

Preparing for an Interview (Doing Good Interviews)

Objective: To learn how to do an effective interview

Materials: Cut Up Interview Scenarios
Copies of Steps to a Good Interview
Copies of Open-ended Question Worksheet
Copies of Sample Interview Questions

Source: Action Research Projects for High School Classrooms, Training Manual for Teachers.

Enroll: How many of you have seen a television interview?
Who was interviewed? Do you know who the interviewer was?
What stands out about what a great Interviewer does?

Do/Experience: Ask for a volunteer who is willing to be interviewed.
Other youth in the room will be the Interviewer.
The subject of the interview is how youth are portrayed in the media.
Each volunteer will come up, take a slip of paper, and interview the person doing whatever their paper says.

Process: After each Interviewer, ask:

- What were they doing?
- What was wrong with the interview?
- What could make this interview better?

As a group, make a list of tips for a good interview
After all the volunteers have gone, ask:

- What bad habit do you think you do?
- What good habit do you excel at?

Label: Hand out tip sheet and review together as a class.
One of the most important goals in interviews is to be open-minded and really hear what people have are saying.
You don't want to influence interviewee's answers to fit what you want to hear, or to fit what you believe yourself.
Sometimes questions are open-ended, sometimes they are leading.
When a question is leading, you put your own ideas into the question.
When this happens the interviewee can't really talk about their own thoughts, they can only respond to yours.
When developing questions, ask yourself:

- Does this question assume a certain opinion?
- Does this question lead someone to a particular answer?

If your answer is Yes to either of these questions, then your question is probably leading.

Demonstrate: Get youth into groups of 4-6 youth. Each group will get a worksheet of leading questions that they will turn into open-ended questions. All groups should share out what they have written and compare examples of open ended questions.

Part Two: Based on our research question, each person should write at least four questions you could use to do interviews. These will be reviewed during the meeting to narrow down our interview questions.

Review: What is one key to interviewing well?
What is one worry you have about doing interviews?

Steps to a Good Interview

1. Make sure that you are Prepared and Organized

Practice the questions you are going to ask.

Make sure you have: your interview questions, a notepad, pen/pencil, and a quiet, private place to do the interview.

2. Introduce Yourself and Ask for Permission

Tell the interviewee your name, where you are from and why you are doing the interview.

Ask for permission to interview them.

If they say no, you can't do the interview.

3. Do the Interview

Be sure to make eye contact.

Listen to the person you are interviewing. Don't interrupt.

Don't give your own opinion.

Repeat back what they said to make sure you understood their point.

Ask follow up questions.

Don't accept yes/no answers. Ask them "Why" or "Could you explain?"

If they are nervous, give them some time to answer.

4. End the Interview

Thank them for their time and shake their hand

5. Respect Confidentiality

Tell the person you are interviewing that what they said was between you and them.

When you speak about the interview, speak anonymously, without naming names [unless they agreed to a public interview.]

6. Write any notes down about the interview.

Making Open Ended Questions

Instructions: In your groups, turn these interview questions into open-ended questions that Do Not lead to yes/no answers or illustrate your opinion.

1. Don't you think that the shows on MTV stink?

2. Youth in our community are always getting stereotyped, right?

3. It seems like the media is to blame, don't you think?

4. The news always focuses on the bad stuff happening in my community. I think if they showed more positive stories, the stereotypes would change. Don't you think so?

Interviewer Scenarios

1. During your interview, never make eye contact with them.
2. Forget whether you have already asked a question or not. Forget what questions you are asking.
3. Answer cell phone during interview.
4. Forget to bring something to write with and to write on. Ask the interviewee for a piece of paper and a pen.
5. Act like you aren't listening to their answers.
6. Do not ask follow-up questions be sure to switch from one topic to another.
7. Ask leading questions. (It seems like the media is to blame, don't you think? Don't you think youth in our community are stereotyped a lot?)
8. Give your own opinion to what they say.
9. Use poor body language (slouch, don't face them, etc.).