



## **Enhancing Your Investigative Skills: Interviewing Alleged Perpetrators PARTICIPANT MANUAL**

We create experiences that transform the heart, mind, and practice.



**This training was developed by the Academy for Professional Excellence, with funding from the California Department of Social Services, Adult Programs Division.**



**Curriculum Developer, 2019**  
**Candace Heisler, JD**

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE ACADEMY FOR PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

We are pleased to welcome you to the Enhancing Your Investigative Skills: Interviewing Alleged Perpetrators Participant Manual, developed by APSWI, a program of the Academy for Professional Excellence under a grant from the California Department of Social Services, Adult Programs Division.

The Academy for Professional Excellence, a project of San Diego State University School of Social Work, was established in 1996 to provide exceptional workforce development and organizational support to the health and human services community by providing training, technical assistance, organizational development, research, and evaluation. Serving over 20,000 people annually, the Academy continues to grow with new programs and a diversity of training focused on serving the health and human services community in Southern California and beyond.

The Academy is a project of San Diego State University School of Social Work (founded in 1963), which offers both a bachelor's and master's degree in Social Work. The School of Social Work at San Diego State University was founded in 1963 and has been continuously accredited by the Council of Social Work Education since 1966.

APSWI (Adult Protective Services Workforce Innovation) is a program of the Academy for Professional Excellence. APSWI is designed to provide competency-based, multidisciplinary training to Adult Protective Services professionals and their partners. APSWI's overarching goal is the professionalization of Adult Protective Services professionals to ensure that abused and vulnerable older adults and adults with disabilities receive high quality, effective interventions and services. In partnership with state and national organizations, APSWI has developed a nationally recognized Core Competency Training Curriculum for Adult Protective Services professionals. This curriculum is reviewed and approved by experts in the elder and dependent adult abuse fields.

APSWI's partners include:

- National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) Education Committee
- California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Adult Programs Division
- County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA), Protective Services Operations Committee (PSOC)

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This training is the result of a collaborative effort between Adult Protective Services administrators, supervisors, staff development officers and workers across the state and the nation; professional educators; and the Academy for Professional Excellence staff members. APSWI would like to thank the following individuals and agencies:

### **Agencies**

California Department of Social Services, Adult Programs Division  
County of Los Angeles Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services  
Orange County Social Services Agency  
Riverside County Department of Public Social Services  
San Bernardino County Department of Aging and Adult Services  
County of San Diego Aging & Independence Services

### **Regional Curriculum Advisory Committee**

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### **Committees**

APS Training Planning Committee  
National Adult Protective Services Association Education Committee  
Protective Services Operations Committee of the County Welfare Directors Association of California

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## Executive Summary

### **Course Title: Enhancing Your Investigative Skills: Interviewing Alleged Perpetrators**

Interviewing alleged perpetrators is a key part of conducting an APS investigation. Some APS professionals are highly skilled at such interviews while others find the task challenging and difficult. This interactive and challenging training course is designed to advance the ability of APS professionals to effectively interview alleged perpetrators. It will include reminders about basic aspects of alleged perpetrator interviews such as anticipating dangers and enhancing safety, setting the tone for the interview, and rapport building as well as more advanced topics such as exploring defenses, cultural considerations when interviewing alleged perpetrators, addressing volatility, and creating an environment for disclosure and problem solving.

The following instructional strategies are used throughout the course: short lectures (lecturettes), interactive activities/exercises including individual, class and small group discussions; several of which are built around case studies, PowerPoint slides, role playing/demonstrations, and video clips to stimulate discussion and skill development.

### **Course Requirements:**

Because this is an advanced course to enhance skills, participants are encouraged to have completed Modules 8 (Dynamics of Abusive Relationships), 9 (Communication and Interviewing) 16 (Investigation First Steps) and 22 (Working with the Criminal Justice System) of the NAPSA Core Competency Curriculum found at <https://theacademy.sdsu.edu/programs/apswi/core-competency-areas/> . The course is also designed for APS professionals with investigative experience handling variety of types of abuse. *All participants are required to role play APS interviewers and alleged perpetrators and to model effective techniques for class members.*

### **Target Audience:**

This course is designed for APS professionals, including Supervisors and Training Staff who conduct interviews of alleged perpetrators, train staff on interviewing alleged perpetrators, and have experience conducting such interviews. Allied social services professionals who conduct interviews of alleged perpetrators may also benefit from course content. *The course is not designed for law enforcement professionals.*

### **Course Training Goal:**

To enhance participants' skills and ability to effectively interview alleged perpetrators of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

### **Outcome Objectives for Participants:**

By the end of this training participants will be able to:

- List the purposes of APS interviews with alleged perpetrators (A/P)



- Recognize cultural, racial, and gender biases and assumptions of APS professionals and A/Ps that may affect the interview
- Identify safety concerns APS professionals may encounter during the interview process with an A/P
- Model effective techniques for building rapport with an A/P
- Develop strategies to address defenses when interviewing an A/P
- Model techniques to address A/P volatility during an interview

**COURSE OUTLINE**

<b><u>CONTENT</u></b>	<b><u>MATERIALS</u></b>	<b><u>TIME</u></b>
<b>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, COURSE OVERVIEW</b>		<b>TOTAL: 15 minutes</b>
<b>ADDRESSING OUR OWN REALITY: FEARS, PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW, &amp; CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>		<b>TOTAL: 60 minutes</b>
<i>Activity #1-Reflection (Individual, Table Groups, &amp; Large Class)</i>	<i>Reflection Questions</i>	
<i>Activity #2- Implicit Bias (Table Groups)</i>	<i>Handout #1</i>	
<i>Activity #3- Addressing Mistakes (Large Class)</i>		
<b>SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS</b>		<b>TOTAL: 20 minutes</b>
<i>Activity #4-Safety First (Large Class)</i>	<i>Handout #2</i>	
<i>Activity #5- Initial Home Visit Safety (Large Class)</i>		
<b>BREAK</b>		<b>15 minutes</b>
<b>PLANNING THE INTERVIEW</b>		<b>TOTAL: 15-20 minutes</b>
<i>Class Discussion: Setting the Tone</i>	<i>Handout #3</i>	
<b>CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW</b>		<b>TOTAL: 155- 165 minutes</b>
<i>Class Discussion: Building Rapport</i>		
<i>Activity #6-Skill Practice (Individual &amp; Table Groups)</i>	<i>Handout #4</i>	
<i>Class Discussion: Introduction to John and Betsy</i>	<i>Handout #5</i>	
<b>LUNCH</b>		<b>TOTAL: 60 minutes</b>

<i>Activity #7: Building Rapport with Betsy (Table groups)</i>		
<i>Activity #8 (Part 1)- Justifications and Defenses Questions (Dyads/triads)</i>	<i>Handout #5</i>	
<i>Activity #8 (Part 2)- Justifications and Defenses Role Play (Dyads/triads &amp; Large Class)</i>	<i>Handout #5</i>	
<i>Class Discussion: Interview Practice</i>	<i>Handout #6</i>	
<i>Activity #9-Managing Difficult Situations (Dyads/triads)</i>	<i>Handout #7</i>	
<i>Class Discussion: Addressing Volatility</i>	<i>Handout #8</i>	
<b>BREAK</b>		<b>TOTAL 15 minutes</b>
<i>Activity #10- Norman and Evelyn (Large Class)</i>		
<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>		<b>TOTAL 35 minutes</b>
<i>Class Discussion: Why Document?</i>		
<i>Activity #11: Documenting the Interview (Individual, Table Groups, Large Class)</i>	<i>Handouts #9 &amp; #10</i>	
<b>WRAP-UP AND EVALUATIONS</b>		<b>TOTAL: 15 minutes</b>
<i>Activity #12- Lessons Learned (Individual and Large Class)</i>		
<b>TOTAL TIME (INCLUDING BREAKS AND LUNCH)</b>		<b>7 hours</b>

### Housekeeping



- Location of restrooms
- Set cell phones to vibrate
- Please return promptly from breaks and help us keep to the schedule
- Materials
  - PowerPoint Slides
  - Participant Materials



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### Introductions



- Participants
  - Name, agency, assignment
  - Number of alleged perpetrators interviewed
  - Types of abuse alleged in cases where have interviewed the alleged perpetrator
- Instructor



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### Terminology



- Jurisdictions refer to alleged perpetrators in a variety of ways such as A/P, alleged abuser (A/A), and person of interest (POI), etc.
- Throughout this course we will use the term alleged perpetrator or A/P for consistency.

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### Course Goal



Enhance your ability to effectively interview alleged perpetrators of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older and vulnerable adults



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### Course Learning Objectives



- Identify purposes of APS interviews with alleged perpetrators (A/P)
- Recognize cultural, racial, and gender biases and assumptions of APS professionals and A/Ps that may affect the interview
- Identify safety concerns APS professionals may encounter during the interview process with an A/P
- Model effective techniques for building rapport with an A/P
- Develop strategies to address defenses when interviewing an A/P
- Model techniques to address A/P volatility during an interview

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### Course Expectations



- Course is interactive, built on case studies, video, and activities.
- **Everyone has valuable expertise to share in the course!**
- Everyone needs to share in the discussions, group reports, role modeling, and other course work. While not everyone enjoys role playing or modeling of techniques, they are a valuable way to learn, especially for professionals.
- **Everyone deserves support and respect when participating and this is a safe place to practice or try a new technique or idea.**

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**Activity: Reflection**



Individually, in Participant Manual, answer the following questions:

- **What are your challenges/fears when interviewing A/Ps?**
- **How is your role different from that of law enforcement?**
- **What has been effective?**

Discuss as table and choose one question to report out on.



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### Summary Points



- APS' role is not to get a confession but to have a conversation with a purpose, not to establish guilt for a crime
- Not to build a case for criminal justice system - you are not their agent
- Your goal is to assess the A/Ps willingness and appropriateness to continue to play a role in the client's life and to assure your client's safety

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### Why Do You Interview A/Ps?



- Gather or substantiate facts
- Establish what happened
- Stabilize/ensure safety by assessing whether alleged perp should continue to play a role in client's life and if so, what role.
- Assess A/P's needs and abilities in light of any continuing role, motivation, danger posed to the client, APS professional, and others
- Educate A/P, offer resources and services
- Assess the A/P's willingness to work with APS to improve situation
- Put A/P on notice of acceptable conduct

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### Cultural Considerations When Interviewing A/Ps



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## Biases



Who brings biases to alleged perpetrator interviews?



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## Activity: Implicit Biases



- Odd Numbered Tables: Address questions from the perspective of the interviewer
- Even Numbered Tables: Address questions from perspective of the A/P
  - Create a list of biases/assumption and examples of practice situations where they may arise
  - How do these affect your interview?
  - How will you identify such biases/assumptions?
  - How would you address those biases and assumptions to successfully conduct the interview?

Select a note taker and a spokesperson to report for your group.

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**Cultural Considerations and Biases**

**HANDOUT #1**

Possible Biases and Assumptions	How They Will Affect the A/P Interview	How To Identify These Biases and Assumptions	How To Address them & Successfully Conduct the A/P Interview

### Report Back & Summary Points



- Biases are held by both the interviewer and A/P and may affect your ability to engage with the A/P
- Examples of Interviewer biases
  - Stereotyping
  - Misunderstanding cultural experiences
  - Misinterpreting actions during contact
- Examples of A/P biases
  - Distrust or fear of governmental officials
  - Refusal to accept help as cultural norm



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### Addressing the Elephant in the Room



How do you handle a situation in which you feel (or know) that you have offended the A/P because of a cultural bias or assumption?



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### Cultural Awareness



- Need to know cultural entities/communities you serve. Do you need to engage with a leader or elder before interviewing the A/P (or victim)?
  - Need an interpreter?
- If you are not sure, be culturally humble and respectful.
  - Ask for guidance.
  - Apologize if you get off on the wrong foot.
- Big picture—have relationships with respected leaders in other communities you may serve.

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### Safety Considerations



- Safety of Self
- Safety of Client



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### Safety Scenarios



- Identify safety considerations for the client and the APS professional and strategies/ways to address them.



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**Safety Considerations: Case Studies****HANDOUT #2**

**Identify the safety considerations/concerns for your client; for yourself; and what you can do to address these concerns.**

**Case Study #1:** You are assigned a case of dependent adult (age 52) with an intellectual disability who lives in his brother's home. The brother is the client's guardian/conservator. The report is that his brother is not paying the bills that are in your client's name, is emotionally abusing his brother, and is not taking his brother to medical and therapy appointments. The report indicates the brother has been heard calling the client names, berating him, and threatening to put him out of the house. Client is living in a basement room without heat or cooling. He is afraid to come upstairs if the brother's large dog is present in the house.

Case Study #2: Your client is a woman, age 70, whose adult son has moved in and has been stealing from her. Client has told you he has stolen her car, forged her checks, and locked her out of the house during very cold weather. He uses opioids and abuses alcohol and she mentioned that a couple of times when he was high, he picked up a knife and said he was going to hurt her. His friends often "crash" at the house for days at a time. He has a criminal history for stealing, gang violence, driving under the influence of alcohol, and fighting. She loves him and wants him to get help.

Case Study #3: Your client, age 78, lives with her daughter who has a history of hoarding behaviors and has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Client has difficulty walking and is at high risk for falling. The home is so cluttered that it is difficult to enter and leave the apartment. The utilities have been turned off for nonpayment of bills so the daughter has run electrical cords to the neighboring apartment. There are rats in the apartment and they have begun invading other units in the building.

### Group 1



Your client is a dependent adult (age 52) with an intellectual disability who lives in his brother's home. The brother is the client's guardian/conservator. The report is that his brother is not paying the bills that are in your client's name, is emotionally abusing your client, and is not taking your client to medical and therapy appointments. It indicates the brother has been heard calling the client names, berating him, and threatening to put him out of the house. Client is living in a basement room without heat or cooling. He is afraid to come upstairs if the brother's large dog is present in the house.



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### Case Study #2



Your client is a woman, aged 70, whose adult son has moved in and has been stealing from her. He has allegedly stolen her car, forged checks, and locked her out of the house during very cold weather. He uses opioids and abuses alcohol and a couple of times while high, has picked up a knife and said he was going to hurt her. His friends often "crash" at the house for days at a time. He has a criminal history for stealing, gang violence, driving under the influence of alcohol, and fighting.



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### Case Study #3



Your client, age 78, lives with her daughter who has a history of hoarding behaviors and has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. The home is so cluttered that it is difficult to enter and leave the apartment. The utilities have been turned off for nonpayment of bills so the daughter has run electrical cords to the neighboring apartment. There are rats in the apartment and they have begun invading other units in the building.



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### Anticipate Dangers; Take Precautions



- Check location and known parties with LE and APS files before you respond
- Decide if you should make an announced or unannounced visit
- Consider where you should conduct the interview
- Should you take another APS professional or LE with you?
- Tactical considerations
  - Preprogrammed phone to 911
  - Staff/office check in and check out procedures
  - Park where not be blocked in
  - Hands free
  - Do not stand in front of the door
  - Remove animals
  - Nothing between you and door. Plan an escape route.
  - Avoid places with known dangers- e.g., kitchen, workshop
  - Try to place the A/P in soft furniture while you sit in chair without upholstery
  - Trust instincts—leave if not comfortable call law enforcement



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### Setting the Tone



How do you set the tone for a productive A/P interview?

- Just like your conversation with the client, the A/P interview is a conversation with a purpose.
- It is not an interrogation aimed at obtaining a confession in order to build a criminal case or prove a crime has occurred.

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### Helpful Tips



- Introductions
- Addressing confidentiality



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## Helpful Hints: Planning the Interview and Setting the Tone

### HANDOUT #3

During the planning phases, think of the following important interview skills to improve your ability to investigate.

#### Setting the Tone:

- Your ability to set the tone for the A/P interview affects your safety and that of your client
- It provides you the opportunity to clarify your role to enable you to build rapport with A/P
  - Explain that you are **not** law enforcement, this is **not** a criminal investigation
- When setting the tone is done well, creates an environment for any disclosures

#### During the Interview with A/P:

- Identify yourself by name and position; relevant job responsibilities; describe your legal authority
  - What are the pros and cons of stating you're from Adult Protective Services?
    - How and when do you explain your Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse Statute?
- Enlist the A/P's cooperation and assistance in better understanding the situation
  - "Help me understand"
  - "I would love to hear how you...."
- Offer help as needed for client and perhaps, the A/P
- Get and keep A/P focused on purpose of the interview—get their side of situation
- If you cannot legally answer a question, say so
  - "State law prohibits me from discussing who made the report/ who I have spoken with already"
- Refocus A/P on purpose of the interview and importance of A/P's account
- Always stay focused on client safety.
  - Do not share information that may be attributed to client (or other collaterals)
- "My information from various sources reflects..."
- "Records suggest..."
- "I have talked with many other people about this situation and based on what I have heard it seems that..."
- Always treat the A/P with dignity and respect.
  - You cannot expect the A/P to give you what you need (their statement) unless you give them what they need; to be treated as a person, with dignity and respect

### Telephone Vs. In-Person Interviews



- What are the pros and cons of each?
- Which is preferable?



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### Timing



- There is no single “right time” to conduct the A/P interview.
  - A/P’s work or school schedule
  - If the A/P works in a congregate work or living setting the facility’s schedule—not during meals, bathing times
- Consider asking the client when they feel is the best time to speak with A/P
- Should also ask the client how they feels A/P will react to contact and interview by APS
  - Any “hot buttons” to avoid during the A/P interview
- Make sure that interview is conducted in a private place away from others who may listen or interfere

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### Summary Points



For best possible outcome:

- Be careful with terms such as “investigation”
- Keep a neutral tone, no accusations
- Do not threaten A/P with notifying law enforcement unless A/P threatens you
- If A/P is reluctant or unwilling use statements like:
  - I really value your point of view;
  - Perhaps we can offer help with your mother’s caregiving needs;
  - I am not accusing you of anything, I am not L.E., I am a Social Worker

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### Building Rapport



Why build rapport with an A/P?

- Build trust with the A/P
- Encourage A/P to participate in the interview
- Educate the A/P in APS professional's goal and role
- Demonstrate respect for A/P
- Provides a way to better understand communication style
- Gain insight into their values and beliefs



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### Rapport Building in Action



MA Elder Affairs Video Clip

- Note how the APS professional builds rapport and what was effective and what may not have been

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### Rapport Building Skill Practice



Return to the case studies from the safety segment.

- Focus on building rapport with the A/P in your case.
- Develop questions to build rapport
- Select team member as A/P and role play the APS interviewer and A/P building rapport, using techniques you've written down (5-7 minutes)



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## Rapport Building Considerations: Case Studies

### HANDOUT #4

**Identify ways to build rapport with the A/P in the following scenarios:**

Case Study #1: You are assigned a case of dependent adult (age 52) with an intellectual disability who lives in his brother's home. The brother is the client's guardian/conservator. The report is that his brother is not paying the bills that are in your client's name, is emotionally abusing his brother, and is not taking his brother to medical and therapy appointments. The report indicates the brother has been heard calling the client names, berating him, and threatening to put him out of the house. Client is living in a basement room without heat or cooling. He is afraid to come upstairs if the brother's large dog is present in the house.

Case Study #2: Your client is a woman, age 70, whose adult son has moved in and has been stealing from her. Client has told you he has stolen her car, forged her checks, and locked her out of the house during very cold weather. He uses opioids and abuses alcohol and she mentioned that a couple of times when he was high, he picked up a knife and said he was going to hurt her. His friends often "crash" at the house for days at a time. He has a criminal history for stealing, gang violence, driving under the influence of alcohol, and fighting. She loves him and wants him to get help.

Case Study #3: Your client, age 78, lives with her daughter who has a history of hoarding behaviors and has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Client has difficulty walking and is at high risk for falling. The home is so cluttered that it is difficult to enter and leave the apartment. The utilities have been turned off for nonpayment of bills so the daughter has run electrical cords to the neighboring apartment. There are rats in the apartment and they have begun invading other units in the building.

Introduction to the Case of Jonn Rogers  
and Betsy



- This case will be used throughout the rest of the day and will be the basis for a number of activities in which you will demonstrate what you would do in one of your assigned cases.
- There are a number of role plays. You will work in groups of 2-3. Everyone will participate in the discussion and preparation while individual team members will alternate playing the APS interviewer and the A/P.
  - **Everyone is expected to play the interviewer at least once so you have an opportunity to practice your skills.**
- Read the case study and make notes of key points.

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**HANDOUT #5****Case Study**

*John Rogers aged 77 years, has diabetes, serious vision impairment, and a history of heart attacks. He developed ulcers on his lower left leg and for the last 6 months has received weekly visits from a visiting nurse who checks his blood pressure and changes his leg dressing. John is a retired teacher who was widowed 8 months ago. Up to that point his wife, a nurse, took care of his medical needs.*

*John's health needs have grown so that he needs some help with his ADLs. His daughter Betsy has moved in to help her father. They have always had a contentious relationship but Betsy recently lost her job and helping her father seemed a good way to help him and provide her with a place to live and earn some money. Betsy receives IHSS funds to provide care for her father, keep the home in order, make sure that he eats properly for his medical condition, and takes his medications.*

*On a regular visit to check on John and treat his leg ulcer, the nurse was unable to get anyone to answer the door. She became concerned as this is her regular time to visit and John has always looked forward to her visits. She called John's phone but no one answered.*

*The nurse looked through an open window and saw John in bed apparently asleep. It was very cold outside so the nurse was concerned that the bedroom window was open. She called to John but he did not respond.*

*The nurse knocked on a neighbor's door, whom she had previously met as John's friend. The neighbor, Bill Samson, had a key to John's house. Bill said he had not seen John for several days and thought he and Betsy were away as he had seen a sign on their door telling Meals on Wheels not to deliver meals that week.*

*The two entered the home. Betsy was not there. When they entered John's bedroom they discovered that John did not respond to them. The house was very cold though Bill said there was a heater in the house which was always on in the winter. The bedroom was dirty and there was a strong smell of urine and feces.*

*The nurse was able to awaken John who did not recognize Bill. John was taken to the hospital by paramedics where he drifted in and out of consciousness. He was admitted to the hospital and found to have an elevated blood pressure, unmanaged diabetes, bilateral bruises on both upper arms, bruises on his chest, and several Stage 3 and 4 pressure sores over his shoulder and tailbone. The doctor told the visiting nurse that John would most likely have died in another day if not found by her.*

*APS was contacted along with law enforcement. APS consulted with Law Enforcement before interviewing the client and Law Enforcement requested APS to interview both client and A/P and provide an update on the investigation.*

*APS interviewed John, the client, who said:*

- He is no longer able to live alone and meet all of his needs.*
- His daughter Betsy moved in to help him after she lost her job and needed a place to live.*
- She is paid by “the government” to help him.*
- Betsy was always a rebellious child and the two of them often argued throughout her growing up. He hoped she had changed once she lived on her own but things have only gotten worse between them since she moved in.*
- She sometimes grabs him and shakes him when she is angry with him. He has developed bruises after some of the disagreements. The last time she shook him was a few days before he was hospitalized. She grabbed him by both upper arms and shook him. She screamed at him and called him “ugly” names that really upset him. She then left and that was the last time he saw her before he went to the hospital. He is unsure how long she was gone except that it was a ‘long time”. He did not know where she was or when she would come back. He was cold and hungry. He felt too weak to walk into the bathroom or bedroom and did not have a telephone. He did not have his medications and did not know where she had put them.*
- He loves his daughter and does not want her to get into trouble. He also says she should not live with him ever again.*

**Other information gained from the APS investigation:**

- *Another neighbor, Mary Lawton, saw Betsy leave the home 3 days earlier carrying a suitcase and enter a car with a ride share logo on it.*
- *The ride share company records show that driver A. Johnston picked Betsy up at her home and drove her to the airport 3 days before the nurse discovered John.*
- *The neighbor called Betsy on her cell phone and learned that she was visiting friends in another state.*
- *Betsy told the neighbor that she thought John could be on his own for a few days. She said she left plenty of food in the refrigerator. She said she asked her boyfriend to check on John while she was away.*
- *IHSS records reflect that Betsy is the sole caretaker for John and she has received regular payments for the last 6 months.*
- *The police photographed the house, the bedroom in which John was found, noted the house heating system was working, and took custody of John's clothing.*
- *APS checked the refrigerator which was nearly empty and found uneaten meals on wheels containers on the front porch where they had been delivered and left. There were 5 days' worth of food on the porch.*
- *APS checked with Meals on Wheels and learned their driver had left the meals the same day that Betsy had left. The driver saw a sign on the front door saying to leave the meals on the porch as John and Betsy were away briefly.*
- *Police took custody of the note to Meals on Wheels.*
- *Betsy has no prior criminal history.*

### Assessing the Situation



- What forms of abuse do you suspect have been committed?
- Will you interview Betsy alone, in presence of the client, or in the presence of another possible witness?
  - Generally, no one in the interview room except A/P and interviewer(s)
  - Exceptions
  - Think safety-- yourself and client
  - Out of eye and earshot of anyone else at location (such as the client)

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### Rapport Building with Betsy



- How will you build rapport with Betsy?
  - Develop questions you would ask
- Identify a spokesperson for your team



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### Betsy's Likely Defenses or Justifications



What are Betsy's defenses or justifications she might come up with?

- Think about all of the forms of abuse that may be present.
  - Financial Abuse
  - Physical Abuse
  - Caretaker Neglect

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Interviewing through  
Justifications/Defenses



- In dyads/triads, develop questions to ask Betsy to explore your assigned defense or justification. Select a spokesperson to report to the class.
  - Doing the best I can. I am not a trained caregiver.
  - John can really take care of himself if I set the food and meds up in advance and I did.
  - John is very difficult and I had to get away so I did not “lose it”.
  - I thought my boyfriend would check on John.
  - He has been pushing all my buttons for days. I was so upset that I just had to leave. What would you have done—punch him?
  - He has yelled at me all my life—it doesn't hurt anything. It just is how we argue.

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### Interview Practice



- Assume that you have successfully built rapport with Betsy. You are now ready to ask her questions about what happened in the most recent incident
- Develop interview questions to establish Betsy's version of what happened and select 2 interviewers for your group and one person to play Betsy.
- Prepare to role play that segment of the interview for the class. The role plays should not exceed 3-4 minutes.

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### Summary Points



- Try to begin with open ended questions to get narrative responses
- Challenge responses with care
- Create an Environment for Disclosure
- Do not collude with bad behavior
- Explore defenses and justifications



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**Interview Practice**

**HANDOUT #6**

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>SUGGESTED APPROACHES</b>
<b>Question Typology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to begin with open ended questions to get narrative responses                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encourages providing more information</li> <li>○ Yes-no questions close off answers</li> <li>○ Open ended may help keep A/P calm and de-escalate anger</li> <li>○ Use closed questions to clarify information and prior answers.                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Who was there? Who said that? Where were you standing”</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Avoid forced choice closed questions (“Was the light red or green? It was yellow) but if you must due to cognitive disability, then always add “or something else” as a last option.                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May not provide the right choices</li> <li>▪ Discourages information giving</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Your Responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge responses with care                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Only do so if needed for clarification and avoid accusing.</li> <li>○ “Help me understand...”</li> <li>○ “I thought that you said...”</li> <li>○ “My investigation seems to indicate...”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an Environment for Disclosure                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Frame questions in neutral, objective language; avoid terms like “elder abuse, abandonment, and neglect”.</li> <li>○ Remain neutral, maintain consistent body language and facial expressions.</li> <li>○ Do not offer judgments about the A/P’s conduct.</li> <li>○ Watch for general statements that may be “coded” responses and probe for more.                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Can you give me an example?”</li> <li>▪ Make sure your questions are really answered.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Maintain Objectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do <b><u>not</u></b> collude with bad behavior! Examples of this include:</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wow, I see what you mean. We all have breaking points. I'd have hit her too.</li> <li>○ I understand. You had no money, your mom has all she needs and more. When she didn't give you money when you asked, I see why you had to take it.</li> <li>○ Do not label the A/P as an abuser or other "charged" term. Instead stay focused on the behavior, not the person.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Defenses and Justifications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore defenses and justifications             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "What do you think others (or can ask about specific persons) would say about what has been happening if I were to ask them?"                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do not disclose if you have talked to these persons or what they said.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ "Who else have you spoken to about this...?"</li> <li>○ "Do you have any notes, records, photos, or other about what you have told me (or about what has been happening)?"</li> <li>○ "Have you sought help? Medical attention? Have you reported this to any officials?"</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Difficult Situations



- What challenges have you faced during A/P interviews?
- What did you do that worked?
- What did you do that did not work?



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### Working Through the “What- Ifs”



- Work with your assigned what-if and assume Betsy has raised the issue during your interview.
- Develop a role play modeling how you would deal with the situation. Have different team member play the interviewer.
  - Group A: Betsy shuts down and will not answer a particular set of questions
  - Group B: Betsy becomes very emotional and upset
  - Group C: Betsy verbally attacks you
  - Group D: Betsy threatens to file a complaint against you with your agency
  - Group E: Betsy derails the interview and starts asking personal questions
  - Group F: Betsy asks to speak with an attorney

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## “What-ifs”

## HANDOUT #7

*With your assigned situation, develop questions and approaches to address the situation. Assign 2 team members to play interviewers and 1 member to play Betsy who raises your “what-if” situation and model how to effectively deal with it to keep the interview going in an effective and productive way.*

Group A: Betsy shuts down and will not answer a particular set of questions

Group B: Betsy becomes very emotional and upset

Group C: Betsy verbally attacks you

Group D: Betsy threatens to file a complaint against you with your agency

Group E: Betsy derails the interview and starts asking personal questions

Group F: Betsy asks to speak with an attorney

### Addressing Volatility



- Use active listening skills to keep interview going. Keeps your tone neutral and communicates to the A/P that you are really listening and care about what the A/P is saying.
  - Minimal Encouragers
  - Open Ended Questions
  - Mirroring/Reflecting
  - Emotion Labeling
  - Paraphrasing
  - "I" Messages
  - Effective Pauses
  - Summarizing

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## TECHNIQUES FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is an important skill that takes both time and practice to acquire. It is an essential component of productive discussions because it allows for the respectful exchange of ideas. This handout will help you to understand and practice the skill.

- » **Listen** in order to fully understand what is being said to you.
- » **Rephrase** what you heard the person say so you can be sure you heard correctly.
- » **Ask questions** that help you get more information. For example, "What did you mean when you said...?"
- » **Offer encouragement and support.**
- » **Ask how the person feels.** Be careful not to assume that you know how the person feels.

COMMUNICATION BLOCKERS	COMMUNICATION ENHANCERS
Blaming and attacking.	Asking for more information and problem solving together.
Being distracted or using other body language that is non-attentive.	Making eye contact, leaning toward the other person, giving full attention.
Dismissing or making light of someone's problem.	Showing empathy, validating the other person's feelings.
Interrupting.	Staying silent until the person is finished speaking.
Lecturing/moralizing.	Withholding judgment.
"Yes...but" statements.	"Yes...and" statements.

Explanation and Diagram adopted from *Tutu and Franklin: A Journey Towards Peace* Teachers Guide, a production of Wisdom Works, Inc. ([www.wisdomworks.net](http://www.wisdomworks.net))

### Addressing Volatility (continued)



- Take control and ask A/P to lower voice. Remind them of importance of the information they are providing and that you are not taking sides.
- Offer possibility of providing help to them.
- Change the line of questioning and move to less upsetting subjects and then come back to what was upsetting.
- If unsuccessful in deflecting the A/P's anger or volatility, take a short break or end the interview.
  - Leave if you feel unsafe
  - Reschedule interview or conclude the interview
  - If you are concerned for your own safety or your client's, leave and call LE for help
- If they ask to speak to an attorney, follow agency policy.

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### A/Ps Who "Push Your Buttons"



Watch the video clip of Norman and his wife Evelyn. Assume that you are interviewing Evelyn.

- There is a long history of abuse by Norman's wife and 2 sons
- After last attack, Norman suffered a stroke
- Guardian has placed Norman in a SNF
- Norman wants to go home
- The interviewer is Norman's friend Jim. Norman's wife, Evelyn, joins the interview
- Take notes as you will want to refer to them when we discuss how you would document this interview.

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### Norman Debrief



- Did you have a reaction to the person being interviewed (Evelyn)?
- What techniques did the interviewer (Jim) use to keep calm?
- If you had conducted this interview what techniques would you have used to remain calm?

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### Norman Debrief (continued)



- What did you notice about Norman during the interview?
- APS professionals should not interview the client and A/P together
  - Safety concerns
  - Person being interviewed may be less candid and complete
  - Danger of contamination of information and non-verbal and verbal cues.
  - Your client may perceive you as believing and accepting the A/P's account

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### Ending the Interview



- How do you conclude an A/P interview?
- How would you end the interview of Betsy in the John Rogers case?
  - Thank the A/P for speaking with you.
  - Effective questions
    - If there anything I should have asked you that I did not?
    - Is there anything else you want me to know?
  - Tell the A/P what will happen next (e.g., I will write up my interview notes...I will discuss with my supervisor...etc.)



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### Summary Points



- Keep interview professional in tone; maintain your professionalism
- Do not get “personal”
- Focus on the conduct, not the person you have interviewed
  - Safer for client if A/P is not angry
  - Fewer complaints or problems you will have to face
  - Helps keep the interview and your reaction to the individual (positive or negative) neutral and objective
- Keep the door open
  - Will you or another APS professional need to interview this person at a later time on another case? A/P’s level of cooperation will be related to how you treated them
  - Tell them what to do if they think of additional information.
- Prepare for cooperative problem solving and/or offer of services

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### Documenting the Interview



- When and how do you document the A/P interview?
- Do you take notes during the interview?
- If you can tape record, it is a great way to obtain actual quotes and the context of questions. May also pick up emotions.
- Even if you tape record, be prepared for problems with technology
  - Still take notes and tell A/P you are. Allow the A/P to correct and even to sign.
  - Take notes with awareness that if case goes to court, defense attorney will likely see them.
- Promptly write up documentation Your memory declines with passage of time.
  - Your memory may be confused by other information or cases you work on between the A/P interview and its documentation.
- Court implications for delays—goes to your credibility and accuracy

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### Documenting Evelyn’s Interview



- Working individually, document the interview with Evelyn, Norman’s wife.
- You have 5 minutes.
- Share your documentation of the interview with Evelyn with others at your table.



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## Norman Interview Documentation- SAMPLE

HANDOUT #9

The interview began at \_\_\_\_ and took place in the nursing home where Norman now lives at \_\_\_\_\_ (address).

The interview is in 2 parts. Part 1 is Norman and the interviewer (Jim).

Norman appears relaxed and responds immediately to each question.

Norman is asked if he wants to remain in the nursing home. He responds “I want to go home.”

The narrator expresses concern that Norman may have a recurrence of the reasons he in in the NH (prior abuse). Norman says he “doubts that very much” and they have “seen the mistake. It was all a mistake”.

The narrator asks how Norman will be taken care of and Norman responds “They’ll take care of me”, and “they will take care of me real good”.

Part 2 is Norman, the interviewer, and Evelyn, Norman’s wife.

Evelyn is asked how she feels about Norman coming home and responds that “she doesn’t mind” if he comes home and he would be more content. She says that their son Fred will help Norman get out of bed and into his wheelchair and wheel him to the table before Fred goes to work.

Evelyn is asked if Norman Jr. is at home. She says no and “he is not around” and he is “not with me right now”.

Evelyn says Norman has not been abused and when asked how Norman has been injured she says “Norman fell in the bathroom”. She asked Norman and he agrees. The interviewer asked “did he fall or was he pushed?” Norman says “He fell, I fell”. Evelyn says there has not been abuse adding “sometimes he (Norman) got a little crack, that’s all”. She says this will not happen again and said “Norman (Jr.) won’t touch Norman again, I’ll stake my life on that”. She says she “loves her two sons, like I love my husband, and like I love Chowie” (the dog).

The interviewer Jim confronted Evelyn with the fact he had called the house and spoken to Norman Jr. Evelyn says “All right, so” and says she spent \$1000 to get Norman Jr. out of jail. She also says she wrote a letter for Norman to sign asking that Norman Jr. not be prosecuted. She says she read it to Norman and asked him if he wanted to sign it. Norman said yes. She says she was confronted by the second floor nurse.

I noted that Norman’s behavior changed during the time Evelyn was being questioned by interviewer. He seemed to defer to Evelyn and only spoke when directly questioned.

The interview ended at \_\_\_\_\_.

### Elements of Documentation



- Beginning and ending time of interview, location, everyone present
- If any accommodations used such as interpreter, facilitated communication,
- Time you wrote up the documentation
- Important statements in quotes with context (the question and the answer)
- Relevant observations (not gratuitous but for a purpose and can be defended)
- Any documents you used in the interview
  - Show documents individually and question about them individually. Have a way to identify each document and interview content about it.
- Anything the A/P provided

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## Tips on Documenting the A/P Interview

**HANDOUT #10**

Noted Yes/No	Documented
	Beginning and ending time of interview
	Location of Interview
	Identity of Everyone Present (Even Briefly)
	When You Prepared the Documentation of the Interview
	If any accommodations used such as interpreter, facilitated communication, and identity and contact information of any translator, facilitator, or interpreter
	Important Statements in Quotes and Context (Question and Answer and any helpful additional information)
	Relevant observations (not gratuitous but for a purpose that is defensible, such as injuries, complaints of pain, size and weight, behaviors)
	Any documents you used in the interview
	Show documents individually and question about them individually. Have a way to identify each document and interview content about it (e.g., number each document or refer to it by a different letter)
	Anything the A/P provided. If multiple items consider numbering them or assigning each a letter to distinguish
	Names and contact information of anyone the A/P provided with information about the situation



### Wrap UP



- Effective A/P Interviews do not “just happen”, they require careful planning.
- Develop your own style.
  - Watch others and take what works for you
  - Practice
- Remember the purpose of A/P interviews.
  - Not to get a confession but to gather facts
  - Should the A/P continue to be part of your client's life if that is what client wants and if so, under what conditions
  - How you can improve a situation by offering services and education to help your client and the A/P
  - Possibly help build a case for a court case—civil, criminal, or Probate.

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### Lessons Learned



- What is the most important thing you will take from this training that will help you be a more effective APS professional?
- Write your ideas in the Participant Manual.



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### Evaluations



- Thank you for attending this course and for the important work you do every day protecting older and vulnerable adults in your community!
- Please complete the course evaluation



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## References

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