



Factsheet 11 Questions and their uses

	QUESTION	PURPOSE
Open	<i>'What concerned you?'</i> <i>'How can I help you?'</i> <i>'How did you feel then?'</i>	To obtain more depth To encourage person to talk To get more information
Closed	<i>'What time was that?'</i> <i>'Did you speak by phone?'</i> <i>'Did you see her again?'</i>	To obtain specific detail To narrow the topic To check a fact
Clarifying	<i>'Do you mean...?'</i> <i>'Are you saying...?'</i> <i>'So you're wanting to say...?'</i>	To check understanding To check what was said To check timelines
Probing	<i>'Why would he say that?'</i> <i>'How do you explain that?'</i> <i>'What's likely to happen now?'</i>	To make explicit what has been hinted at or implied To reveal more information To reveal motivation or feelings

Questions need to:

- be brief and well-timed
- asked one at a time
- asked in a friendly, concerned way
- be relevant, that is, related to the situation being discussed
- help the other person find out or express what they want

Avoid asking WHY questions. Instead ask questions starting with:

- how
- when
- what
- who

These types of questions tend to gather more specific information as well as challenging any assumptions or limits that the other person may have.