

# **Types of Clinical Interviewing**

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## **Types of Clinical Interviewing**

### **Introduction**

Clinical interviewing is the systematic method of gathering psychological, emotional, behavioral, and social information from a client through direct interaction. It is the primary assessment tool in clinical psychology and forms the foundation for diagnosis, treatment planning, counseling, and psychotherapy. Through skilled questioning, observation, and listening, the clinician develops an understanding of the client's problems, personality, life circumstances, and mental health status.

Clinical interviews can be classified into several types based on structure, purpose, approach, and clinical setting.

## **Major Types of Clinical Interviewing**

### **1. Structured Clinical Interview**

#### **Definition**

A structured clinical interview uses standardized questions in a fixed order, ensuring consistency across clients.

#### **Key Features**

- Pre-determined questions
- Fixed sequence
- Minimal flexibility
- High objectivity

### **Advantages**

- High reliability
- Reduces interviewer bias
- Standardized diagnosis

### **Limitations**

- Rigid
- Limited emotional exploration

### **Uses**

- Psychiatric diagnosis
- Research
- Screening

## **2. Semi-Structured Clinical Interview**

### **Definition**

This interview follows a general format but allows flexibility to explore client responses in depth.

### **Key Features**

- Core questions + probing
- Balanced structure and freedom

### **Advantages**

- Flexible
- Rich clinical data
- Better rapport

### **Limitations**

- Requires skill
- Moderate bias

### **Uses**

- Clinical assessment
- Therapy sessions

### **3. Unstructured Clinical Interview**

#### **Definition**

An informal, free-flowing interview with no pre-planned format.

#### **Key Features**

- Open-ended conversation
- Client-centered

#### **Advantages**

- Deep emotional insight
- Strong rapport

#### **Limitations**

- Low reliability
- Difficult to quantify

#### **Uses**

- Counseling
- Psychotherapy
- Initial interviews

### **4. Diagnostic Interview**

#### **Definition**

Used to identify mental disorders based on DSM-5 / ICD-11.

#### **Examples**

- SCID
- MINI

#### **Uses**

- Psychiatric diagnosis

- Treatment planning

## **5. Intake Interview**

### **Definition**

The first interview session conducted to collect background and presenting problem details.

### **Areas Covered**

- Personal data
- Presenting complaints
- History
- Family background

## **6. Case History Interview**

### **Definition**

Collects detailed life history information to understand causes and development of problems.

### **Purpose**

- Identify etiology
- Understand life patterns

## **7. Mental Status Examination (MSE) Interview**

### **Definition**

A systematic evaluation of current mental functioning.

### **Areas**

- Appearance
- Mood
- Thought
- Perception
- Orientation
- Memory

## **8. Crisis Interview**

## **Definition**

Conducted during emergency psychological situations.

## **Uses**

- Suicide prevention
- Trauma intervention
- Disaster counseling

## **9. Behavioral Interview**

### **Definition**

Focuses on specific observable behaviors and environmental factors.

### **Model Used**

- ABC Model (Antecedent–Behavior–Consequence)

## **10. Motivational Interviewing**

### **Definition**

A client-centered technique to increase motivation for behavioral change.

### **Uses**

- Addiction
- Health behavior change

## **11. Therapeutic Interview**

### **Definition**

Part of psychotherapy and counseling, focusing on emotional healing.

## **12. Forensic Interview**

### **Definition**

Used for legal and judicial assessment.

# Classification Based on Purpose

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Type of Interview</b>
Diagnosis	Diagnostic Interview
Initial Contact	Intake Interview
Emergency	Crisis Interview
Therapy	Therapeutic Interview
Legal Evaluation	Forensic Interview

## Skills Required in Clinical Interviewing

- Active listening
- Empathy
- Non-judgmental attitude
- Observation
- Communication skills
- Ethical sensitivity

## Conclusion

Clinical interviewing is the backbone of psychological assessment and intervention. Different types of interviews serve distinct functions, from diagnosis and assessment to therapy and crisis intervention. Effective clinical interviewing requires professional training, ethical awareness, and interpersonal skills, ensuring accurate understanding and compassionate care of clients.