

BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance
Use Workforce v. 2

**Interview Tool for
Senior Management**



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

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INTERVIEW TOOL FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT


This document provides suggested interview questions for the **Senior Management** job cluster and the relevant competency profile. The competency profiles and proficiency levels are examples only and may be tailored or adapted to specific organizational contexts and job descriptions. Review the *Guide to Behavioural Competency-based Interviewing* to supplement the tools included in this resource.

This tool provides a selection of sample interview questions focusing on behaviour for the Behavioural Competencies and proficiency levels relevant to the **Senior Management** competency profile. It also includes the procedures for conducting the interview and evaluating candidate responses.

While this tool is a useful template for your interview process, it might not accurately represent the competencies required for the position for which you are interviewing. Before using it, review the suggested competency profile to determine if it is relevant. If not relevant, review the competencies to determine which competencies or proficiency levels you should change to give a more accurate representation. A brief overview of the steps involved in identifying the relevant Behavioural Competencies for a profile has been provided in the *Guide to Behavioural Competency-based Interviewing*.

A job competency profile includes only the critical competencies required for the job, not those that are “nice to have”—that is, not essential to performing the job successfully.

Preferably, each profile should have no more than 12 competencies.



After confirming the competencies and proficiency levels of the relevant competency profile, you must determine which competencies you will assess in the interview and which questions you will ask. Sample questions have been provided for the relevant proficiency level for the suggested profile. A generic interview bank has been provided in the *Generic Questions for the Behavioural Competencies* to assist you in selecting and adapting alternate questions if a different competency profile is used.

Avoid assessing all competencies by interview. It would take far too much time and some competencies are better assessed through other methods, such as reference checks, knowledge tests or simulations. For a one-hour interview, five to seven questions are a reasonable number to ask.

To determine which questions to ask, consider the relative importance of a competency to the position. Also, review competencies for overlap to determine if asking a question on one competency will provide information on another competency that can then be excluded.

You might choose to assess the same competency using more than one method if it is important for the position. For example, if Interpersonal Rapport is more important than other competencies, you may wish to assess it both in the interview and through a reference check. Alternatively, you could ask two questions on this competency instead of one in the interview.

Questions can be used for reference checking by adapting the text to ask about the candidate in the third person, rather than in the second person. For example:

- **Interview Question:** “Please provide an example of a time when you coordinated a large project” (*second person*)
- **Reference Question:** “Please provide an example of a time when Mark coordinated a large project” (*third person*)

Ensure that all performance evaluations are conducted in accordance with existing organizational policies and procedures.

Interviewing Tool for Positions Related to Senior Management

Position Title: _____

Candidate Name: _____

Interviewer's Name:	Interviewer's Title:
Date of Interview:	Location of Interview:

Preparation Checklist

- Review résumé and candidate file information, paying particular attention to jobs/experiences and education/training most related to the target position.
- Review competencies required for the target position.
- Determine which competencies to focus on in the interview.

Suggested Competency Profile

Job Cluster	Example Job Titles
Senior Management	Executive Director, Clinical Director, Program Director, Program Manager, Controller, Office Manager

Competency Required	Proficiency Levels
Adaptability and Flexibility	4
Analytical Thinking and Decision Making	4
Collaboration and Network Building	4
Continuous Learning	4
Creativity and Innovation	4
Culturally Safe and Anti-oppressive Practice	4
Developing Others	4
Effective Communication	4
Ethical Conduct and Professionalism	4
Leadership	4
Person-directed Care	4
Planning and Organizing	4
Self-care	4
Teamwork and Cooperation	4

Conducting the Interview

1. Greet the candidate and introduce yourself, giving your name and position within the organization.
2. Confirm the job for which the candidate is being considered.
3. Explain the purpose of the interview: to gather specific information about the candidate's past experiences and accomplishments, particularly in the past two to three years; and to help the organization make a fair and informed decision on the most qualified candidate for the job.
4. Describe the interview plan:

The questions in the interview guide are designed to obtain information about the candidate's experience and accomplishments (do not have to be work-related) that relate to the competencies that are important for success in the job to be filled.

For each question, you must obtain one or more specific examples of the candidate's experience or accomplishments, ensuring that the candidate describes:

- The **Situation** or circumstances related to the example;
 - The **Actions** taken by the candidate to address the situation, along with the rationale for the action taken; and
 - The **Results** or outcome of the candidate's actions.
5. Ask follow-up questions as necessary to clarify or obtain additional information. Follow-up questions are provided below the main question.
 6. Take notes on the candidate's answers during the interview to have an accurate record of information about the candidate's experience and accomplishments to evaluate later.
 7. Provide an opportunity at the end of the interview for the candidate to ask questions.
 8. Clarify the next steps in the selection process.



Questions for Applicable Competencies at the Appropriate Level of Proficiency

The next several pages contain interview questions, one per page, with follow-up questions and space for you, the interviewer, to jot down notes. The follow-up questions are especially helpful because you can encourage the candidate to elaborate on their response to the initial question.





Question 1: Adaptability and Flexibility

Definition: Willingly adjust one's approach to meet the demands and needs of constantly changing conditions, situations and people, and to work effectively in difficult or ambiguous situations.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Tell me about a significant project or new responsibility you took on that involved changing plans or high ambiguity or both.

- Describe the project or responsibility.
- What changes were required? Why?
- What changes did you make?
- How did you feel about having to change your plan or strategy?
- How did things turn out?
- What would you do differently next time?

Notes

Situation

Action

Results

Question 2: Analytical Thinking and Decision Making

Definition: Gather, synthesize and evaluate information and evidence to determine possible alternatives and outcomes and make well-informed, timely decisions. Includes critical thinking and reasoning skills.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe a time when you needed to make a strategic decision, thinking several steps ahead and considering the positive and negative consequences on the organization.

- What was the strategic decision?
- What were the potential impacts on the organization?
- What factors did you take into account in making your decision?
- How did you balance the varied factors in making your decision?
- What decision did you make and what was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 3: Collaboration and Network Building

Definition: Identify, create and build capacity with informal and formal interdisciplinary networks and allied community groups, including people with lived and living experience, families and communities from diverse backgrounds, to support the provision of service delivery and achievement of the organization's objectives. People that use services include individuals, groups, organizations and communities.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Provide an example of a relationship you have established that benefitted the organization in terms of achieving its strategic goals.

- Describe the relationship and your role in developing it.
- How did the relationship help the organization?
- How was it tied to the strategic goals of the organization?
- In what way have you maintained the relationship since?

Notes

Situation

Action

Results

Question 4: Continuous Learning

Definition: Identify and pursue learning opportunities to enhance one's professional practice and development, and the delivery of high-quality programs and services.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Sometimes it is necessary to look at the future of the organization and the skills and expertise that may be required to move in that direction. Tell me about a time when you undertook a developmental opportunity beyond your own area to help meet future organizational needs.

- What future organizational needs were involved?
- What learning opportunities did you seek to address these needs?
- What did you learn from these opportunities?
- How useful was the developmental opportunity for you or for the organization?

Notes

Situation

Action

Results

Question 5: Creativity and Innovation

Definition: Use evidence-informed practices in innovative and creative ways to initiate effective new ways of working and advance the understanding of the field of practice. Innovation and creativity are achieved by collaborating with stakeholders to optimize improvements in service delivery and professional practice.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe what you have done in your current job or in another situation to nurture and promote creativity in others. Please be specific.

- Describe the situation, including your role and that of others at the time.
- What concretely did you do to promote creativity?
- How successful were your efforts? What makes you say that?
- What would you do differently another time?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 6: Culturally Safe and Anti-oppressive Practice

Definition: Provide inclusive, anti-oppressive, sex- and gender-sensitive, equitable and timely services to diverse populations, as defined by culture, age, sex, gender, language, ethnicity, socio-economic status, legal status, health, ability, sexual orientation, type and mode of substance use, continued substance use, concurrent conditions, etc. Challenge oppressive structures and unequal power relations, affirm and value the worth of all individuals, families, groups and communities, and protect the dignity of all with cultural awareness, competence, sensitivity, humility and cultural safety.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe a cultural or diversity challenge you have identified in your organization and what strategy you put in place to overcome or mitigate it.

- What was the challenge and what impact did it have on the organization?
- How did you recognize that it was something that needed addressing?
- What recommendations did you make or what strategy did you put in place to overcome this challenge?
- What impact did your recommendations or strategy have on mitigating the situation?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 7: Developing Others

Definition: Facilitate and motivate sustained learning and create learning opportunities and resources, as well as promote and respect others' ownership of learning outcomes. Includes creation of a continuous learning environment that fosters positive growth in both work and public contexts among peers, individuals, families, communities and other groups.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Tell me about the strategies and systems you have implemented to encourage and promote continuous learning in line with the goals and mission of the organization.

- Describe a situation where you have done this.
- How did you determine what competencies and skills would be required to successfully operate in the future?
- How did you ensure that your employees would possess these competencies?
- How do you know that your efforts in encouraging and promoting continuous learning were successful?

Notes

Situation

Action

Results

Question 8: Effective Communication

Definition: Articulate both verbally and in writing across a range of technologies in a manner that builds trust, respect and credibility, including in-person and technology-assisted communication (e.g., video conferencing, texting, social media). Checks with the audience to ensure the message is received and mutually understood. Includes active listening skills (attending, being silent, summarizing, paraphrasing, questioning and empathizing), communicating with gender sensitivity, cultural humility and congruent non-verbal communication.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe a situation where you had to explain a complex idea or problem to someone in a credible and persuasive manner.

- Who were you explaining the idea or problem to and why?
- Describe your communication approach or strategy.
- Describe your efforts in getting the message across or persuading the individual.

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 9: Ethical Conduct and Professionalism

Definition: Provide professional services according to the principles and values of integrity, competence, accountability, respect and trust to safeguard both self and others. Includes the development of professionalism and ethical behaviour in self and others (individuals, groups, organizations, communities).

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe a time when you developed or contributed to the development of ethical standards or policies for your organization.

- What standards or policies were you developing and why were they needed?
- What was your role?
- Describe the key ethical factors you had to consider.
- Describe your model of ethical decision making.
- What was the outcome of these efforts?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 10: Leadership

Definition: Help others achieve excellent results and create enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission, even in the face of critical debate and adversity. Model professionalism and integrity. These qualities apply to both informal and formal leadership roles.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe a time when you played a leadership role in developing your organization's vision or values.

- Describe the situation, your role and that of others in developing the vision or values.
- What process was used to develop the vision or values?
- What factors were especially critical in developing the visions or values?
- What was your role in dealing with these factors?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 11: Person-directed Care

Definition: Support people to exercise choice in the services and supports they are seeking, and to practice self-determination in all aspects of their unique goal of well-being. For those who work with people seeking substance use services, this means supporting and empowering them to achieve their well-being goals through collaboration. The service provider acts as a bridge and navigator to supports, knowledge, information and services.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Tell me about a time when you established or revised your organization's person-directed service standards.

- Describe the situation (e.g., What service standards were at issue? What was your role in establishing or revising the standards?).
- How did you go about establishing or revising the standards?
- Who else, if anyone, did you involve?
- What factors did you take into account in establishing or revising the standards?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 12: Planning and Organizing

Definition: Identify and prioritize tasks, develop and implement plans, evaluate outcomes, and adjust activities to achieve objectives.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe a time when you played a key role in developing and implementing a significant program or policy that affected the entire organization.

- Describe the situation, including your role and that of others.
- What was the program or policy?
- How did you contribute to planning the development or implementation of the program or policy?
- What was the outcome of this project?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 13: Self-care

Definition: Deliberately and continuously apply professional and personal principles of well-being. Intentionally support others to sustain optimal well-being, while maintaining physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Tell me about a time when you developed strategies or implemented programs to enhance self-care assessment or self-monitoring in your organization.

- Describe the situation in your organization.
- What strategy or program did you develop or implement to improve employee self-care assessment?
- What was the outcome?
- How did employee well-being change?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 14: Teamwork and Cooperation

Definition: Work cooperatively and productively with others within and across organizational units to achieve common goals; demonstrate respect, cooperation, collaboration and consensus-building.

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe how you and your team partnered with a team in another organization, department or area to achieve an organizational goal.

- Describe the situation.
- With whom did you partner? Why?
- How did the partnership help to achieve the goal?
- What was the result?

Notes

Situation

Action

Results

Evaluating the Interview

All the energy and effort devoted to capturing good job-related information during the selection interview will be lost if this information is not evaluated consistently and appropriately for all candidates. This section provides guidance on how to evaluate information from the candidate gathered through the competency-based interview.

Each behavioural question is designed to elicit information relevant to a specific competency. However, human behaviour can be complex and the following situations can arise:

- A behaviourally based question is asked focusing on one competency area, but a candidate provides an example that relates to another area.
- A candidate provides examples that relate to more than one competency area.
- A candidate provides examples that relate to the required competencies during the introductory phases of the interview or during the close of the interview.

The whole interview should, therefore, be reviewed carefully for evidence of the competencies being assessed. One method for doing this is to circle each behavioural example and, if one demonstrates a competency other than the one intended by the question, note the competency demonstrated alongside the example. Then cross-reference this example in the section of the interview tool devoted to that competency.

Once all relevant information from the interview has been reviewed and correctly classified, the interviewer is in a position to understand and evaluate a candidate's past behaviour for each competency.

The next step is to assign a rating, or score, for each competency, using the rating scale below. The assigned score is based on the candidate's demonstration of the relevant behaviour indicators for the proficiency levels in the competency profile at the beginning of this tool. Refer as necessary to the *Behavioural Competencies for Canada's Substance Use Workforce* for an extended sample of appropriate behaviour indicators for each competency.

Record the score in the scoring grid on the next page. Add any particular comments needed to support the rating.

If there are multiple interviewers, each interviewer completes the scoring grid individually, without consulting the others. Upon completion of all scoring, the interviewers discuss the ratings they assigned and arrive at a consensus score for each competency.

Interview Rating Scale	
5	Well Above Standard (<i>significantly exceeds requirements</i>) Evidence of candidate's demonstration of the competency is exceptional and reflects superior ability to perform; all aspects of the competency are demonstrated to a high degree.
4	Above Standard (<i>exceeds requirements</i>) Evidence of candidate's demonstration of the competency is above average and reflects more than an adequate ability to perform; all or most aspects of the competency are demonstrated at an above-average level.
3	Meets Standard (<i>meets requirement</i>) Evidence of candidate's demonstration of the competency meets expectations and reflects an adequate ability to perform; candidate may have demonstrated minor weaknesses in some aspects of the competency, but none of major significance.
2	Below Standard (<i>falls below requirements</i>) Evidence of candidate's demonstration of the competency is inadequate in key respects.
1	Well Below Standard (<i>falls significantly below requirements</i>) Evidence of candidate's demonstration of the competency is far from adequate in all or most respects.

Scoring Grid

Competency	Interviewer Score	Rationale/Comments	Consensus Score
Adaptability and Flexibility			
Analytical Thinking and Decision Making			
Collaboration and Network Building			
Continuous Learning			
Creativity and Innovation			
Culturally Safe and Anti-oppressive Practice			
Developing Others			
Effective Communication			
Ethical Conduct and Professionalism			
Leadership			
Person-directed Care			
Planning and Organizing			
Self-care			
Teamwork and Cooperation			