Before the Home Visit, briefly review the Discovery Staging Record. Do not bring it with you. During your visit, keep note taking to a minimum. If you must take notes, make sure to ask for permission first and try to only take brief notes on key points. Be careful not to spend too much time writing in your notebook because the interruption in eye contact and attention will affect the quality of your conversation.

An hour and a half seems to be just the right amount of time for an effective Home Visit. It sometimes takes about 15 minutes to get the conversation in flow, so an hour may cut a good conversation short. By the time the 2-hour mark is hit, both parties are a bit tired and distracted. You'll find that engaging in a quality conversation requires quite a bit of energy and effort!

The following list of Probes/Questions/Conversation Points may be helpful in getting the conversation going during the Home Visit. To enhance information learned, these probes should be directed toward the Employment Seeker and others present during the Home Visit. The wording of any given probe can be adjusted slightly to reflect those present at the visit.

* **Informal Supports: family, friends, neighbors**
  + Tell me who lives in this home.
  + Tell me about the people in your daily life.
  + Tell me about your extended family.
  + Tell me about your friends.
  + Tell me about your neighbors.
  + How often do you see these people?
  + If you needed help, who would you call?
  + When something exciting happens in your life, who do you call?
  + What do the people closest to you do for a living?
* **Intermediate Supports: structured, community-based activities**
  + Tell me about what you do in your spare time.
  + Tell me about community activities you participate in.
  + What do you enjoy about those activities?
  + Tell me about any formal and informal groups (church, service clubs, People 1st, VFW, et al.) you belong to.
  + Tell me about your experiences with work (paid, during school transition years, volunteer, helping out friends/family/community or organization/associations).
* **Formal Supports: medical, therapeutic, public assistance services**
  + Tell me about the services/education you receive(d).
  + Tell me about progress you see resulting from these services.
  + Tell me about public benefits received such as SSI / SSDI, VA benefits, etc.
  + Tell me how your day begins.
  + Tell me about how this time of day goes. If I were a fly on the wall, what would it look like?
  + Discuss the following 5 items for each major part of the day (morning, daytime activities, after school/work, evening, etc.):
    - What are you doing?
    - Describe what everyone else is doing.
    - How do you participate in this time of day?
    - What supports do you receive at this time of day?
    - Please rate your satisfaction with each time of day (a 1 to 10 scale or other measure is appropriate).
    - What would you like to be different during this time of day?
    - What would you like to see happening next during this time of day?
    - Recap the information and concerns raised throughout the conversation.

During the Home Visit, be on the lookout for evidence of: memorable and significant qualities of the home environment; chores and tasks; hobbies and collections; and activities the employment seeker engages in. We are also seeking to understand family dynamics, important relationships that may not be obvious, and some history that will help us begin to appreciate the individual's story.

Remember to weave selected points from this list (not all of them!) into the conversation and be sure to practice **Smooth Listening**. Effective ways to draw out your conversation include using follow-up comments, such as, "Tell me more about that" or "Tell me what that looked like" or "Please describe that to me." Additionally, engaging in the mutual give and take of conversation by adding a small amount of information about yourself when appropriate usually gets the conversation going. If you find shared experiences, interests, or skills/tasks, say so. Just make sure that you do not become the focus of the conversation.

Your conversation will be most effective if you are genuinely interested in what the other person is saying. One risk of using the Probes/Questions/Discussion Points listed above is that the conversation turns into an interrogation if you follow them too closely. Do your best to remain quiet but attentive to the speaker while at the same time being true to yourself. You will likely find that beginning the conversation with one of these probes gets people talking and you'll use the other probes to gently guide the conversation to unaddressed topics as you go.

We are also seeking information about what works best for the employment seeker. A description of the person's best-self can reveal intrinsic motivation and effective teaching methods, insight into environments that elicit the person's best performance, and qualities that comprise their ideal conditions of employment. You will also learn about the people that are present when the person is their best-self. These people might provide additional information and unique perspectives about the employment seeker.

**Best-Self Probes / Questions / Discussion Points:**

* When things are really working best for you, what is happening?
* Tell me about what you are like when you're at your best?
* Tell me about where are you when you're at your best.
* Who are you with when you're at your best?
* Tell me about what you are doing that brings out the best in you.
* Tell me about your positive traits / attributes.
* Tell me about your accomplishments.

In addition to the information we learn through conversation, we'll learn a lot from being attentive to the employment seeker's home environment. People surround themselves with things that are important to them. We often refer to this as "The Talking Walls." Photographs, art, furniture, books, entertainment, tools, and collections are a few of the things that might offer insight about what's important to the individual. Make sure to only note what you see. Do not make inferences about the individual based on household items, especially if the household is shared. You'll learn about the significance and meaning of items in the home environment through engaging in conversation and Discovery Activities.

Finally, try to find a way to be invited into the person's room. Especially in shared home environments, an individual's room may give you some of the best insight into the person's skills, tasks, and interests. Do not demand to see the person's room. Either ask for a tour of the house or inquire about something you learned during your conversation. For example, if someone tells you they have a specific type of clothes collection, tell them you'd love to see it.