



It's not rocket
science...it's
reference!

**Reference Interview
Skills is an Infopeople
contract workshop.**


Is your library staffing its reference
desk with support staff or students?







Are they friendly and approachable?

Do they know how to do an effective reference interview?






How well do they clarify the patron's information need?
Make an effective referral?




Do they know that patrons don't always ask for what they REALLY want?



What do they do when asked for medical or legal advice rather than information resources?

How can you help your support staff or student employees provide effective reference assistance and make good referrals?



Reference Interview Skills for Public Library Staff

Available as an Infopeople contract workshop

Reference Interview Skills...

- Approachability
- Proactive welcoming behaviors
- Approachability on the telephone



Reference Interview Skills...

- What is an “ill-formed query”?
- ...and why the initial question may not be the real information need.



Reference Interview Skills...

- When to use open questions
- Asking WHY without saying WHY
- How to determine the context for the information need



Reference Interview Skills...

- Making the patron a partner in the search
- One-on-one instruction
- How communication styles can affect a reference interaction



Reference Interview Skills...



- How to handle requests for medical or legal advice
- Explaining that we provide information resources, not advice.

Reference Interview Skills...

- Making an effective referral
- Positive closure for the reference transaction



Reference Interview Skills...



- Practice in these skills
- Handouts with “sense-making questions”
- A checklist for self-assessment
- Practical tips that can be applied immediately

For more information on
contract workshops, go
to infopeople.org.

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