

Initial Home Visit/Meeting Guidelines

Conversation Recommendations/Reminders

1. Engage the job seekers in active conversation.
 - Your conversation will be most effective if you are genuinely interested in what the other person is saying.
 - Do your best to remain quiet but attentive to the speaker while at the same time being true to yourself.
2. Practice Smooth Listening™.
 - Effective ways to draw out your conversation include using follow-up comments, such as, “Tell me more about that” or “Tell me what that looked like” or “Please describe that to me.”
 - Additionally, engaging in the mutual give and take of conversation by adding a small amount of information about yourself when appropriate usually gets the conversation going.
 - If you find shared experiences, interests, or skills/tasks, say so. Just make sure that you do not become the focus of the conversation.
3. Weave selected points from the probes/discussion list (*not all of them!*) into the conversation only as necessary. Do Not Interrogate!
 - One risk of using the Probes/Questions/Discussion Points listed below is that the conversation turns into an interrogation if you follow them too closely.
 - You will likely find that beginning the conversation with one of these probes gets people talking and you’ll use the other probes to gently guide the conversation to unaddressed topics as you go.

Common Probes/Questions/Discussion Points

(adjust as necessary to reflect those present at the Home Visit)

- **Informal Supports:** family, friends, neighbors
 - Tell us who lives in this home
 - Tell us about People in your daily life
 - Tell us about your extended family
 - Tell us about your friends.
 - Tell us about your neighbors.
 - How often do you see each person?

- If you needed help, who would you call?
- When something exciting happens in your life, who do you call?
- What do the people closest to you do for a living?
- **Intermediate Supports:** structured, community-based activities
 - Tell us about what you do with your spare time
 - Tell us about Community Activities you participate in
 - What do you enjoy about that activity?
 - Tell us about formal and informal associational groups (Church, Service Clubs, People 1st, VFW, et al.) you belong to
 - Tell us about your experiences with work (paid, during school transition years, volunteer, helping out friends/family/community or organization/associations)
- **Formal Supports:** medical, therapeutic, public assistance services
 - Tell us about the services/education you receive(d)
 - Tell us about progress you see resulting from these services
 - Tell us about public benefits received such as SSI/SSDI, VA benefits, etc.
- Tell us how your day begins
- Tell us about how this time of day goes. If I were a fly on the wall, what would it look like?
- Discuss these 5 items below for each major part of the day (morning, daytime activities, after school/work, evening, etc.):
 - What are you doing?
 - Describe what everyone else is doing
 - How do you participate in this time of day?
 - What supports do you receive?
 - Please rate your satisfaction with each time of day (*a 1 to 10 scale or other measure is appropriate*)
- What would you like to be different during this time of day?
- What would you like to see happening next during this time of day?
- Recap the information and concerns raised throughout the conversation

Best Self-Probes/Questions/Discussion Points:

- When things are really working best for you, what is happening?
- Tell me about what you are like when you're at your best

- Tell me about where you are when you're at your best
- Who are you with when you're at your best?
- Tell me about what you are doing that brings out the best in you
- Tell me about your positive traits/attributes

Home Visit: Observation

In addition to the information learned through conversation, you can learn a lot from being attentive to the job seeker's home environment. People surround themselves with things that are important to them. We often refer to this as **"The Talking Walls."**

- Photographs, art, furniture, books, entertainment, tools, and collections are a few of the things that might offer insight about what's important to the individual. Make sure to only note what you see.
- Do not make inferences about the individual based on household items, especially if the household is shared. You can learn more about the significance and meaning of items in the home environment through engaging in conversation and Discovery Activities.

Home Visit: Things to Learn/Explore

During the Home Visit, be on the lookout for evidence of:

- memorable and significant qualities of the home environment
- chores and tasks
- hobbies and collections
- activities the job seeker engages in
- We are also seeking to understand family dynamics, important relationships that may not be obvious, and some history that will help us begin to appreciate the individual's story.

You are also seeking information about what works best for the job seeker. A description of the person's best-self can reveal intrinsic motivation and effective teaching methods, insight into environments that elicit the person's best performance, and qualities that comprise their ideal conditions of employment.

Learning about the people that are present when the person is their best-self might provide additional information and unique perspectives about the job seeker.