

Action Plan for Improvement

Using these questions, create your personal action plan for improvement of your reference interview skills. Talk to your supervisor about how to include this action plan in your work plan.

1. As a result of this training, which specific reference interview skill(s) do you want to improve?
2. How will you build this skill? When will you start?
3. What resources or support will you need?
4. How will you know when you have mastered this skill?
5. Is there anything that will hinder you? What can you do about any obstacles?
6. How do you want your supervisor to recognize your mastery of this skill?

A CHECKLIST for INTERVIEW SKILLS

You can use this checklist for self-assessment or ask a co-worker or supervisor to observe you in a reference transaction and give you feedback.

Being Approachable—Making the patron feel welcome and comfortable with the transaction.

Some things to look and listen for: Smiling, looking up, open body language, comfortable eye contact, friendly greeting, pleasant tone of voice.

Showing Interest—Demonstrating interest in the patron's need.

Some things to look and listen for: Putting aside competing activities, maintains appropriate eye contact, uses short comments to encourage the patron to say more, an unhurried and patient approach.

Listening—Active listening skills are essential.

Some things to look and listen for: Encouraging, listens without interrupting, restates what patron says, confirms what was heard.

Asking Questions—Ensuring that the information need is understood.

Some things to look and listen for: open questions, sense-making questions, closed questions, clarifies understanding of question with patron.

Informing—Finding and explaining sources of information.

Some things to look and listen for: Tells patron about what he/she is doing, cites source to be used, goes with patron to resources, offers help in using a source, checks if answer is understood, avoids jargon.

Following up—Ensuring patron satisfaction.

Some things to look and listen for: Facilitates and monitors the referral process, encourages patron to return, "Does this answer your question?"