

Practicing interview skills

Adolescents practice writing and using **interview questions**.



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30-45 min



Activity Overview

Purpose

Write interview questions then practice interviewing another adolescent.

Objectives

Adolescents will be able to:

- Practice active listening skills.
- Write creatively.

Competency domains



Communication and expression



Empathy and respect

Works well for

Circles where adolescents can talk with each other, listen, write, and ask questions.

Adolescents who are exploring a topic that interests them over the course of several sessions, and/or are preparing to work on a project together.

Especially designed for adolescents who are exploring a challenge, issue or opportunity that is relevant to their lives or communities.

For example:

- Challenges: Chronic flooding in the community; Preparing food in a kitchen shared with other families.
- Opportunities: Using vacant space that is not being used; learning traditional stories from elders.

Phase

Connecting.

Before

The adolescents should have chosen a topic to explore, and/or a topic for a project. This will be the focus of the interview that they conduct with each other or members of their community. Use **Interview Skills**.

After

Adolescents should use their new skills in actual interviews with each other or members of their communities, as part of their work to explore a topic or develop a project.

Preparation

None needed.



Practicing interview skills

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Explanation and Discussion:

Divide the adolescents into groups of two and introduce the topic of interviews. Facilitator says: "Today we are going to practice skills for interviewing people. What is an interview? Is it the same as other types of conversations?" Key points to cover include:

- An interview is a conversation that is also a form of research, in which one person asks another person questions in order to learn from their experience or perspective.
- An interview is like other kinds of conversations, but it is more focused on one person trying to learn something from the other about a specific topic.

Explain that the adolescents will be practicing interview questions and discuss:

- When you interview someone it can help to ask them several questions so that you learn as much about their perspectives and experiences as possible.
- Interviewers should always try to write down some questions before they conduct the interview. That way they are more likely to get all of the information that they need.

Provide the adolescents with a guide to writing interview questions:

See	What is their perspective on this challenge or opportunity?	What do you see when...?
Think	What is their opinion on the topic?	What do you think about...?
Feel	How do they feel about the topic?	What kind of feelings do you have about...?
Do	Do they do anything about it? Does the topic make them do something different than normal?	What do you do when...?

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Ask the adolescents to work in pairs to write interview questions.

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When they are ready, ask each pair to work with another pair to practice using their interview questions. Each pair will take turns interviewing the other pair. Give each pair at least ten minutes to conduct their interview.

- Pair 1: Interviewer (asks questions) and note taker.
- Pair 2: Interviewee (answers questions) and note taker.

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Sharing and Take Away

Bring the adolescents back together and discuss what they have learned (this should take about 15 minutes). Ask:

- What interesting, surprising or helpful things did you learn?
- Which questions led to those interesting, surprising or helpful answers? Adolescents should write examples of successful questions and post them where everyone can see them.
- What is similar about these questions? Why do you think they led to helpful answers?
- Think about your experience as interviewers for a minute. What did you do during your interview that helped you to get useful information?
- Think about your experience as interviewees. What did the interviewers do to help you to give interesting answers?
- Based on today's experience, how will you prepare for the interviews that you will do in the next few days?
- Discussion point: The successful interview techniques that you have used are examples of active listening. This includes showing interest in what the interviewees say through your body language (smiling, nodding), and asking follow-up questions.



Practicing interview skills

If adolescents will be interviewing other community members or adolescents in the upcoming sessions, prepare them to invite those people for their interviews. They should set a feasible time and location for the interview, and make sure that those people understand the purpose and topic of the interview. If interviewing children younger than age 18, follow child protection procedures to make sure those children and their parents/guardians give informed consent for the interviews.

Do & Don't

- ✓ Encourage adolescents to be proactive and flexible when they practice their interview techniques, and recognize that many different styles and approaches can work.
- ✓ Encourage adolescents to practice and try the roles of both interviewer and note taker.
- ✗ Let adolescents ask each other personal questions during their interviews, or to push each other to answer questions if they don't want to.

Adaptation

Low literacy: Instead of writing their questions, adolescents can develop them verbally. They can then memorize the questions and/or draw symbols to remember them during their practice interviews.

Environment

Indoor or outdoor space, where adolescents can sit comfortably, hear each other and write with minimal distractions.

Supplies

- Marker board and markers.
- Notebooks or paper for adolescents to write their questions.
- At least one pen or pencil for each adolescent.

Improvise

Adolescents can use this activity to learn about issues in their community from the point of view of different community members, including other adolescents, younger children and adults. Choose and adapt topics for the practice interview that are related to the topics they will explore.

Let adolescents practice their interviews while playing the roles of real or imaginary characters.

Create a drama in which adolescents describe what they have learned about their topic by acting out an imaginary interview.

Adolescents can create instructional posters or skits to demonstrate the interview techniques they have learned.

Continue

Adolescents can practice their interview questions as many times as they want, and use them to research any topic that interests them. They can revisit this activity after they have done real-life interviews, to reflect on what they have learned and to improve their skills.