

## Adult Protective Services: Professional Communication

### Question Styles and Content

**Question style** refers to the structure of the questions and the type of response the particular structure is designed to elicit. There are five (5) categories: open-ended, multiple choice, yes/no, leading, and coercive.

Question Style	Definition	Examples
<b>Open-Ended</b>	Open ended questions are designed to present a broad topic and allow the older adult to choose to provide a narrative response (a description relating to how they perceive the topic).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you think I came to see you today?</li> <li>• Can you tell me what happened to you yesterday?</li> </ul>
<b>Multiple Choice</b>	A question that presents the older adult with a number of alternative responses from which to choose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you sign the power of attorney or did he sign it for you?</li> <li>• Did he hit you once, twice, or more than that?</li> </ul>
<b>Yes/No (Close-Ended)</b>	A question structured so as to limit (either directly or by implication) the older adult's options to a "yes" or "no" response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did she feed you today?</li> <li>• Did he give you your medication?</li> <li>• Do you want to go home?</li> </ul>
<b>Leading (Suggestive)</b>	Leading or suggestive questions are those which make it clear to the listener the answer the interviewer is looking for. It can include the answer within the question itself. It frequently ends with a "tag" comment or question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Didn't you tell him that you didn't want to go to the doctor?</li> <li>• He was doing his best to care for you, wasn't he?</li> </ul>
<b>Coercive</b>	Use of inappropriate inducements or threats to gain cooperation or to elicit information from an older adult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me what happened or we may have to place you in a facility to protect you.</li> </ul>

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**Question content** refers to questions that are designed to gain information about a variety of matters, from general functioning to questions directly related to abuse, neglect, and exploitation. There are three (3) categories: general, focused, and disclosure clarification.

<b>Question Content</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>General</b>	These are questions about the older adult's well-being. Rapport-building, general demographic data and "getting to know you" questions fall into this category.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's going on with you?</li> <li>• How are you feeling today?</li> <li>• How many grandchildren do you have?</li> <li>• What is your caregiver's name?</li> </ul>
<b>Focused</b>	These are follow-up "probe" questions that focus on specific topics, including topics related to the allegation. These questions may be asked before or after the older adult discloses abuse, neglect, or exploitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about your care needs.</li> <li>• What happens when your caregiver gets frustrated?</li> <li>• How does she react to your toileting accidents?</li> </ul>
<b>Disclosure Clarification</b>	These questions are asked after the older adult has disclosed abuse, neglect, or exploitation, or has described an incident that may be related to the allegation. These questions drill down to the specific details of the allegation the older adult has disclosed without suggesting the answer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You said that your caregiver hit you. Tell me more about that.</li> <li>• Had she ever hit you before?</li> <li>• What happened before she hit you?</li> <li>• Did she hit you with an open or closed hand?</li> </ul>

<b>Content</b>				
		<b>General</b>	<b>Focused</b>	<b>Disclosure Clarification</b>
<b>Style</b>	<b>Open-Ended</b>	Tell me about yourself.	Tell me what happened when your caregiver was here yesterday.	You said that she pushed you. Tell me more about that.
	<b>Multiple Choice</b>	Do you prefer to have your caregiver cook for you or to go to a restaurant for your meals?	When your caregiver was in your room, did she handle your purse, open your drawers or touch any of your valuables?	Did it happen in your room, the family room or somewhere else?
	<b>Yes/No</b>	Do you have grandchildren?	Has your caregiver done something to you?	Did you confront Molly about getting into your purse?
	<b>Leading</b>	I understand that you have a caregiver named Molly, right?	Isn't it true that Molly pushed you after you grabbed her backpack?	This wasn't the only thing she stole, was it?
	<b>Coercive</b>	You need to sit here and talk to me.	You leave after you tell me what your caregiver did to you.	I know that she stole from you. Don't you want to keep her from stealing from others?