

# INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

A range of interview techniques, designed to assist in information gathering, are presented below. You may like to consider incorporating one or more of these into your practice.

## Screening

Ask about the overall presentation of the problem behaviour/s. For example:

- “How close have you come to hurting someone?”; “What is the most violent thing you have ever done?”

## Timeline

Use the timeline approach. Ask the consumer to talk about a particular point in their life, then move forward from that date. For example:

- “I want to hear your story from the beginning. Tell me about the first fight you ever had? Who was it with? Where? Why?”; “When was your next fight?”
- “When did you first have contact with police?”; “What happened?”; “Why were the police involved?”; “When was the next time the police were involved with you and your partner?”
- “I’ve read through your medical record; it mentions you were arrested in 2017. Tell me about that incident.”
- “I know you don’t like talking over and over about your history, so I’d like to start with how things have been going since your last admission to hospital. What happened after you were discharged?”

## Funnel down

The funnel down approach involves asking broad questions about a topic, then asking more specific questions that hone in on a particular situation until you have a good understanding of the violence / problem behaviour. Continue to ask more specific questions until you have an understanding of what contributed to a particular act of violence or a particular occurrence of the problem behaviour.

## Chain analysis

The chain analysis approach involves identifying one instance of the problem behaviour and the antecedents and consequences of the behaviour. For example:

- “How were things in your life in the month before you hit him?”
- “What were your stressors at the time?”
- “What were the changes in your life around that time?”

Ask about immediate triggers for the behaviour. For example:

- “Why did you punch him?”; “What made you punch him that day?”

Identify what happened after the problem behaviour. For example:

- “What happened after you hit him? How did you feel?”; “What were the repercussions of hitting him?”

## Over-estimation

Ask the consumer to recall the behaviour. In your line of questioning, exaggerate to then arrive at a more accurate figure. For example:

- “Did you get into a couple of fights every day?”; “How often would you carry a knife? Every day?”; “Do you think every day, about killing him?”

