

Collateral Interview on Drinking

Once you have mastered client interviews with Form 90, it is a short step to interviewing significant others (SOs). The special challenge with these collaterals is that they typically have more limited information and need encouragement to provide whatever data they have. The instructions provided here refer to the shortened Form 90-ACS. A more detailed form (90-AC) was used in Project MATCH and was modified to facilitate more general applications.

Preparing for the Interview

When contacting collaterals (table 3) for the first time, a letter should be sent in advance of the call, informing them of the purpose of the interview and the fact that it is done with the client's written permission (see appendix for sample letter). It should also be made clear that the information provided is confidential and will not be shared with the client. To further protect confidentiality, such letters should be sent with a return address that does not reveal the purpose of the project.

When telephoning a collateral, ensure that you are talking to the right person. Do not reveal the client's name or the purpose of your call until you know you are talking to the collateral whom you have written permission to interview. In talking to others, give only your name and

TABLE 3.—When to contact the collateral for a 90-ACS interview

INTAKE	As soon as possible after completing Form 90-AI
FOLLOWUP	Whichever comes first: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Completion of Form 90-AF2. Inability to locate the client for 90-AF3. Client refusal of 90-AF4. 30 days after the due date for 90-AF

a general indication of the purpose of your call (e.g., "a professional matter" or "about a friend" or "a research program"). Be aware that "caller ID" technology is now widely available, indicating the registered name and number of the telephone from which you are calling (unless you have arranged for such information to be blocked).

Inquire as to whether the collateral received the letter that was sent. (In many cases, the collateral will not recall it, or may not have read or understood it.) Briefly explain the purpose of your call, then proceed with the interview. (Additional general information on interviewing collaterals can be found in Miller and Marlatt 1984, 1987.)

Items 1-4

Items 1-4 can usually be completed from information provided in the client file. Before starting the interview, be sure to determine accurately the total number of days in the window to be discussed (see item 1a).

Table 4 provides recommendations for the starting and ending dates for 90-ACS interviews.

TABLE 4.—Starting and ending dates for 90-ACS assessment windows

	Starting date	Ending date
Intake	Same as 90-AI: 89 days before the date the client reports as his/her last drink	Outpatients: Day before 90-AI interview Inpatients: Day before admission
First followup	Outpatients: Date of first treatment, or if no sessions completed, 5 days after completion of intake	Yesterday
	Inpatients: Date of discharge	Yesterday
Subsequent followups	Date of last Form 90-AC interview	Yesterday

Conducting the Interview

Introduce the first collateral interview with a statement such as:

"Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling from _____. I would like to ask you a few questions about _____, who gave us your name as a person who might help us with some information about him/her. As you may know, he/she is participating in a research study designed to learn more about _____. Did you receive the letter that we sent?"

If no, review details.

"The information you give me will be completely confidential. It will be used only for our research, and we will not share it with (client)."

Later contacts can be introduced with a statement such as:

"Hello, this is _____ from _____. We have called you before to ask you about _____ and to get your help with the study in which he/she is participating. Can you talk for a few minutes now? Remember that the information you give will be completely confidential. We use it only for our research, and we will not share it with (client)."

These introductory remarks should be given in a natural conversational tone and should not sound like a written script.

Item 5

For Item 5, determine how long the collateral has known the client, and record this information as the number of months (12 per year).

Item 6

Introduce item 6 by explaining the period of time (assessment window) about which you are inquiring. Normally this will be the period from a starting date (see table 4) to the day before the interview. For certain research purposes, however, this window may be adjusted. A common problem is that the period of time asked about in 90-ACS does not correspond exactly with the assessment window used in interviewing the client for followup. If direct correspondence is crucial, then the period asked about should be the same as was covered with the client in Form 90-AF.

For item 6, use the script questions to determine the number of days during this assessment window when the collateral was in contact with the client. Record the number of days that they were in contact. Being "in contact" can include in-person shared time or talking by telephone.

Item 7

For item 7, check all of the responses that apply, to indicate the way(s) in which they have been in contact.

Items 8-13

At item 8, ask the question as written. The SO's response may immediately indicate the appropriate alternative, or it may be necessary to ask a further probe to clarify the correct choice (for example, if the collateral says that the client was drinking you might ask whether the collateral suspects or actually observed the drinking). If the appropriate alternative is not immediately clear, read the options and ask the SO to choose the most accurate response. If abstinence is reported (options 1 or 2), record zero (0) for items 9, 11, and 12; and for item 10 (abstinent days) record the total number of days in the assessment window (from item 1a). Then skip to item 13.

If nonabstinence (options 3 or 4) is reported on item 8, proceed to ask items 9-13 as written. Code "998" to indicate a "Don't know" response. For item 11, use the SEC unit when determining the number of standard drink units consumed per day. This is best done by clarifying the type(s) and amount(s) of alcohol beverages consumed, then making the conversion into SEC units (e.g., by using the BACCuS software). Do not rely upon the collateral to specify a number of drinks without knowing what the collateral is considering to be a "drink."

For item 13, read the question and the alternatives and ask the respondent to choose the most appropriate option.