

Excerpted from:

Carol Westby's Presentation:

Paradigms for Understanding Autism
Spectrum Disorders (March 2004)

We need to realize that we are not going to be able to have one approach or one program or one set of parent meetings that fits every parent. We're not going to be able to demand that they meet those kinds of expectations.

(L. Vincent)



Traditional Interviews

Set the agenda. Often ask about:

- birth history
- developmental history
- educational history
- when aware of difficulties
- reason for referral
- current presenting problems



The fundamental principle of interviewing is to provide a framework within which informants can express their own understanding in their own terms.



Goals of Interviewing

- Allow parents, teachers, clients, spouses to ask the questions they would like to have answered
- Enable evaluation team to see the child/client through the eyes of the parents, teachers, client, family member
- Enable evaluation team to gain an understanding of the values, beliefs, and resources of the family so as to develop a family-centered intervention plan

Goals of Interviewing



Discover:

- what the child/client does
- what the child/client does not do
- who and what support the child/client performing his/her best
- what compromises the child's/client's best performance

Traditional vs Ethnographic Interviews

I know what I want to find out, so I am setting the agenda for this interview.



I don't know much about this person's point of view, so I've got to encourage him to set the agenda.



Traditional vs Ethnographic Interviews

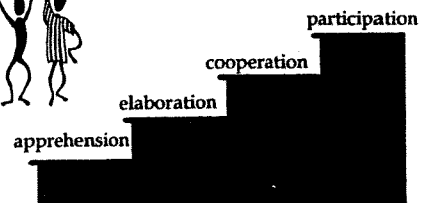
I know what is best for this child. Let's see if I can get this family to accept my ideas for their child.



I don't know what these parents want for their child. Let's see if I can thoroughly understand their ideas about their child.



Rapport Process



Parent Apprehension

- uncertainty
- concern
- control
- special needs
- future
- criticism




Interviewer Apprehension




- unfamiliar disability
- unfamiliar culture
- unfamiliar language

Elaboration *give repeated explanations*
 "This information will help us plan the assessment for James."



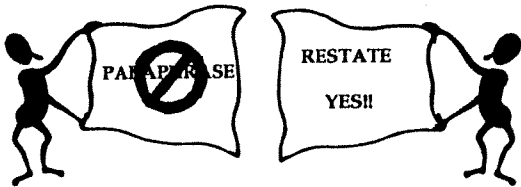
"We want to know the situations in which James does his best so that we have some ideas for ways to help him in class."

Elaboration *give repeated explanations*



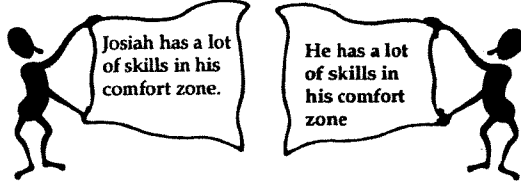
You've asked the Teacher Assistance Team for help with Mark because he is disruptive in class. By talking with you, I'll get a better picture of Mark and what he does in class. This will help us figure out strategies to help Mark and you.

Elaboration *Restate what interviewees say*
 words

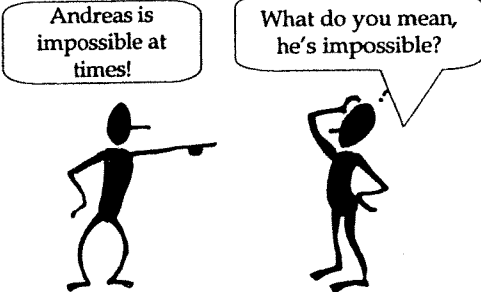


key phrases

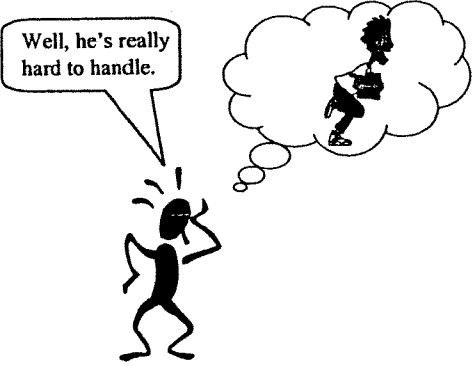
Parent Interviewer



Ask for use, not meaning



Well, he's really hard to handle.



Asking for use

He runs. He'll run out of any door that isn't locked. He gets mad if I try to stop him. He'll try to bite me.

What does Andreas do when he's impossible?

Avoid asking "why"

Judgmental tone

Why? Why? Why?

Assumes person knows why

What might cause Abby to cry during the night?

Elaboration: Avoid Why

What are your reasons for not taking Cindy to restaurants?

You said you don't take Cindy to restaurants.

She spits out food if she doesn't like it. If they turn down the lights, she'll scream.

Cooperation

know what to expect

not worried about offending

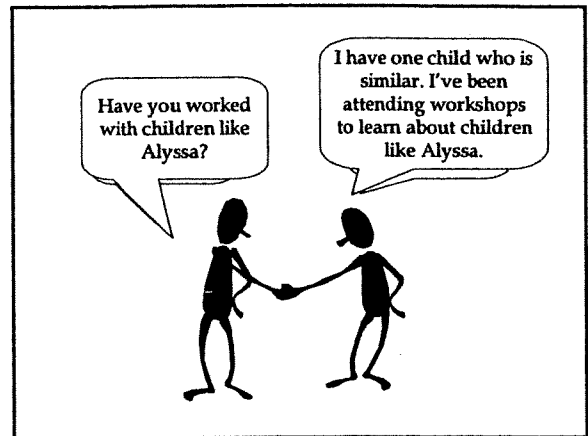
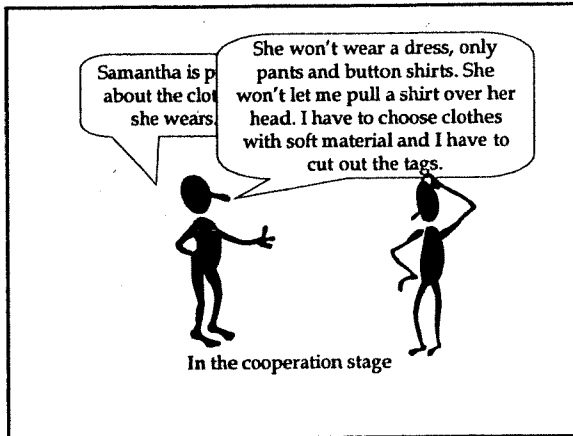
give clearer descriptions

Samantha won't eat lots of food

What kinds of food won't Samantha eat?

What kinds of food will Samantha eat?

Before the cooperation stage



Participation

- bring information to your attention
- discover patterns of behavior
- reflect
- analyze and interpret

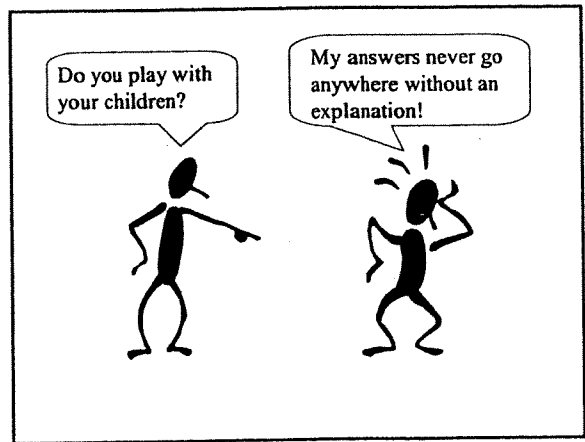
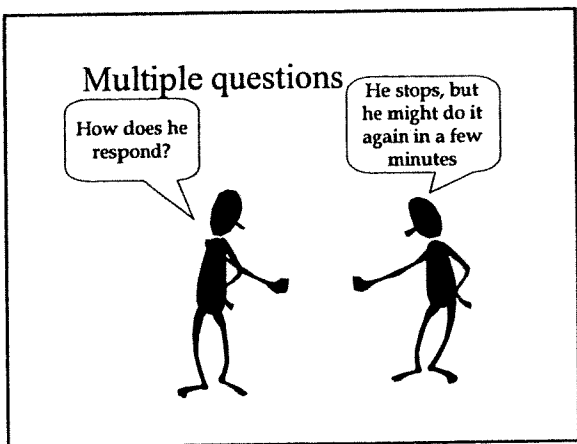
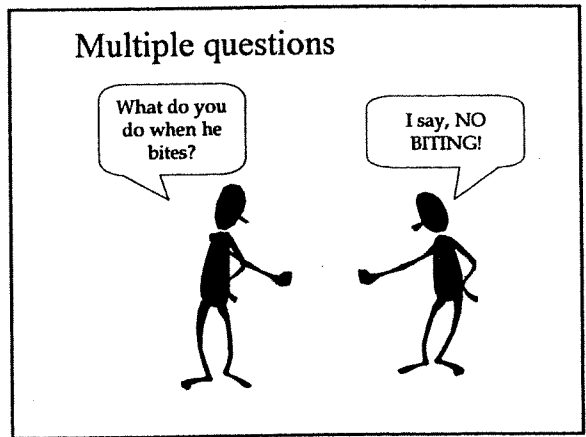
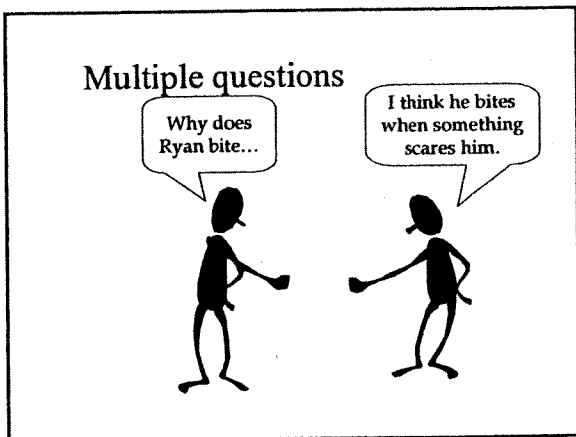
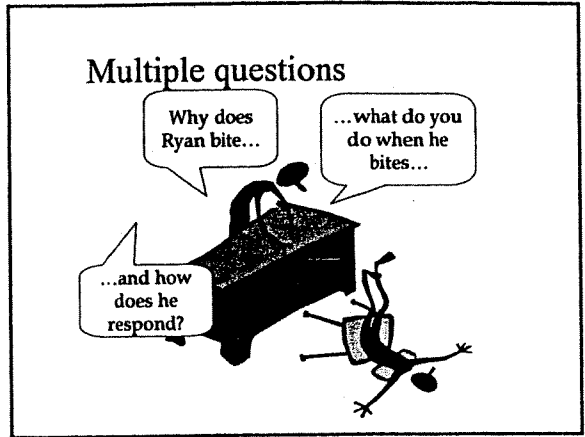
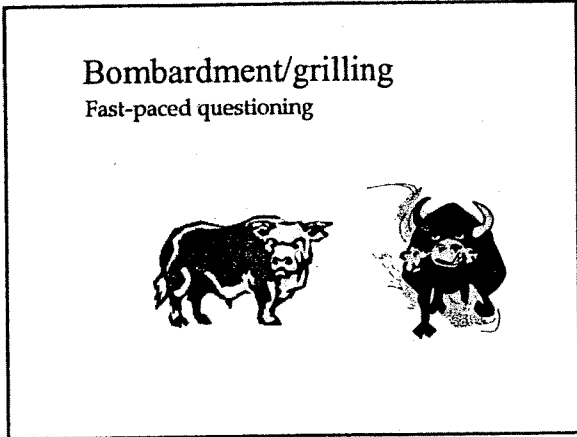
Participation

I keep thinking about when you asked me what our family does with Marsha that is fun. She's irritable and unpredictable so much of the time. I realized that we don't seem to do anything that's fun. I've been thinking about how we might change that.

Good Interviewing = Asking the right questions + To the right people + In the right ways

Problematic Questions

- bombardment and grilling
- multiple questions
- leading questions
- questions as statements
- closed-ended questions



YES-NO Question

Are you satisfied with Joey's therapy program?

YES

NO

How question

How satisfied are you with Joey's therapy program?

Tell me question

Tell me about your experiences with Joey's therapy program

I'm not sure what they do in his program. I haven't talked to anyone for a couple months

Questions as statements

What do you think about putting the children on a more regular schedule?

Questions as statements

Some children are helped by having a structured routine.

Leading questions

Leading Question
What do you dislike about Kesha's teacher?

Neutral Question
Tell me about your experiences with Kesha's teacher.

We've had some problems with Kesha's teacher.

Facilitating interview flow

clear questions

prefatory statements



presumptive questions

probes and follow-up

Clear Questions

- Be clear in your mind about:
 - Why you are asking the questions
 - How the information will help
 - How you will use the information

Clear questions

- Be clear about how you ask the question
 - What terms does the parent/client know and not know
 - Use the language of the parent/client, but don't talk down
 - Be sure you and the parent/client mean the same thing

Clarity

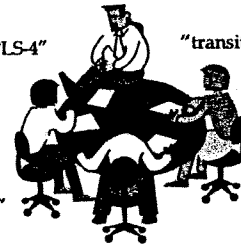
Avoid jargon

"PLS-4"

"transition plan"

"IEP"

"cognitive underpinning"



Clarity

Don't assume word meaning

Marc's very sensitive, and he's very sensitive to other people



He must be a warm, loving child who is considerate of others



Clarity

Don't assume word meaning

Sometimes I worry about his sensitivity when he gets older.




You said that Marc's sensitivity is a concern. Give me an example of when you've seen his sensitivity.



Clarity **Don't assume word meaning**

When I think of him being sensitive, it's not so much in terms of being kind, but more there's a sensitivity that gives him a low tolerance for input.

He gets frustrated and real angry so easily.




Prefatory statements


alert to what is coming

direct and focus attention

give time to organize thoughts




Prefatory statements



Transition


We've been talking about the progress Joey has made in therapy. Now I'd like to ask you some questions about the kinds of changes you have seen in Joey at home.

Prefatory Statement
Summarizing




Before we move on, let me make sure I've got everything you said about Joey's medical treatment for his seizures. You said he saw a physician who first diagnosed his seizures when he was 18 months....

Prefatory statement
Direct Announcement



Let me ask you to think about the changes you have seen in Joey as a result of his program.... How has Joey changed since he entered this program?

Prefatory statements
Getting attention



The next question is particularly important to the program staff. How do you think this program could be improved?

Presumptive questions: imply that what is asked is natural

Tell me about a good day for Scott?

What do you do when Robby and his sister fight?

What does Toby do when he gets hurt?

Elaboration probe (encourage talking)

I think I'm beginning to understand.

Go on.

I see.

uh huh

Elaboration probe (encourage talking)

Would you elaborate on that?

Then what happened?

Could you say more about that?

Detailed-oriented probe

When did that happen?

Where were you during that time?

How did that happen?

Who else was involved?

There was one year when Joey really made progress.

Clarification probe

I'm not sure I understand.

Could you tell me more?

There was one year when Joey really made progress.

Facilitating Interview Flow

It's not enough to ask the right questions--one must listen carefully to make sure that the responses received provide answers to the questions asked.

Social Dimensions of Culture

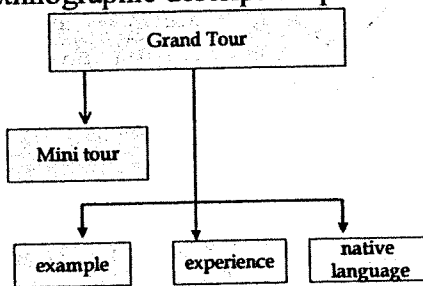
people involved	places used	individual acts
activities	events	objects
time	goals	feelings

What dimensions are important?



17: "typical day" parent w/ highlight important aspects

Ethnographic descriptive questions



Purpose of descriptive questions

- To encourage persons to talk about social situations in their daily lives
- To learn what a family or teacher considers important in their world

Grand tour questions

typical	ask for generalizations of how things usually are	<i>Tell me about a typical day with your child, Joey.</i>
specific	focus on a recent specific time frame	<i>Tell me about what you did with Joey this morning.</i>
guided	talk about event as it is experienced; ask parents to give you a tour	<i>The next time I come, I'd like you to carry on which routines with the kids and tell me what's happening</i>

Minitour questions

Typical	generalize about how things usually are	<i>Tell me about a mealtime. Tell me about a typical tantrum that Sara has.</i>
Specific	focus on recent specific time frame	<i>Tell me about the tantrum Sara had this morning.</i>
Guided	talk about event as it is experienced	<i>Let's look at the videotape you made of Sara having a tantrum and you tell me what's happening as we watch.</i>

Example: ask for an example of an idea or experience

"Mark is so hyper at times!"



Give me an example of what Mark does when he is hyper?

If I were watching Mark when he was being hyper, what would I see?

Experience: ask about experiences in a particular setting



Tell me about your experience with the neurologist.

Native language

"Michael has a hard time at preschool because he is so **AGGRESSIVE.**"



Direct

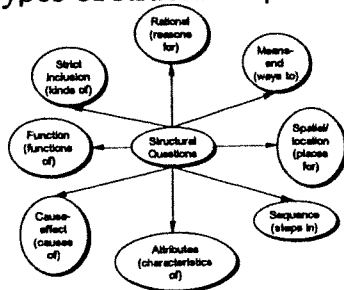
What other words would you use to describe his aggression?

Hypothetical
Let's imagine your mother was here. Explain Michael's difficulties to your mother.

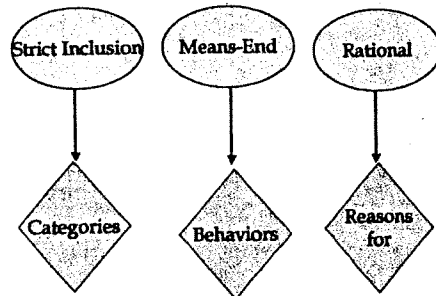
Purpose of structural questions

- Explore responses to descriptive questions
- Understand relationships
- Learn how persons have organized knowledge

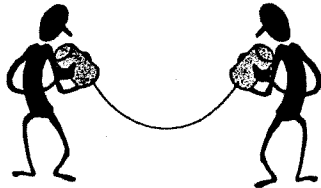
Types of structural questions



Primary structural questions



All ethnographic interviews include



Descriptive questions

Structural questions

Identify the question type

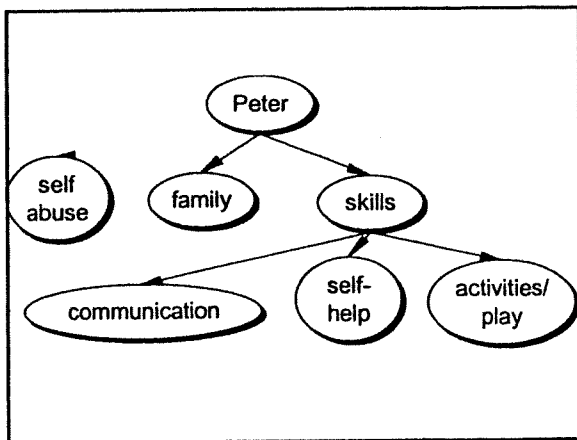
- **M:** Since the new baby's come, Josiah's had some destructive behaviors.
- **I:** What kinds of things has he done that are destructive?
- **M:** He's pulled wall paper off walls and the towel rack out of the bathroom.
- **I:** What do you think are the reasons he has done that?
- **M:** He doesn't like change. And he knows when I'm busy. Then it's like its free rein in the house for him—all the rules are off.

Identify the question type

- **M:** The problems we have with Josiah are mostly around transitions. You have to work around his agenda. Then he does just fine.
- **I:** Tell me about a transition that Josiah has problems with.
- or
- **I:** What would I see when he is having a problem with a transition?
- or
- **I:** You said you have to work around his agenda. Give me an example of what you do when you work around his agenda.

Identify the question type

- **M:** Josiah had a really good preschool teachers.
- **I:** What were the characteristics of these good teacher?
-
- **M:** I'm home schooling him this year. His teacher last year just didn't understand what he needed.
- **I:** Tell me about your experiences with that teacher.
-
- **M:** Many days, Josiah got so upset. He cried and refused to get on the bus?
- **I:** What do you think might have caused him to be so upset?



Domains

self abuse	What does Peter do when he hurts himself?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ hits his head with fists ■ throws self into wall ■ bites his hands
	When does he do this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ when he's frustrated ■ when someone makes him do something ■ in new situations
	What are the reasons he does this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ may be related to seizures ■ keeps people away
	What do the preschool staff do about Peter's hitting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ tried OT, but stopped ■ told me to pay for a private psychologist
	What do you do when he hits himself?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ hold him and rock him ■ put on soft music ■ give him a musical toy


Domains

family	Who are in your family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■husband, 6 year old daughter ■husband's parents, brother, sister ■mother's sisters
	Who helps with Peter?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■his sister ■my sister sometimes
	What are the reasons your family doesn't come around	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■they're afraid of Peter ■they don't know what to do when he hits himself
	What kinds of things does Peter's father do with him?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■he's works out of town, so he doesn't see him much ■he doesn't know what to do with him
	You said you're concerned about Peter's sister. What are your concerns?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■Peter often hits her ■she doesn't get enough attention ■she's been waking at night and wetting the bed

Domains

skills		
communication	What kinds of sounds does Peter make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■grunts, eee, mmm
	What does Peter do to show you what he wants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■looks at something ■runs to get it ■has brought me a picture ■I usually can guess
self-help	What kinds of things can Peter do for himself?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■hold cup & drink ■eat with spoon & fork ■take off clothes
	What do you do to teach him to help himself?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■put my hands over his ■give him time if I think he can do it
play activities	What does he do when left on his own?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■wander ■spin objects ■listen to music if I turn it on

Don't put the other fellow in your shoes—wear his. Tis true, if "I were you," I could use the logic that you espouse to solve my problem. But since I am me, we must find a solution that fits well into the scheme of my mold. We must cloak the solutions of my problems in garments wrinkled by my needs and desires, otherwise, what you are saying to me, is not, "If I were you," but "If you were me;" and since I am not, your answers help me little.



Florene Poyadue