Excerpts from QSR Training provided by The Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group

INTERVIEWING FUNDAMENTALS FOR THE QSR REVIEWER
Modeling the skills for building a trusting relationship

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<th>Core Conditions</th>
<th>Reviewer Attributes</th>
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| **Genuineness** is “being you,” being congruent in what you say and do, being non-defensive and spontaneous. To be genuine you need to be aware of your feelings and at the same time respond to the family member (or other person being interviewed) in a respectful manner that opens up rather than closes communication. Genuineness helps to reduce the emotional distance between you and the person being interviewed. | • Being yourself and balancing this with your professional role, and acting consistent with how you feel or believe  
• Making sure that your nonverbal behavior, voice tone and verbal responses match or are congruent  
• Communicating trustworthiness and acceptance  
• Being able to express yourself naturally without artificial behaviors  
• Being non-defensive  
• Self-disclosing in a purposeful and brief manner |

| **Respect** is believing that there is value in each human being and that there is potential in that person as well. There are two aspects of respect: 1) your attitude or value about people and 2) your ability to communicate respect in observable ways. Respect involves valuing the family member/person interviewed as a person separate from any evaluation of his/her behavior. Respect is recognizing the dignity and worth in each human being. When communicating respect, there is warmth that is conveyed to people that says you accept them, you like them, you care about them and you have concern for them. Respecting a person does not mean sanctioning or approving his/her thoughts or behaviors of which society may disapprove. Values and beliefs that convey respect include belief in the following: all human beings are worthy; each person is a unique individual; people have the right to self-determination, to make their own choices and people can change. | • Scheduling the interview and being on time  
• Asking where to sit  
• Addressing people formally (e.g. Mr. Mrs.)  
• Communicating warmth  
• Clarify how much time people have  
• Explaining purpose of interview  
• Being appreciative of interviewee’s time and willingness  
• Showing commitment to understand their perspective; using good listening skills  
• Recognizing a person’s strengths  
• Being open-minded and neutral listener  
• Using a person’s strengths |

<p>| <strong>Empathy</strong> is a process in which you attempt to experience another person’s world then | • Recognizing the person’s experience, feelings and nonverbal |</p>
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| communicate an understanding of and compassion for the person’s experience. You develop a sense of what the situation means to the other individual. Empathy is being able to see through another’s eyes and understand their worldview. | communication  
- Communicating with words your understanding of the person’s experience.  
- Accurate empathy helps create a climate where the family member is willing and able to explore his/her issues and problems. Communicating with empathy results in more openness in people. |

**EXPLORING SKILLS**

**Active Listening and the Use of Reflections**
Listening is an active process which requires you to focus on what the family member is saying both in the content of his/her message and in the emotional process of his/her message. It is the most powerful interpersonal helping skill that promotes rapport and the building of a trusting and caring casework relationship. Active listening involves using both verbal and nonverbal messages to communicate your understanding of the family member’s experience. Your verbal response can focus on what the person is describing, how the person is feeling or both. You can reflect what the person is saying and/or reflect what the person is feeling. Active listening is used to empower families to explore and discuss topics. It conveys your understanding of their situation. It can help you gather certain information and it develops a broader and deeper understanding of the person’s circumstances.

**Attending Behaviors**
These are behaviors that convey respect, acceptance and trust to family members. Following are two categories of attending behavior:
- **Physical attending** is the intentional use of the environment and body to demonstrate respect for, acceptance and interest in the family member. You want to create a comfortable environment absent of distractions. You want to assure open communication by not placing any barriers between you and family members.
Psychological attending involves observing and listening to the family member and responding. It involves observing the person’s nonverbal behavior, hearing what the person’s voice communicates and assessing the congruence between the person’s words and behaviors. Examples of verbal following and minimal encourages are, “Oh, can you tell me more?” and, “Um-hmm,” and “Really?”

**FOCUSING SKILLS**

**Reframing**
Reframing is helping the person change his/her frame of reference in such a way that the problem can be approached in a positive way. It refers to the process of assisting the family...
member in identifying a different framework for understanding and responding to a problem. For example, we can view change as painful or frightening, or we can reframe change as manageable stages leading to a new opportunity.

Clarification
Clarification is a process you use to help family members develop an understanding and awareness of their feelings, thought and behaviors. Clarifying responses facilitate the development of the family member’s awareness and understanding of himself/herself.

Questions
Effective communication involves combining different types of questions. Questions should be used carefully and sparsely. Questions are a way for the child welfare worker to focus a conversation.

Open-ended questions are used to encourage communication, gather information and explore issues. Family members can answer as they choose, giving them an opportunity to explore their thoughts, feelings and experiences. Questions starting with the words how or what encourage the person to explore and allow him/her to express his/her own feelings, views and perceptions.

Closed-ended questions are used to gather specific factual information. Closed questions begin with the words who, when, will, is or where and usually can be answered with a one-or two-word answer.

Indirect questions are statements that imply a question. Indirect questions can begin with, “Tell me…” or, “I’ve been wondering…” Indirect questions can be used to explore sensitive subjects and can lessen the harshness of a series of questions.

Solution-focused questions are used to move from reframing to solutions. Solution-focused questions empower families to find their vision of success and their own strategies that have worked or will work for them. Solution-focused question can be used to define the problem, determine when the problem does not exist and encourage the family to specify what they do want.

Summarization helps you to synthesize a wide range of facts and feelings communicated. Effective summarizations contain no new or additional information but bring together information regarding facts or feelings previously discussed. Summarizations can be used for a variety of purposes. Following are some of the purposes:

- To keep the interview focused and on track, especially in rambling or disjointed conversations
- To check your understanding of what the person is saying
- To highlight contradictions or ambivalence (The phrase “I am confused” can be helpful in seeking greater clarity.)
- To structure the interview, particularly in the beginning and in the end of the interview