

Exercise #2

Identifying Interviewing Skills to Work On

Instructions: Which of the following behaviors would you like to practice or improve? Read through the following list and **circle** the ones you think you should work on or improve.

Nonverbal Behavior

1. **Eye Contact** - keep eye contact with the user, when possible, throughout the interview. Vary the eye contact so that you do not appear to be staring.
2. **Gestures** - Match your gestures to what you are saying. Try to keep nervous and distracting habits under control (nail biting, pencil tapping, etc.)
3. **Relaxed Posture** - Relax physically. Use body movements that show you are interested in what the user is saying and feeling.
4. **Facial Expression; Tone of Voice** - Reflect the mood of the user in your facial expressions. Your tone of voice and expression should make your comments believable.

Verbal Behavior

5. **Use Open-Ended Questions** - Encourage user control of the process by asking questions like "Can you tell me more about X?" in the beginning of the interview. Listen to and remember what the client says so that you do not have to keep asking for the same information and so that you can put things together to determine exactly what the patron wants. It's OK to take notes.
6. **Premature Diagnosis** - Do not make assumptions about the user's status or problems. Get all the necessary information before sizing the user up—don't interrupt. Do not cut the client off, change the subject, or interrupt at an inappropriate time or in a manner that would be offensive.
7. **Reflect by Paraphrasing** – Use closed questions as appropriate to hone in on the exact question. Ensure that you understand what is being asked by paraphrasing it into your own words and asking the user to confirm what is being asked.
8. **Follow Up** – Ask: "Does this answer your question?" or "Do you think this is enough material to get you started?" Give referrals as appropriate.

Adapted from "Users and Their Information Needs: Information-Seeking Behavior; the Reference Interview." *School of Information*, University of Texas at Austin, 2001.
[<http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~l382jh/Main/t3-usrinfoneeds.html>]