

Sensitive communication

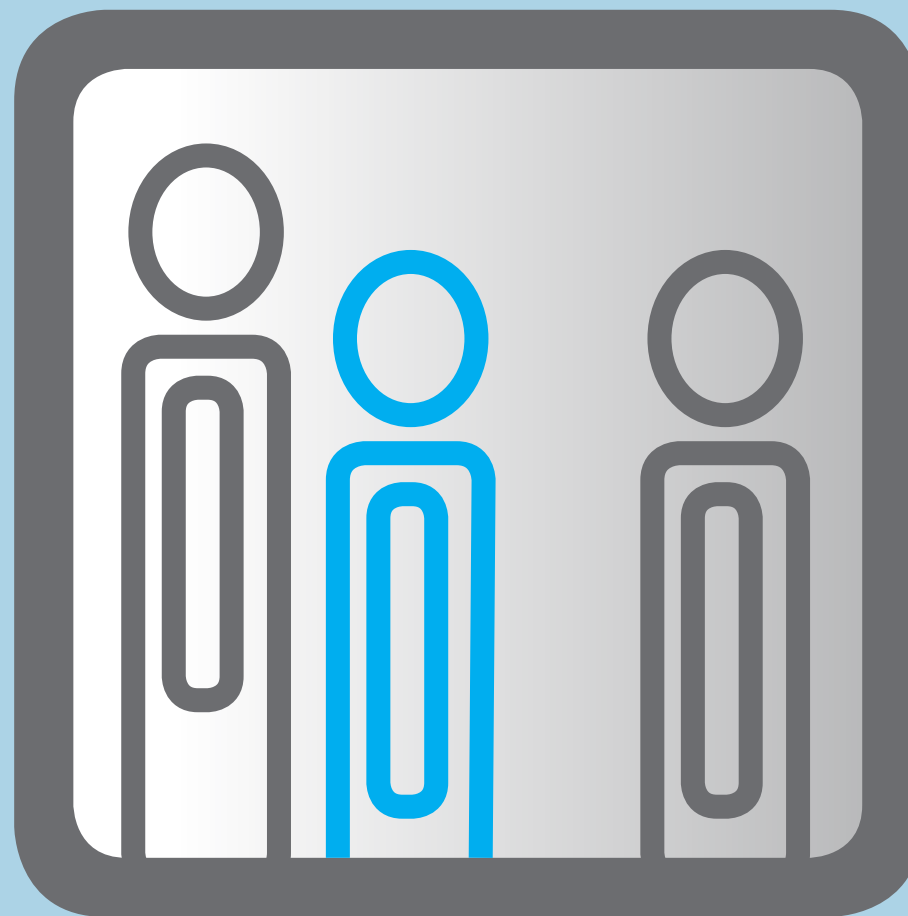
with victims of torture and other ill-treatment

01



Be polite – greet in adequate manner and respect the privacy of the detainee, shake hands, offer a business card; in the end ask the detainee for urgent needs and thank the victim for their time.

02



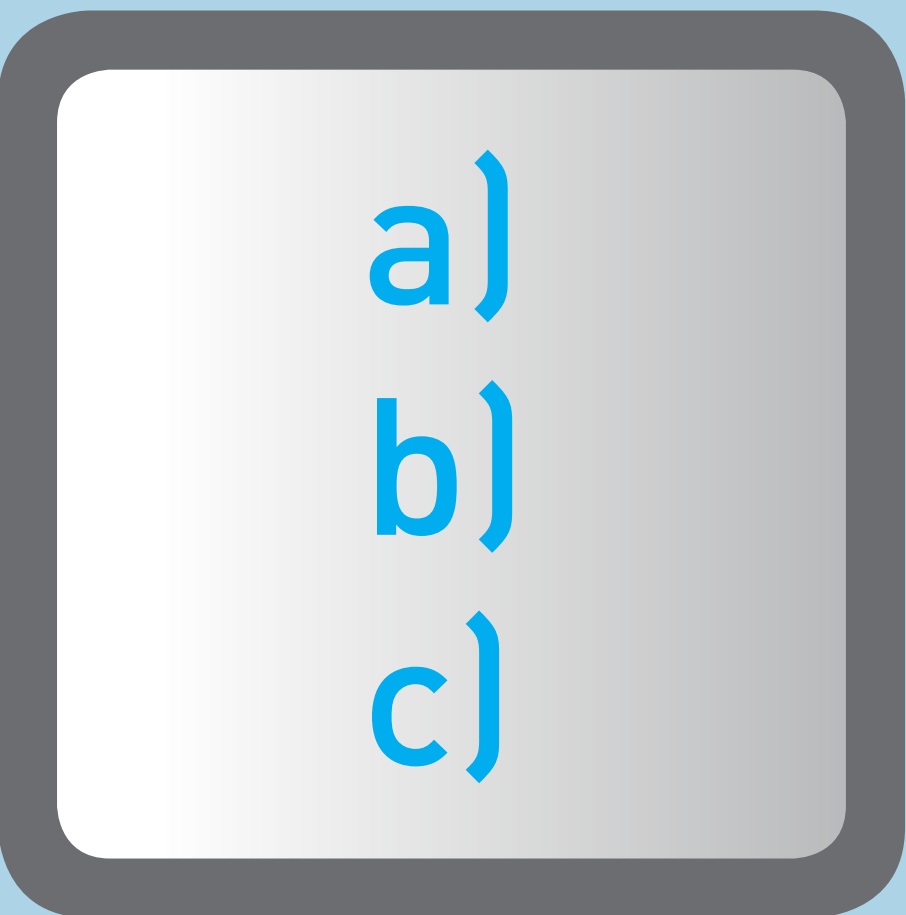
Explain who you are and why you are here – emphasize your independence from the authorities (e.g. the prison administration etc.)

03



Start with easier questions focusing on the present times: How are you now? How is the food here?

04



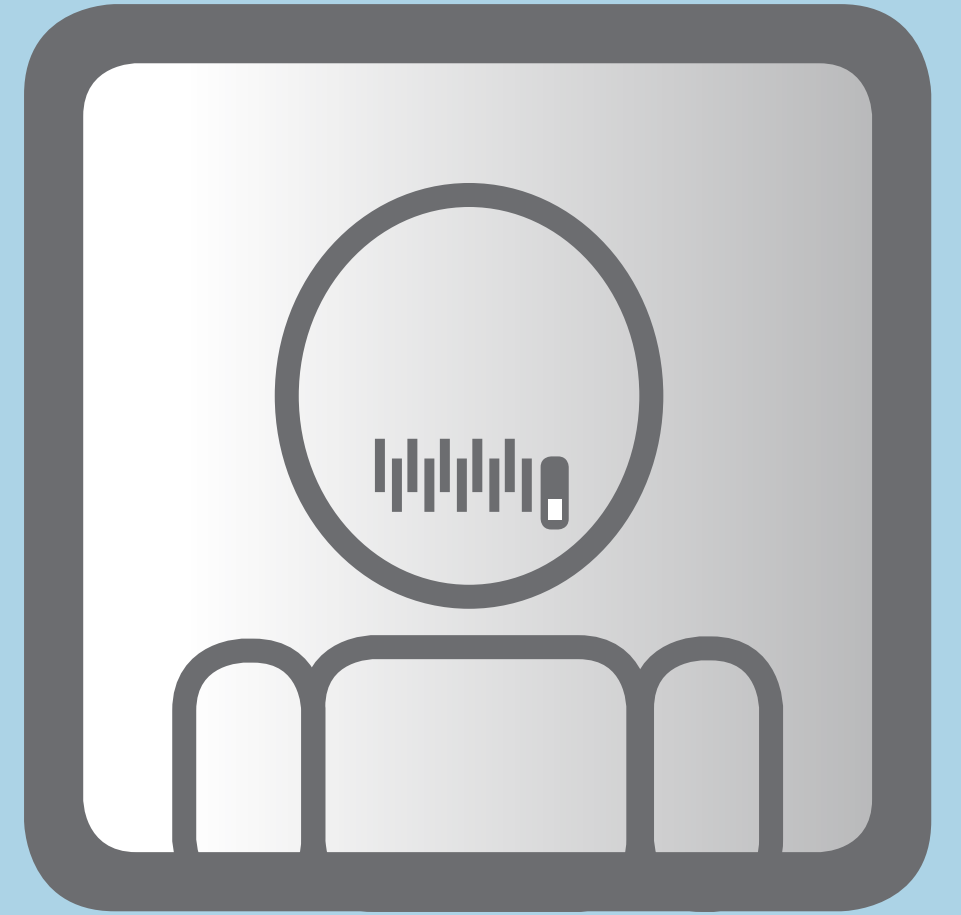
Be responsive to individual requests: let the person decide as many things as possible, e.g. place of the interview, opening/closing the window, ...

05



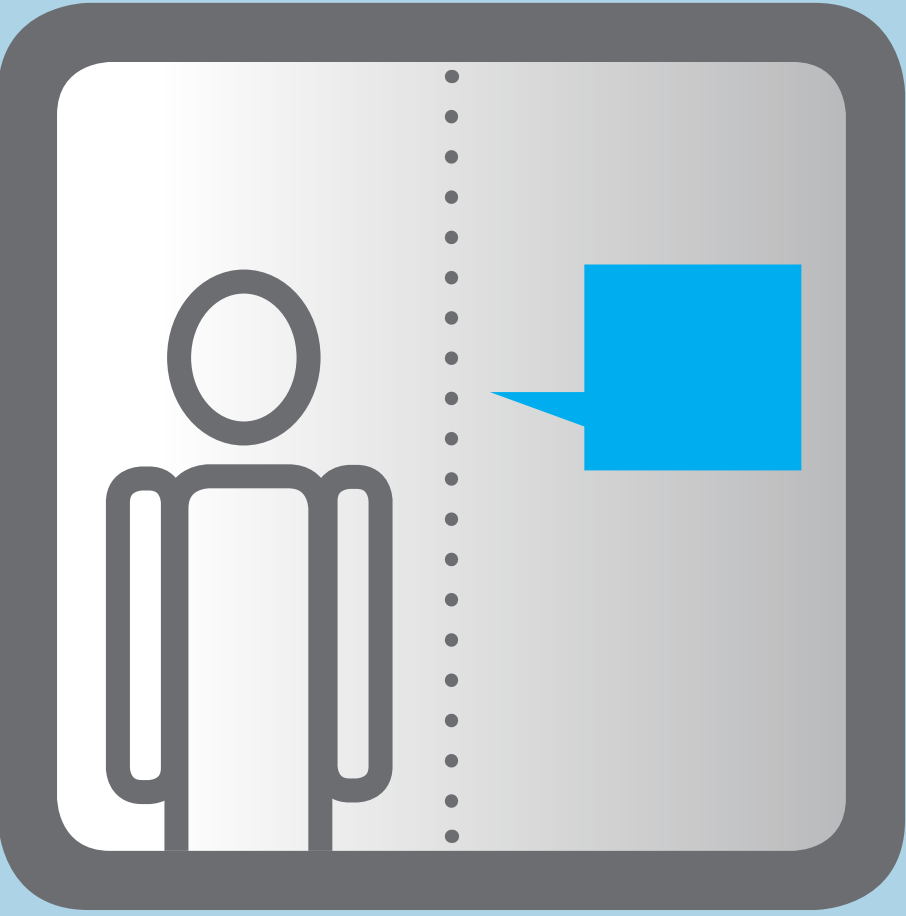
Break the ice – offer the person a handkerchief ...

06



Give the person the option not to answer, avoid leading questions and interruptions and emphasize the voluntary nature of the interview.

07



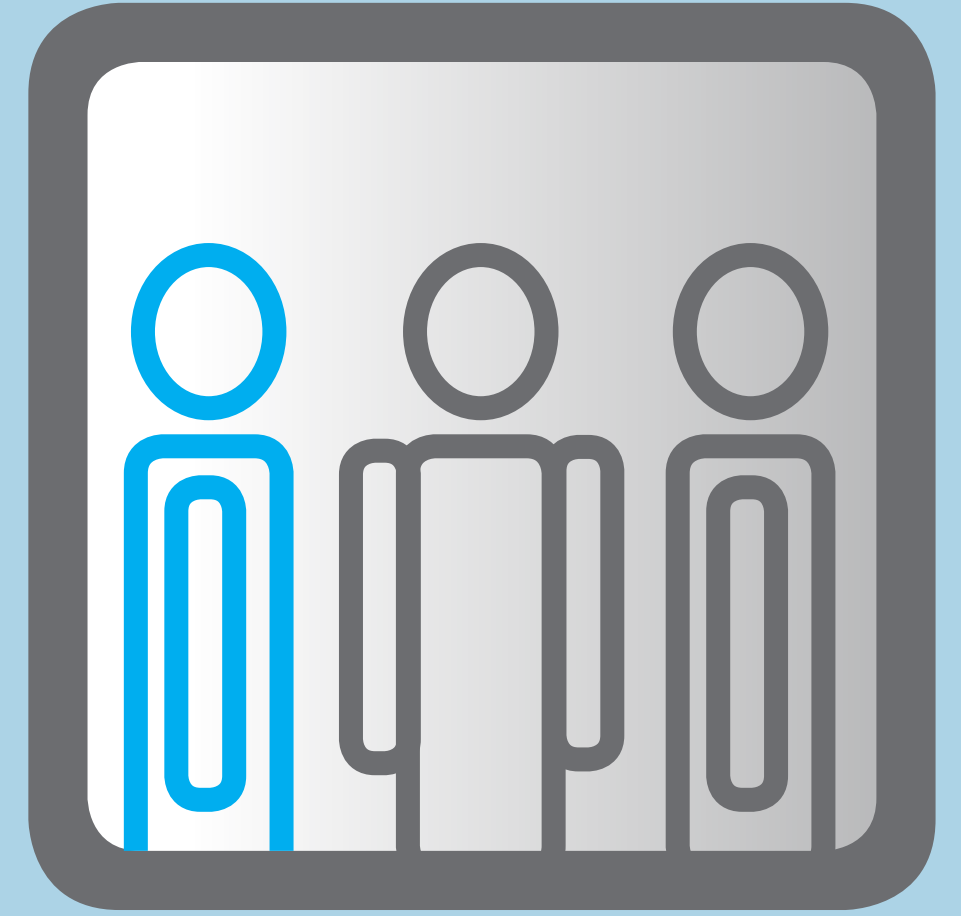
Establish trust – emphasise the principle of confidentiality (all information must be kept confidential upon the victim's request), ensure privacy – guards or other detainees should not be able to hear or see the interview.

08



Be extremely careful not to raise false expectations – don't make any promises you are not sure to be able to keep!

09



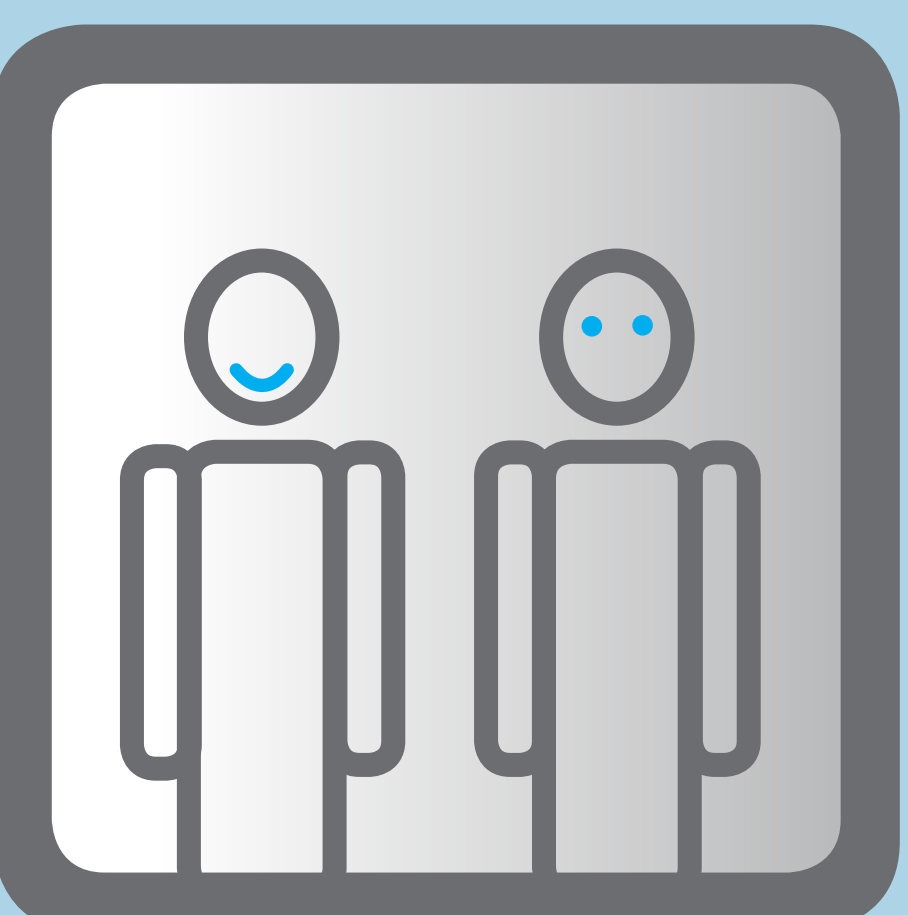
Be culturally sensitive – if possible, get familiar with the culture in advanced, have a native mediator or interpreter

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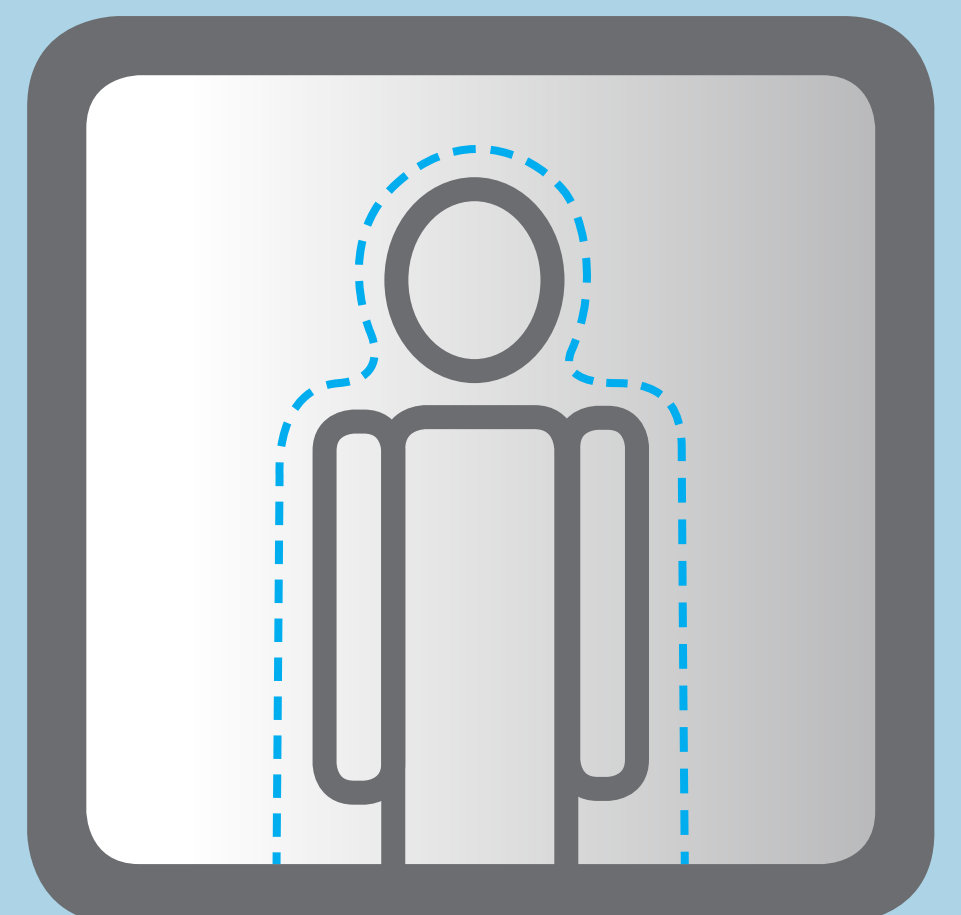
Be personal – avoid using recording devices or questionnaires, make notes.

11



Interviews should always be conducted by two people – one speaking and keeping eye contact with the detainee, one taking notes ("Four-eyes principle").

12



Don't forget about your own supervision and other psychohygienic measures to prevent burnout and protect your own mental health.