

Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions are questions that encourage people to talk about whatever is important to them. They help to establish rapport, gather information, and increase understanding. They are the opposite of closed-ended questions that typically require a simple, brief response such “yes” or “no.”

Open-ended questions invite others to “tell their story” in their own words. They do not lead people in a specific direction. Open-ended questions should be used frequently, though not exclusively, in conversation. When asking open-ended questions one must be ready and willing to listen to the response.

Examples of open-ended questions:

- Would you tell me more about ___?
- Could you help me understand ___?
- What are the good things and the less good things about ___?
- What do you think you will lose if you give up ___?
- What have you tried before?
- How do you feel now about ___?
- How do you see things changing?
- What do you want to do next?
- What is more important for you now?
- What would it be like?
- What do you imagine ___?
- What would happen if ___?
- What would you do ___?
- How can we ___?
- What is that like?
- Where would you like to begin?