# Interviewing Alleged Perpetrators

This tip sheet suggests a way to structure your interview with an alleged perpetrator (A/P). Examples are provided to spark ideas. However, it is important to take the examples and make them your own based on the situation, your interview style, and APS program policies.

## Pre-Interview

**Is it safe to conduct the interview?**
- Consider safety for yourself and your client.
- If unsafe (environment, infectious diseases, violence), do not enter.

**Should you bring someone with you?**
Screen for anyone in home being ill, exposure to communicable diseases.

**If at any point you feel unsafe, EXIT, and call Supervisor.**

If conducting a phone or virtual interview, additional safety considerations:
- Are you using a personal phone, computer or other device? Is your number blocked on A/P’s display or call back list?
- Can you be located by the A/P?
- Consider consulting with your IT department to ensure that your device is protected from malware.
- Is anyone other than the A/P listening?
- How do you know that you are speaking with the A/P?

## Introductions

- **Title/Agency**
- **Cultural Considerations**—e.g., is eye contact appropriate? Is shaking hands appropriate?
- Getting in the door.
- Wear or display badge/ID.

**Examples**
- “Thanks for answering, I’m Jason with Adult Services.”
- “Could we talk about your (mom, dad, grandma, etc)?”
- “I’m a Social Worker with the County.”
- “I’m from Aging and Adult Services.”

## Spend Time to Build Rapport

Have a conversation, not an interrogation.
Create an environment for disclosure.
Demonstrate respect for their time.

**Examples**
- Acknowledge décor, pictures, etc. in environment.
- “Thank you for taking time to talk to me.”
- “Tell me about yourself...” (job, military, interests)
- “What do you enjoy doing?”

## Explanation of Events: One Allegation/Subject at a Time

Let A/P narrate.

Open ended questions.

Discuss one allegation at a time – ask directly.
Make sure that your questions are answered and not deflected.

**Examples**
- “We received a report about some concerns regarding your Mom’s health (safety, finances).”
- “I was hoping you could tell me more about...”
- “I would really like to hear from you and get your perspective on what has been happening.”
- “Help me understand how your dad got that bruise?”
- “Perhaps my question was not clear,” then repeat the question that was not answered.
- “Thank you for that information. Can you tell me...?” and repeat the question that was not answered.
| Clarifying Questions                                                                 | “Do I correctly understand that (repeat what you have been told)?”
|                                                                                     | “If I heard you correctly, you said that he called you a name, and you became angry. What is the next thing that you did?”
|                                                                                     | “Do you have a copy of the POA/contract/form you described?”
|                                                                                     | “Have you shared what happened with anyone else?”
|****                                                                                                                                 |
| Educate if Appropriate                                                              | “What appears to have occurred/what you have told me may be considered elder abuse/neglect, exploitation.”
|                                                                                     | “When you left your dad alone overnight instead of staying with him, that may be considered neglect.”
|                                                                                     | “How else could you have responded to this situation?”
|****                                                                                                                                 |
| Engage in Problem Solving as Appropriate                                            | “How could we prevent (bed sores, being delinquent in the rent payment, etc.)?”
|                                                                                     | “Would you be interested in getting additional support caring for your mother?”
|                                                                                     | “How would you feel about getting support for yourself around your substance use/gambling/mental health challenges?”
|                                                                                     | “What are you comfortable doing?”
|****                                                                                                                                 |
| Wrapping Up the Interview                                                           | “What else would you like to tell me that we didn’t cover?”
|                                                                                     | “Is there anything else you want me to know?”
|                                                                                     | “Is there anything I did not know to ask you?”
|                                                                                     | “Thank you for speaking with me today. I really value your perspective in helping me understand the situation better.”
|                                                                                     | “Do you have any questions for me?”
|                                                                                     | “If you remember anything else or have questions, please call me.”
|                                                                                     | If asked, provide a brief summary of what happens next. “I’m going to go back to my office and mail you the resources we talked about.”
|****                                                                                                                                 |
| Post Interview                                                                      | As close in time to interview as possible so memory is clear and fresh.

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