

# NIRVANA: Interview Guide

Youth Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one: **INITIAL** **REASSESSMENT** **POST**

<b>INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT:</b>	<b>REMINDERS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<p>“It’s a pleasure to meet you. My name is _____, and I am a (state your position) at (state agency name). How are you doing today?</p> <p>I’d like to talk with you and ask a few questions to help me to get to know you better and learn a little about your experiences so that your time with us can be as beneficial for you as possible.</p> <p>Our goal is to find out how we can best work with you to help you be successful, stay out of trouble and have the tools and resources you need for the future.</p>	<p>Introduce yourself</p> <p>Ask the youth how he/she is doing and feeling</p> <p>Ensure immediate physical and emotional safety to make the youth as comfortable as possible</p>	
<p>While I will do my best to use other sources of information (like any prior arrest records, contacting others such as your teachers, parent/guardians), it’s really important to me to hear what you have to say and get to know what your thoughts, fears, hopes, and dreams are.</p>	<p><b>REMINDERS</b></p> <p>Throughout interview, use <b>OARS</b> to elicit information and allow the youth to elaborate</p> <p><b>O</b>=Open Ended Questions <b>A</b>=Affirmations <b>R</b>=Reflections <b>S</b>=Summarizations</p>	
<p>Just so you know, I will be taking a few notes as we talk, so that I can remember what we discussed. Please ask any questions you have as we go.</p>		
<p>Do you have any questions before we get started?</p>		

## DELINQUENCY HISTORY

SET-UP STATEMENT:	REMINDERS	NOTES
<p><b>Let's start by talking about any previous experience you have with getting into trouble with the law or any juvenile justice system involvement</b></p>		
<p>Have you ever been charged with an offense by the police or arrested?</p>	<p><b>If no arrests, move to asking about stealing</b></p>	
<p>How many times has that happened?            Did any of those offenses involve a person getting hurt?            Did any of those offenses involve using or selling alcohol or drugs?            Did any of those offenses involve a gun or weapon?            Explain each instance.</p>	<p>Assess for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ number of arrests</li> <li>➤ number of violent offenses against other people</li> <li>➤ number of firearm and weapon offenses</li> </ul>	
<p>*Tell me about times you ever stolen anything from your family, house, or your neighbors? How often have you stolen things?</p>	<p>Assess repeated stealing even if never arrested for it;            If never arrested and never stolen, skip to next domain</p>	
<p>Tell me what that was about/like and what happened.</p>	<p>(ask about any/all arrests and about any stealing)</p>	
<p>How old were you the first time that happened?</p>	<p>Age at first arrest (if never arrested, age at first time stealing is just for information purposes)</p>	
<p>Tell me about the people you were with.</p>	<p>Goes towards assessing antisocial peers</p>	
<p>What time of day was it?</p>	<p>Goes towards parental supervision</p>	
<p>What were you thinking at the time?</p>	<p>Goes towards assessing youth's attitudes and impulse control</p>	

What were you feeling?	Goes towards assessing remorse/guilt, impulsivity, etc.	
How did your parent(s) respond?	Assessing family relationships	
What happened as a result of what you did?	Consequential thinking	
How did it affect you?	Assessing attitudes/empathy	
How did it affect your family/friends?	Assessing skill level	
Who else was affected and how did it affect them?	Eliciting self-motivational statements	
What do you think about it now?	Consequential thinking	
How do you feel about what happened?	Attitudes	
Would you do anything different if the same situation that led to the arrest occurred again?	Problem solving	

## **FIREARMS**

<b>SET-UP STATEMENT:</b>	<b>REMINDERS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Let's switch for a minute and let me ask you specifically about something we ask everyone about, and that is any access you have to guns or weapons</b>	<b>Use OARS to elicit information about not only the youth's home, but friends' behaviors as well.</b>	
Do you or your family have a gun at the house? Talk to me about any of your friends that carry guns or weapons?		
Has a gun been confiscated from you at school?		
	Add any information about firearm or weapons arrests from above domain here.	

## SCHOOL

SET-UP STATEMENT:	REMINDERS	NOTES
<p><b>Now, I'd like to talk to you about school. So, tell me, are you currently enrolled in school? If so, how has school been going for you this year?</b></p>	<p>Use OARS to allow youth to elaborate</p>	
<p>(* ) Talk to me about your attendance at school this term.</p> <p>Explain any difficulties you've had with teachers this school term.</p> <p>Tell me about any difficulties you've had with other students this term.</p> <p>(* ) Talk to me about the grades you get in school?</p> <p>(* ) Are you failing any classes?</p> <p>(* ) Tell me about any suspensions/expulsions from school in the most recent term. How many times have you been suspended in the most recent term?</p> <p>(* ) Talk to me about any special education needs or services you have received, or if you have any diagnosis of a special education need?</p> <p>Tell me about any time you were held back or failed a grade.</p> <p>Talk to me about what you like about school.</p> <p>Tell me about any teachers you get along with really well, and why you think that is.</p> <p>Do you feel like you belong when you're at school?</p>	<p>Items preceded by an asterisk (*) should be corroborated with education records, if available to you.</p> <p>Ask about calls or letters to home regarding behaviors/events</p> <p>Special Education needs include: Learning issues, intellectual disabilities, Behavior special education issues, and ADHD/ADD</p> <p>Gets at Victories/strengths</p>	

## EMPLOYMENT

SET-UP STATEMENT:	REMINDERS	NOTES
<p><b>Let's switch to talking about work.</b></p>	<p><b>If the youth is under 15 you may select "too young for employment" and skip to next domain</b></p>	
<p>Tell me about the kinds of jobs have you had?</p> <p>Are you currently working now?</p> <p>Are you currently looking for a job? Tell me how that is going and how you have been trying to get a job.</p> <p>What's the longest you've ever held a job? How did you get along with the people at work?</p> <p>What made those relationships work for you? How did you get along with other adults working there?</p> <p>What's the best part of the job? The worst part?</p> <p>Talk to me about the most important things you think it takes to keep a job.</p>	<p>Use OARS.</p>	

## PEER ASSOCIATIONS

SET-UP STATEMENT:	REMINDERS	NOTES
<p><b>Now, I'd like to get an idea of the friends you spend time with.</b></p>		
<p>Tell me about whether you have many friends, and who you hang around with the most.</p> <p>What do you like best about each group of friends?</p> <p>How often do you see each set of friends?</p> <p>Who makes the decisions about what you're going to do when you're with each set of friends?</p> <p>If your friends had an idea to do something wrong, get into trouble, or to break a law, would you go along with it?</p> <p>Tell me about whether any of your friends get into trouble a lot, and what kind of trouble?</p> <p>Do you have a significant other? Would you say your significant other is a positive influence on you and stays out of trouble or does he/she often get into trouble?</p>	<p>Summarize the youth's peer associations</p>	

## FAMILY/LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

<b>SET-UP STATEMENT:</b>	<b>REMINDERS</b> Summarize conversation regarding family/living arrangements	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Now I'd like you tell me about your family and where you live</b>		
<p>Who are you currently living with and what is their relationship (parent, grandparent, sibling, etc.) to you?</p> <p>Tell me about your current living situation. Is your family currently homeless or living in a shelter? How long have you been living at your current location? Tell me about how often your family moves, and the reasons for the moves.</p> <p>What sorts of things does your family do together?</p> <p>Talk to me about any involvement you may have had with DCF (child welfare)?</p> <p>Have any of the people who have lived in your home ever been in jail or prison?</p> <p>Talk to me about any of the household members who you have lived with that have had serious issues with alcohol? Who?</p> <p>Have any of the household members you have lived with had serious issues with drugs? Who has had those problems?</p> <p>Have any of the household members you have lived with had serious health complications? Who has had those problems?</p> <p>Have any of the household members you have lived with had serious issues related to mental health? Who had those issues?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Family homeless</li> <li>➤ Youth homeless</li> <li>➤ In shelter or rejected from shelter</li> </ul>	



<p>Have any of the household members you have lived with had periods of time not working? Which members?</p> <p>Who in your family can you easily talk to? Why that person? Talk about how close you are to each person in the household.</p> <p>Tell me about how well you get along with your parents/guardians?</p> <p>What is it like when you and your parents/guardians disagree?</p> <p>Tell me about how well you get along with your siblings? What is it like when you and your siblings disagree?</p> <p>Do you have a curfew?</p> <p>Talk some about how well do your parents know your friends?</p> <p>Who is there when you get home?</p> <p>Talk to me about how your parents feel if/when you get into trouble with the law or break important rules they have set?</p> <p>Have you ever run away from home? How many times? Have you ever been kicked out of the house? How many times? Talk to me about the last time that happened.</p> <p>Do you usually follow your parent's/guardian's rules?</p> <p>When you go out, talk to me about whether your parents/guardians know who you will be with, where you are going, and when you will return?</p> <p>Tell me about any family planning/pregnancy concerns you may have.</p>	<p>Getting at any long gaps in employment of parents/guardian</p> <p>Ask about how long the youth was away if they have a runaway history</p>	
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## ALCOHOL & DRUG USE

<b>SET-UP STATEMENT:</b>	<b>REMINDERS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<p><b>Let's switch topics to your experience with drinking and drugs.</b></p>		
<p>Tell me about your experiences with trying or taking alcohol and drugs.</p> <p>Try to describe to me how your substance use began and progressed from first use up until now.</p> <p>Let's talk about any experiences you may have had with different types of substances.</p> <p>Tell me about your experiences with using tobacco.</p> <p>Tell me about your experiences with drinking alcohol.</p> <p>Talk to me about your experiences with using marijuana.</p> <p>Explain any experiences you have with using amphetamines (meth/speed/uppers/ecstasy).</p> <p>Tell me about your experiences with using cocaine (coke, crack).</p> <p>Tell me about your experiences with using heroin.</p> <p>Talk to me about your experiences with using inhalants (huffing).</p> <p>Tell me about your experiences with using barbiturates (downers).</p>	<p>Use OARS!</p> <p>Remain non-judgmental</p>	

<p>Tell me about your experiences with using tranquilizers (valium/ketamine).</p> <p>Tell me about your experiences with using hallucinogens (LSD/acid/mushrooms/GHB).</p> <p>Tell me about your experiences with using phencyclidine (PCP/angel dust).</p> <p>Explain any experiences you have with using opiates (Demerol/codeine/oxycontin).</p> <p>Tell me about your experiences with abusing over-the-counter (OTC) medications for the purpose of getting high (cough syrup/Sudafed).</p> <p>Tell me about any experience with anabolic steroids.</p> <p>Tell me about your experiences with using any other drugs.</p> <p>Have you ever had to participate in a class or treatment about alcohol use? Are you currently participating in one of those classes?</p> <p>Have you ever had to participate in a class or treatment about drug use? Are you currently participating in one of those classes?</p> <p>Tell me about what your parents/guardians know about your experiences, what they think about it, and whether it's caused any problems at home?</p> <p>Has your use ever impacted you getting to school on time or getting good grades? In what ways?</p>		
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<p>Tell me about how your friends feel about your use? Have you ever gotten into trouble or committed a crime while drunk or high? What happened?</p> <p>Do you feel like you need more drinks or amounts of drugs to get the same feeling as you did when you first tried it?</p> <p>Do you use so much that you feel sick the next day or after you come down?</p>		
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**DOMAIN 9: MENTAL HEALTH**

<b>SET-UP STATEMENT:</b>	<b>REMINDERS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<p><b>It will be useful for me to better understand a bit more about how you usually feel.</b></p>		
<p>Was there ever a time when you had trouble controlling your feelings? Tell me what that was like.</p> <p>What kind of difficulties or hurdles have you run into thus far? Tell me more about that.</p> <p>What’s it like to feel out of control. Have you ever had troubles in any of these areas in the past? Have you had any troubles in any of these areas in the last six months? Give me a recent example if you can?</p> <p>Talk to me about whether you feel sad a lot, and what that’s like?</p> <p>Have you ever thought about hurting yourself?</p> <p>Has a caregiver or sibling ever attempted or committed suicide?</p> <p>Have you ever lost someone you cared about, and what was that like? How does that affect you now?</p> <p>Tell me about anything very bad or terrifying that has happened to you or that you’ve seen happen to someone else. Does it ever cause you to have bad dreams or prolonged feelings about that event/s?</p> <p>Tell me about any prescribed medication you take and what it is for.</p>	<p>Affirmations</p> <p>If so, follow up to understand the seriousness of these thoughts, if the youth made a plan, attempted to carry out the plan.</p>	

<p>Sometimes young people who are away from home can be taken advantage of and asked to do sexual activities in exchange for something of value. Has anyone ever asked you to do something like that? For example: dancing, stripping, posing for photos, or sex of any kind?</p>	<p>This item gets at human trafficking and survival sex. If you know that response from another assessment you may use it (Yes/No potential victim); Remember youth cannot engage in prostitution by law as they are underage and cannot consent; For this item, include any instance of youth receiving money or goods in exchange for sexual activities.</p>	
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## ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS

SET-UP STATEMENT:	REMINDERS	NOTES
<p><b>Now I want to discuss what you think about things that may be going on in your life and how you react to them.</b></p>		
<p>Explain to me your thoughts on why there are rules and laws, and are they fair?</p> <p>Talk to me about how you consider what could happen before you do something.</p> <p>Tell me about whether you would say you think before you act, or whether you usually just react? Why do you say that?</p> <p>Who is affected when you get into trouble? How do you feel about that?</p> <p>When you think about a victim of something you did, what do you think, and how do you feel? What about victims of crime in general?</p> <p>Tell me about how you feel when a teacher or other adult tells you to do something?</p> <p>Talk to me about how you feel about authority figures (teachers, police, parents)?</p> <p>Talk to me about your belief in your ability to control your own behavior that leads to you breaking a rule.</p>	<p>Use OARS, especially Reflections</p> <p>Impulsivity</p> <p>Empathy/remorse</p> <p>Respect for authority</p>	

## AGGRESSION

<b>SET-UP STATEMENT:</b>	<b>REMINDERS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<p><b>Let's talk about things that get you really upset or mad.</b></p> <p>Tell me about how you view the intentions of other people toward you.</p> <p>What does it look like when you manage your anger the way you want to and what's it look like when your anger is hard to manage?</p> <p>Has there ever been a time when you have lost your temper? If so, tell me about a time when you have lost your temper. What kind of things might cause you to lose your temper?</p> <p>When have you had to resort to violence? In what kind of circumstances are you most likely to use violence? What is the worst violence you have seen or been involved in?</p> <p>When is hitting and or yelling at someone a good idea? How do you feel after you hit or yell at someone?</p> <p>Tell me about a time in the past month or few weeks where you've gotten physically aggressive toward a family member or someone who lives where you live?</p>	<p>Interpretation of the actions of others (look for beliefs people are out to get them, having to take care of yourself, "eye for eye", etc.)</p> <p>Use OARS to get at why the youth would use violence</p> <p>Violence against family</p>	





## VICTORIES/RESILIENCY

SET-UP STATEMENT	REMINDERS	NOTES
<p><b>Now, I'm going to ask you about some positive experiences and supportive people you may have in your life. Do you:</b></p>	<p>Be sure to read the set-up statement;</p> <p>For this domain, read the items word-for-word (Unless seriously developmentally inappropriate)</p>	
Have at least one caregiver with who you feel safe?		
Have at least one good friend?		
Have beliefs that give you comfort?		
Like school or feel a sense of belonging in school?		
Have at least one teacher who cares about you?		
Have good neighbors?		
Is there an adult (not a parent or caregiver) who could provide you with support or advice?		
Have opportunities to have a good time?		
Like yourself or feel comfortable with yourself?		
Have a predictable home routine, like regular meals and regular bedtime?		
Do you believe school provides an encouraging environment?		
Do you like or feel comfortable talking with two or more teachers, education staff, or coaches?		
Been involved in one or more school activities?		
Are you involved in one or more prosocial structured recreational activities (community, cultural, or religious groups, clubs, athletics)?		

<p>Do you have a history of, or current relationship with two or more positive adults?</p>	<p>This item may require further explanation that the intent is to understand whether the youth has ever had, or currently has non-family members who can provide support, encouragement, or model prosocial behavior.</p>	
<p>Have positive, prosocial friends</p>		
<p>Have strong prosocial community ties, meaning you feel there are people in the community who are willing to help and who discourage you from getting into trouble</p>		
<p>Your family has a strong support network</p>	<p>This item will require further explanation that the intent is to understand whether the family has extended family or friends who can provide additional support, whether that is emotional support (just being there for them), or tangible support (money, childcare, transportation, help around the house, etc.), to the Family.</p>	

<p><b>Your family is consistently willing to support you</b></p>	<p><b>Consistency means the majority of time; It does not mean the family supports the youth's law-breaking or getting into trouble, but rather provides encouragement and support</b></p>	
<p><b>Your family provides opportunities for your involvement and participation in family activities and/or decisions affecting you</b></p>		
<p><b>Have a close relationship with parents/caretakers</b></p>		

## CHILDHOOD ADVERSTIY

SET-UP STATEMENT	REMINDERS	NOTES
<b>I'd like to ask you some questions about events that happened during your childhood. This information will allow us to better understand problems that may occur early in life, and may help you, as well as others in the future. This is a sensitive topic, and some people may feel uncomfortable with these questions. If you become uncomfortable and would like to talk more afterward, just let me know and we can do that.</b>	Be sure to read the set-up statement;  For this domain, read the items word-for-word.	
Have you ever lived with a parent/caregiver who went to jail/prison?	Parental incarceration	
Have you ever felt unsupported, unloved and/or unprotected?	Emotional neglect	
Have you ever lived with a parent/caregiver who had mental health issues? (for example, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, or an anxiety disorder)	Parental mental health problem	
Has a parent/caregiver ever insulted, humiliated, or put you down?	Emotional abuse	
Has your biological parent or any caregiver ever had, or currently has a problem with too much alcohol, street drugs or prescription medications use?	Parental substance abuse	
Have you ever lacked appropriate care by any caregiver? (for example, not being protected from unsafe situations, or not being cared for when sick or	Physical neglect	

<p>injured even when the resources were available; not having basic needs met such as food, shelter, clothing)</p>		
<p>Have you ever seen or heard a parent/caregiver being screamed at, sworn at, insulted, or humiliated by another adult? -Or- have you ever seen or heard a parent/caregiver being slapped, kicked, punched beaten up or hurt with a weapon?</p>	<p>Read both parts of this question; a “yes” to either part is an indication of Family/Domestic violence</p>	
<p>Has any adult in the household often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped or thrown something at you? -Or- has any adult in the household ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured? -Or- has any adult in the household ever threatened you or acted in a way that made you afraid that you might be hurt?</p>	<p>Read all parts of this question; a “yes” to any part is an indication of Physical abuse</p>	
<p>Have you ever experienced sexual abuse? (for example, has anyone touched you or asked you to touch that person in a way that was unwanted, or made you feel uncomfortable, or anyone ever attempted or actually had oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you)</p>	<p>Read the “for example” part in parentheses as well.  Sexual abuse</p>	
<p>Have there ever been significant changes in the relationship status of your caregiver(s)? (for example, a parent/caregiver got a divorce or separated, or a romantic partner moved in or out)</p>	<p>Parental separation/divorce  Include parental death as a “yes” to this question as well.</p>	

**Interview close-out (include MAGIC QUESTIONS):**

**“I really appreciate your time, willingness, and honesty talking about these topics. We have discussed a lot of things...is there anything else you would like to add?”**

- **Is there anything that we have missed or that you would like to change?**
- **If you had a magic wand and there was something in your life or going on that you could change what would it be?**
- **Where do you see yourself in a year...how have things changed for you?**

**If you would like feedback about what we discussed, we can go over the results next time we meet. Again, I thank you for your time and participation”.**