




## Digging Deeper: Types of Questions

- Avoid closed-ended questions
  - Can only be answered with a yes or no
  - Use only when necessary to obtain confirmation
- Use open-ended questions
  - To gather facts
- Use reflective question
  - When you need more information

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*The bullet points below include some suggested talking points to help your discussion.*

- Generally, you want to avoid closed-ended questions that can only be answered with a “yes” or a “no” because it doesn’t allow the customer to provide additional information that you may need. Closed ended questions can begin with words like: Do...?, Did...?, Will...?, Is...?, Are...?
    - Examples: “Did you bring your paperwork?” “Do you have a family member here today?” 
  - Instead of using closed-ended questions, we should try to use open-ended questions. These types of questions open the door to gather facts, learn needs, feelings, etc. Open ended questions can begin with words like: How...?, What...? Where...?, When...?, Who...? Be careful of why questions – they may simply blame.
    - Examples: “What questions can I answer for you about the paperwork?”, “Who is joining you here today?” 
  - Another type of questions are called reflective questions. Use reflective questions when you need more information. They are particularly good at showing the patient that you are listening to them. Reflective phrases start with: Oh?, How’s that?, In what way?, For example?, Then you agree that?, Can you tell me more?
    - Examples: “In what way was the paperwork difficult to complete?” 
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## Exercise 2

### Words and Phrases to Avoid

- Some words and phrases can have a negative effect on communication
  - Use active and simple language
  - Use words and phrases that engage the customer

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**Exercise 2: Words and Phrases to Avoid** *See page 67 in the Participant Workbook*

- Of course, not every word or phrase that we use opens the door to communication. In fact, some words and phrases can have the opposite effect.
- As a general rule, aim to use active and simple language. Use words and phrases that engage the customer. Be careful of language that implies you aren't willing to listen. For example, avoid saying "I need you to" because it makes the customer feel manipulated. Instead, use "Will you...?"
- **Exercise instructions:** Let's turn to Exercise 2 in the Participant Workbook. Review the negative phrases, and working within your group, develop alternate words or phrases that will engage the customer. Let's do one together:
  - Avoid saying "I'll try – I think I can..." This implies you aren't sure of what you are doing or are not really willing to help them. Use "I will..."
  - This is a group exercise 
  - Complete each phrase (4 minutes)
- **Group Debrief:** Ask for responses and record them on the flip chart (4 minutes) Use the examples below to stimulate discussion, be prepared with your own examples 
  - Instead of "As a courtesy to you," use "We will..."
  - Instead of "Have to / Can't," use "Can you?"
  - Instead of "It is/is not our policy," use "We can..."
  - (If there is time, ask the participants to identify how customers may interpret the original phrase.)

**Exercise 2: Words and Phrases to Avoid  
Worksheet**

Review the negative phrases, and write down alternatives; try putting the revised phrase into a sentence in the space provided.

Instead of:

Say:

*“As a courtesy to you...”*

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*“You have to...”*

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*“Our policy is to...”*

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*“I’ll try...”*

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Your facilitator provided you with an example of a phrase that didn’t work “*I’ll try – I think I can...*” Use – “*I will...*” The facilitator identified why this is a negative phrase “*This implies you aren’t sure of what you are doing or are not really willing to help them...*” If there is time, identify why each of the phrases above implies a negative rule to the customer.

Negative Rule:

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