



## Coffee Break Training - Fire Prevention and Public Education

### Introduction, Rapport, Opening Statement, Narrative, Inquiry and Conclusion — A Screening Method for Juveniles Involved in Firesetting

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**Learning Objective:** The student will be able to identify the six basic steps in conducting a screening to determine the facts of an incident.

The **Introduction, Rapport, Opening Statement, Narrative, Inquiry and Conclusion (IRONIC)** method was adopted from public information by Lt. Paul Zipper, Ph.D., of the Massachusetts State Police and is taught in the youth firesetting prevention and intervention classes at the National Fire Academy. This method is easy to remember and identifies the steps involved in conducting a screening to determine the facts of an incident.

**IRONIC** stands for Introduction, Rapport, Opening Statement, Narrative, Inquiry and Conclusion.

**Introduction** — The person or people conducting the screening introduce themselves before the process begins. You can easily do this by showing credentials such as photo identification, a fire department badge or a business card.

**Rapport** — This critical phase begins immediately on contact with the interviewee and continues throughout the interview. Start with small talk. Find out if the youth has a favorite sport, pet or hobby. You also build rapport by being on time, prepared and respectful if the interview is in the youth's home.

**Opening Statement** — This step informs the youth of the reason for the screening. Be direct by saying something like, "I am here today because of the fire next door to your house."

**Narrative** — This step allows the youth the opportunity to provide a full account of what happened. Allowing the youth to describe the incident provides a wealth of information to the intervention specialist. He or she should closely analyze the youth's words. If possible, the narrative should be recorded and transcribed. This narrative of the incident should not be contaminated with leading questions. Follow-up questions may be asked to determine the following: who, what, when, where, why and how.

**Inquiry** — This step serves to document the answers to specific questions asked of the interviewee. Using an approved screening form, the intervention specialist should ask the questions listed on the form and document the answers.

**Conclusion** — This is the wrap-up of the screening. The intervention specialist should thank the youth and parents/caregiver(s) for their time and ask if they will be available for a second screening, if necessary. He or she should also provide the family with information on how to maintain contact with the program.

In summary, using this method will help you become more comfortable with the interview process. Practice, practice, practice is the best way to become a great interviewer.

Learn more about youth firesetting prevention and intervention by taking a six-day resident course or by taking two-day courses offered across the country. More information can be found at <http://apps.usfa.fema.gov/nfacourses/catalog/search>.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency. "Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention," January 2014.

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