

Examples of interview openings [goal is to listen to client concerns and be aware of other concerns that will need to be addressed, so as to begin to organize the interview; can use any number of these]

Read the following interview openings. What is your preliminary assessment of client concerns and goals? What is your assessment of client feelings/personality?
What topics do you identify that you need to get information about?

1.

L: I understand you have a housing problem, please tell me what is happening.

C: I believe I should not have to pay rent until the landlord fixes the heat. I heard there is a law that protects me that way. So I need you to tell them that.

2.

L: I understand you have a housing problem, please tell me what is happening?

C: I guess I have to move out of our apartment in the projects, and I don't know where to go.

3.

L: I understand you have a housing problem, please tell me what is happening?

C: I guess I have to move out of our apartment in the projects, and I don't know where to go. The apartment really belongs to my sister and she has left the country. I'm afraid they'll deport me if I ask to keep the place.

4.

Lawyer (L): [after looking through papers that client has presented]

Mr. C., you've shown me the papers from your case, and it appears that Ms. Mom made a paternity claim against you in May with regard to a baby boy born in February, and that at a hearing in July, you acknowledged paternity and were ordered to pay support of \$80 per week, with the payments going through the court, retroactive to the May filing date. This paper that you got is a subpoena requiring you to go to court next Tuesday, and explain why you are behind in your payments. It says you have paid about \$2000, only half of the total, with most of those payments being in the first few months of the order. Tell me what you think of the situation.

Client (C): Well, here's the story. That woman is always trying to get me in trouble. She doesn't even work herself and thinks I should pay for everything. I don't even know for sure if the kid is mine. I can't believe this situation. Now she claims I could go to jail, which I don't believe for a minute.