

During a hearing you should always be asking yourself two things:

1. Are you listening? and
2. Are you asking the right questions?

Good listening skills only come with practice and concentration. You cannot make a decision based on the facts, if you did not HEAR the facts presented.

- Don't get distracted; pay attention to the person speaking. Make note of questions you have while you listen so that you do not forget but also so that you are focusing on the speaker more than you are your question.
- Don't interrupt (unless absolutely necessary); let the person finish their thought.
- **STAY FOCUSED!** Don't waste time asking questions that are irrelevant to the issue at hand. This might include past behavior or other details that have no bearing on the current allegation.

### **Types of Questions**

**Yes or No:** elicits a clear yes or no answer. "Did you take the bus to the exam?" "Did Jennifer go with you?"

**Closed ended:** asks for more details than the yes or no question, but does not allow for a great deal of elaboration. "What time did you get to the party?" "Which sources did you use in writing this paper?"

**Open-ended:** This is the most effective form of questioning. Four key words to remember when formulating an open-ended question:

- **WHAT** – These questions ask for facts. "Tell us what happened when the RA came into the room."
- **HOW** – These questions may ask for facts or bring out feelings and emotions. "How did you know they were still in your room?" "How do you think your actions affected others?"
- **COULD** – Be careful! These can turn into closed questions. Instead of "Could you have done something else?" try "Could you explain why you chose to do this rather than find another solution?"
- **WHY** – You should be **very careful** with this type of question because it tends to put people on the spot and make them feel uncomfortable and judged. However, this type of question can help to determine a student's state of mind and may be helpful in sanctioning. "Why did you choose to drink so much alcohol on that night?"

## **Formulating Questions**

- Be careful not to ask “multiple choice” questions: “Were you tired, or were you preoccupied with the exam, or were you feeling sick?” Let the speaker provide the answers; don’t do it for them.
- Ask only one question at a time; don’t overwhelm the person with a stream of questions. “Did you hear him knock, or did he ring the doorbell? And did you answer the door, or was it your roommate? What did he say when he came in, or did he say anything?”
- Don’t suggest the answer when asking the question. “Wasn’t it closer to eleven o’clock when you saw her?”
- Don’t indicate judgment when asking a question. “Why didn’t you think to lock your door when you knew there had been thefts in the residence hall?”

## **Developing Questions**

Consider starting with a timeline/summary. When reviewing the case file, establish:

- The names of all the participants
- Their relationships to one another
- Where the incident took place
- When the incident took place
- Each participant’s actions
- The order of events

In creating your timeline/summary, you may discover gaps in your knowledge. These gaps provide a starting point for developing questions.