

Interviewing Techniques

1) **5 Key Questions** ; The questions are useful in helping the youth focus on the issues of personal responsibility, the impact of the problematic behaviors on the client's life and goals, and encouraging the client to take specific corrective action. These confrontational questions are most effective when used in conjunction with other skills that demonstrate acceptance and caring on the part of the interviewer.

1. Who's responsible?
(Puts the responsibility on the client; promotes ownership)
2. What are you going to do?
(Puts the client into thinking for action)
3. How are you going to do it?
(Puts the client into planning for action)
4. What is in your best interest?
(Helps the client to weigh the pro's and con's)
Risk reduction ideas:
 - Encourage client to do a "Cost Benefit Analysis." What are they willing to give up by becoming involved in delinquency, substance abuse, and early sexual activity.
 - Client Centered Conversation – tailor the interview to the person's behaviors, circumstances and special needs.
 - Ask client "What options do you have for reducing risks?"
 - Provide option information to include resources, alternate behaviors, information on STD's, and contraception.
 - Encourage the client to set up a written plan to reduce risks.
5. What did you just learn?
(Processes what the client has gained from his decision)

Interviewing Techniques (continued)

- 2) **Time Line Exploration** is the technique of helping the adolescent to recall in chronological order the significant events and relationships in the life of the client (schooling, moves, illnesses, losses, friends and relatives, the first drink, drug use, delinquent act or sexual encounter). This technique can be useful when the time line gives special attention to and exploration of the events and relationships that may have contributed to the development of problematic behaviors and, more importantly, those events and relationships that have served or may potentially serve as strengths to help the client move toward more responsible behaviors. Problem solving skills can be encouraged by asking the client, “If you were faced with that past situation or choice now, what might you do differently to avoid the bad result?”
- 3) **ABC Baskets** technique is useful in helping the adolescent and/or parents to prioritize the behaviors to be worked on. After listing each behavior on a 3x5 card or piece of paper, the client then assigns the card to either the A priority, B priority or C priority basket. Again, a number of interviewing skills come into play in helping the client to explore each behavior and its level of importance to the client and others. Open-ended questions, asking how others might view the adolescent differently, and what positive opportunities might be created by a change in a specific behavior are all useful questions.

The ABC Baskets technique can also be used to brainstorm and rank adolescent and family strengths according to their usefulness in overcoming problem behaviors. Strengths may be personal qualities, values, attitudes and beliefs, aspirations, relationships, experiences, family traditions, family and community resources.