have any questions.

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CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

- Accommodate the needs of Applicants/Tenants
 - Have documents available in large print.
 - Have available a translator and have documents in alternate language if the applicant/tenant does not understand English.
 - Record documents for visually impaired persons.
 - Allow extra time for interview for those who speak slowly or for detailed explanations.
 - May require home visit for conducting interview.

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CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

- Thoroughly document the interview.
- Use interview guidelines.
- Review Applicant responses with the Applicant.
- Random interviews should be monitored for QC.
- Interviews are a skill and your skills will evolve.

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BASIC INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

- Set the tone
- Use written interview guides
- Obtain needed documents from client
- Know your goals
 - Is this interview to determine eligibility?
 - Is this interview to determine continued occupancy? Rent?
 - Is this interview intended to resolve a complaint or to provide a requested service?
- Your goal is to get as much information as possible

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BASIC INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

- You set the tone for the entire interview in the first five (5) minutes of the interview by your appearance, by what you say, and how you say it.
- Use written interview guides to ensure that all basic questions are asked of all applicants.
- Record all responses on the checklist.
- Before the interview, gather all forms needed and quickly familiarize yourself with the client's history and computer data.

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FORMULATING QUESTIONS

- Select appropriate vocabulary
 - Use words that are clearly understood
 - Use words that establish a proper role relationship
 - Avoid leading questions – do not use words or phrases that probe for a specific response
 - Avoid unintentionally *loading* the question
 - Choose words carefully as connotation can influence response.
 - *Contribute* instead of *Give You*
 - *Accurate* instead of *Truthful*

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FORMULATING QUESTIONS

- Broad (open-ended) questions are most useful in obtaining information.
 - They allow freedom of response.
 - They also allow the interviewee the opportunity to get off the subject or to "run on."
 - Broad questions are best used each time you begin a new area of the interview.
 - The interviewer must be careful or they can lose control of the interview when using broad questions that allow the applicant to expound.

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FORMULATING QUESTIONS

- Narrow (direct, close-ended) questions
 - Allows you to avoid the tedious process of separating relevant and irrelevant information
 - Restrict possible responses, but are to the point.
 - Require only a yes or no response.
 - After the interviewee has answered the broad question, you can use direct questions.
 - Use direct questions only as needed or to close out an area of questioning by having the interviewee state a response to a series of individual items.
 - Examples:
 - "Do your wages include any bonuses or commissions?"
 - "You told me about your job; do you receive AFDC?"

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FORMULATING QUESTIONS

- Use of Probing Questions to Obtain More Information than the Applicant Provided
 - Probing questions are used to clarify information provided or to get the interviewee to expand on a previous response.
- Examples:
 - "Tell me more about the support your children's father provides."
 - "How will you maintain utilities to the unit?"

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FORMULATING QUESTIONS

- Use Mirror Questions
 - Like a mirror, “reflect” back the answer to the previous question or a series of responses. Mirror questions give interviewees a change to hear their response as you heard it and to check that the correct meaning was received.
- Example:
 - “Did I understand you say that your mother would be staying with you?”

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FORMULATING QUESTIONS

- Avoid Multiple Questions
 - Some interviewers try to rush through the interview by asking several questions in a row. This confuses interviewees because they don't know which question to answer.
 - Other interviewees take advantage of multiple questions. They ignore questions they don't want to answer by responding to one of the easier or less troubling questions.
 - After obtaining an answer to your initial question, follow up with individual questions relative to the interviewee's response. Not only does this avoid confusion, but it also assures the interviewee that you are listening to their responses.
- Example to Avoid:
 - “Do you live alone with your children, or does your mother live with you, or do you plan to have her move in?”
- Instead Ask:
 - “Who will live in the apartment with you?”
 - “How much of the time will your mother stay with you?”

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FORMULATING QUESTIONS

- Avoid Rewording Questions Unnecessarily
 - Often in an attempt to be sure the interviewee understands a question, an interviewer will restate it in different ways. Rewording often leads to multiple questions and a tendency to restate questions in a way that solicits specific responses. *Think first and ask the question right the first time.* Reword only if the interviewee states that they don't understand or they respond in a way that shows they didn't understand.
- Example to Avoid:
 - “Have you previously received housing assistance? I mean did you ever live in public housing or receive Section 8 rental assistance?”
- Instead Ask:
 - “Have you ever lived in public housing?”
 - “Have you ever received Section 8 rental assistance?”

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CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

- Read the Applicant's body language
 - Remember your body language sets the tone
- Avoid Leads and Cues
 - Some interviewers hint at the answer in their questions. The questions contain words that cue the interviewee as to what an appropriate response would be.
- Example to Avoid:
 - "What are the names of your four boys?"
 - "You don't have any other income, do you?"
- Instead Ask:
 - "What are the names of your children?"
 - "What other income do you have?"

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CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

- Don't Use Jargon
 - Technical words, or jargon, should be avoided. Many interviewees simply won't understand, and won't ask you to explain the terms to them. The interviewee may assume that you are talking down to them or trying to prove how superior you are. You should word questions as simply as possible.
- Example to Avoid:
 - "Do you have any non-realty assets, such as negotiable instruments?"
- Instead Ask:
 - "Where do you bank?"
 - "What other banks or credit unions do you use?"
 - "Where do you have a savings account or certificates of deposits?"

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BE THE EDUCATOR CONTINUALLY

- Remember that the interview is not a one-way dialogue with the interviewee giving all the information.
 - Ask questions such as: "Would you like me to explain?" or "Do you have any questions?"
 - Use the different topics in the interview to educate and reinforce the PHA's policies and requirements.
- Example:
 - "Please take a minute to read the warning at the bottom of this application. We want all of our applicants/tenants to understand how important it is to answer questions accurately."

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CARRYING OUT INTERVIEW

- Ask one question at a time.
 - Use open-ended questions to obtain information.
 - Who, What, When, Where, Why, How
 - Use yes/no questions to clarify that you have heard correctly.
- Attempt to remain as neutral as possible.
- Actively listen.
- Encourage responses.
- Record responses—make notes.
- Provide transition between major topics.
- Don't lose control of the interview.

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SEQUENCE OF QUESTIONS

- Get respondents involved in the interview as soon as possible.
- Before asking about controversial or personal matters, first ask about some basic facts.
- Intersperse fact-based questions throughout the interview.
- Ask questions about the present before questions about the past or future.
- Lastly, allow respondents to provide any other information they prefer to add.

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ACTIVE LISTENING

- Essential skill for conducting effective interviews.
- Requires focus on both topic and purpose.
- 2/3 of what you learn is through listening.
- Average person remembers no more than 25% of what they hear.
 - Need written information as well as verbal.
 - Need to document interview.

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SHOW THAT YOU ARE LISTENING

- Non-Verbally:
 - Eye Contact
 - Body Language
 - Use of Silence
 - Mask Disapproval
- Verbally:
 - Minimal Encouragement
 - Speak Slowly and Distinctly

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REFLECTIONS

- Reinforce important points.
- Clarify meaning.
- Restate facts.

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IMMEDIATELY AFTER INTERVIEW

- Make any additional notes.
- Write down any observations made during the interview.

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INTERVIEW PITFALLS

- Interviewee may try to push interview in a way to benefit their own interests.
- Distractions
- Questions that put interviewee on defensive.
- 2-in-1 questions.
- Complex questions.
- Poor order of questions.
- Not listening.

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BE AWARE OF BIAS

EXPECTANCY EFFECT

- A type of self-fulfilling prophecy
- Communication that produces "expected results"
- People generally live up or down to expectations

PRIMACY EFFECT

- Occurs at the beginning of an interaction.
- First impression that you have of someone
- Re-evaluate

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STEREOTYPING

- Stereotyping - *What is it?*
- Race
- Educational Background
- Age
- Nationality

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DO'S AND DON'TS OF SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS

• Do:

- Be open but be down to business
- Maintain composure
- Carefully word questions
- Answer questions
- Thank Applicant for their time
- Escort the Applicant out

DO'S AND DON'TS OF SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS

• Do

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Allow adequate time for the interview – Identify yourself and make the interviewee comfortable – Show interest and listen – Maintain eye contact – Speak slowly and distinctly – Keep disapproval to yourself | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Be patient – Be open, but businesslike – Maintain your composure – Word questions carefully – Ask if client has any questions – Thank client for their time – Escort client to the door |
|--|---|

DO'S AND DON'TS OF SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS

• Don't

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Appear distant or distracted – Offer criticism – Try to trick or trap the interviewee – Appear superior – Offer personal opinions – Ask personal or illegal questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rush the interviewee – Get trapped in assuming responsibility for the family's personal situation – Ask leading questions – Be hostile or react negatively to statements made by the client |
|--|--|

QUICK REVIEW

The expectancy effect is _____.

- A. A self-fulfilling prophecy
- B. Not scientific
- C. Important in the interview process
- D. Easy to overcome

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QUICK REVIEW

The expectancy effect is based on the expectations of the _____.

- A. Applicant or Tenant
- B. Interviewer
- C. Agency
- D. Management

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QUICK REVIEW

When do people determine their views of other people?

- A. Over time
- B. At the second meeting
- C. Initially
- D. After an hour

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QUICK REVIEW

The primacy effect is _____.

- A. Always accurate
- B. Useful
- C. Easy to avoid
- D. Not always accurate

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QUICK REVIEW

Bias information can be _____.

- A. Informative
- B. Positive
- C. Negative
- D. Positive and Negative

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QUICK REVIEW

What can help prevent gathering bias information in an interview?

- A. Nothing
- B. Ask different questions
- C. Use the same questions
- D. Doing different interviews

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QUICK REVIEW

People stereotype each other based on _____.

- A. Knowledge
- B. Groups
- C. Relationships
- D. Observation

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REMEMBER

- Available on the conference app
 - PowerPoint presentation
 - Class Materials
 - Eligibility and Recertification Interview Guide
 - Zero Income Interview Guide

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THANK YOU!

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