

Telephone Interviews

90-AT and 90-AQ

The feasibility of a Form 90 interview by telephone depends heavily upon the tolerance of the client and the skill of the interviewer. Although it is highly desirable to conduct as many Form 90 interviews in person as possible, it may be necessary to complete a certain percentage by telephone. When a client will not return for an in-person interview and a home visit is not feasible, Form 90 can be completed by telephone.

The Client Telephone Assessment of Drinking and Related Behaviors

Form 90-AT directly parallels 90-AF. No questions are deleted, although instructions have been modified slightly for telephone interviewing.

If a telephone interview can be anticipated (e.g., for out-of-town cases or scheduled telephone interviews), mail to the client a copy of the retrospective calendar for reference during the interview. In many cases, however, this calendar will not be available to the client during the interview. In this situation, you may ask clients whether they have a calendar at hand to help with recall.

Unless there is an apparent concern about completion of the interview by telephone (in which case 90-AQ should be done first), proceed normally through 90-AT. For the drinking quantification portion of the interview (items 36-47 and the calendar), work with a calendar in front of you, with a goal of accounting for each day through (1) abstinence, (2) steady pattern, (3) episodic pattern, or (4) idiosyncratic data. Have as your first priorities to establish (1) the dates of first and last drink (items 36 and 37) and (2) the total number of days abstinent during the assessment window.

Quick Drinking Assessment Interview

When it appears that the client is unwilling to give the time necessary for a full 90-AT, priority should be given to obtaining the essential outcome data contained on 90-AQ. This can be introduced to the impatient client by saying:

"I'd like to ask you just six questions about your drinking during the period from _____ up through yesterday. That's a period of _____ days."

Then launch directly into the six questions, items 5-10. (Items 5a and 5b can be considered a single question.) Ask the questions as specified on Form 90-AQ. When you have completed 90-AQ, try to persuade the client to continue with 90-AT.

NOTE: For certain applications, this simple quick form, which is essentially a quantity-frequency questionnaire, may prove sufficient for all cases.