

# Brief Interview Outline for Individual Under Concern

When interviewing an individual about safety concerns, one method is to ask questions which move from general introduction, to fact finding, to recognition of concerns, to assessing support networks, to developing an outline for next steps. **The following questions are not** intended to be a scripted interview, but provide a sample structure for the kinds of questions which may need to be asked. Individuals using this outline are encouraged to use their professional judgment and experience, to expand these questions as needed. Note, in general it is good to avoid “yes or no” questions.

1. “Seems like you’ve been having a hard time lately, what’s going on?” (*to establish rapport and trust and to open dialog in a non-threatening way*)
2. “What is your understanding of why you have been asked to come to the office?” (*to review factual events*)
3. “What is your understanding of why school staff are concerned?” (*to determine if student is aware of effect behavior has on others*)
4. “What has been going on recently with you at school?” (*to look into possible precipitating events such as peer conflict, student/teacher interactions, failing grades, etc.; follow appropriate leads*)
5. “How are things going with your family?” (*to look into events such as recent moves, divorce, deaths or losses, conflict*)
6. “What else is going on with you?” (*to look into events outside of school such as community unrest, threats, police involvement, medical issues, etc.*)
7. “Who do you have to talk to or assist you with this situation?” (*to determine what supports or stabilizing factors may be available or in place such as mental health professionals, peer groups, family supports, church groups, etc.*)
8. “Given (whatever is going on), what are you planning to do?” or, “What are you thinking about doing?” (*follow-up on appropriate leads, including the level of detail in stated plans, ability to carry out plans, etc.*) **(NOTE: If there is an IMMINENT RISK take immediate action to maintain safety by contacting school security and/or 911).**
9. Close with a statement that describes short term next steps (i.e., “I’ll need to contact your parents to talk about...”, I will also need to speak with the Principal and the Assistant Principals for possible further action(s) and we will need to devise a plan for next steps). Try to determine student’s affect or mood prior to his/her departure, and alert others if necessary.