



Interviewing Skills for Event Review

A PRACTICAL RESOURCE FOR
FAIR, NEUTRAL, LEARNING-
FOCUSED INTERVIEWS

IHA ANNUAL MEETING

Use these prompts as options, not a script. Choose the language that fits the moment, stay curious, and listen closely enough to let new information change your thinking.

A SIMPLE HABIT TO CARRY THROUGH THE INTERVIEW
Pause before the story. What do I know? What am I adding? What else could be true? What could I ask to find out?

PAUSE BEFORE THE STORY

Keep in mind...
The problem is not that we form a story. The problem is forgetting that it is a story.

What do I know?	<i>What is observable, documented, or directly reported?</i>
What am I adding?	<i>What meaning, assumption, motive, or explanation have I supplied?</i>
What else could be true?	<i>What other explanations are possible?</i>
What could I ask instead?	<i>What neutral question would help me find out?</i>

BIAS AWARENESS

Bias can influence what we notice, which details feel important, and how quickly we settle on an explanation. A few forms matter especially in event review:

BIAS	WHAT IT CAN DO
Confirmation Bias	<i>I notice information that supports the explanation I already have.</i>
Hindsight Bias	<i>Knowing the outcome makes the right choice seem more obvious than it may have been at the time.</i>
Outcome Bias	<i>A bad outcome makes the original decision look worse simply because we know how it ended.</i>
Attribution Bias	<i>I explain behavior primarily by the person and underweight the conditions around them.</i>
Anchoring	<i>The first explanation I hear becomes the reference point for everything that follows.</i>
Authority/Status Bias	<i>I give more or less credibility to information because of a person's role or position.</i>
Affinity Bias	<i>I more readily believe or understand people whose style, background, or way of thinking feels familiar to me.</i>

INTERVIEWER SELF-CHECK

Am I asking about what happened, or am I asking the person to explain the story I have already created?

BIAS RESCUE LANGUAGE

If you catch yourself leading	<i>Instead of: "Was the workload the reason this happened?" Try: "Let me ask that differently. What factors influenced what happened?"</i>
If you supply examples too quickly	<i>Instead of: "Was it staffing, equipment, or communication?" Try: "What made the situation easier or harder to manage?"</i>
If you assume emotion	<i>Instead of: "Were you frustrated?" Try: "What was going through your mind at that point?"</i>
If you assume intent	<i>Instead of: "Why did you ignore the warning?" Try: "What did you notice when the warning appeared?"</i>
If you assume knowledge	<i>Instead of: "You knew the policy, correct?" Try: "What did you understand the expectation to be?"</i>

15 GO-TO QUESTIONS

“Walk me through what happened.”

“What would I have seen if I had been standing there?”

“What happened immediately before that?”

“What information did you have at that point?”

“What did you understand the situation to be?”

“Talk me through how you made that decision.”

“What options did you see at the time?”

“What were you hoping to accomplish?/ What was your intent?”

“What risks were you considering?”

“What else were you managing at the time?”

“Is the written process the same as the way the work usually happens?”

“Was anyone operating from different information?”

“What was within your control at that point?”

“What in the system influenced what happened?”

“What should we be paying attention to that we may be missing?”



Sarah Ennis
SparkPoint, President
sennis@sparkpt.com
515.490.5347