BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance Use Workforce v. 2

Interview Tool for Support and Outreach

Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

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INTERVIEW TOOL FOR SUPPORT AND OUTREACH

This document provides suggested interview questions for the **Support and Outreach** 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 **Support and Outreach** 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 Support and Outreach

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
Support and Outreach	Support Worker, Outreach Worker, Alcohol Worker, Drug Worker, Substance Use Worker, Drug Outreach Worker, Community Outreach Worker, Community Liaison Worker, Attendant

Competency Required	Proficiency Levels
Adaptability and Flexibility	3
Analytical Thinking and Decision Making	2
Collaboration and Network Building	2
Continuous Learning	2
Creativity and Innovation	2
Culturally Safe and Anti-oppressive Practice	3
Effective Communication	3
Ethical Conduct and Professionalism	2
Interpersonal Rapport	3
Person-directed Care	3
Planning and Organizing	2
Self-care	3
Self-management	2

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 3   PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a time when you foresaw that a change was to be implemented and prepared yourself for it.

- What change did you foresee?
- What did you perceive to be the impact?
- How did you plan for the change?
- What was the outcome?

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.

LEVEL 2   DEVELOPING

Question

Tell me about a situation where you had to make a decision or recommendation, first weighing the advantages and disadvantages of a number of options.

- Describe the situation and what decision was required.
- What were the options available to you?
- How did the options come to be identified?
- What factors did you take into consideration when determining how to proceed?
- What did you decide to do?
- 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 2   DEVELOPING

Question

Maintaining contact with others outside your own work unit can benefit both your work and theirs. Tell me about a time when you made a point of staying in touch with a contact outside your work unit and it proved to be beneficial to your work and to theirs.

- What were you working on?
- What did you do to maintain contact?
- In what ways did maintaining contact prove to be beneficial to your work and theirs?

Notes		
Situation	Action	Results

Question 4: Continuous Learning

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

LEVEL 2   DEVELOPING

Question

Please describe a time when you made a point of keeping current in an area or subject that was evolving or changing.

- What was the situation?
- In what area were you trying to keep up to date?
- Describe the methods you used to keep updated.
- To what extent did you succeed in keeping updated?
- What impact, if any, did keeping up to date have?

Notes		
Situation	Action	Results

Question 5: Creativity and Innovation

Definition: Use evidence-based and 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 2   DEVELOPING

Question

Please describe a situation where you came up with an improved approach to getting work done or addressing an issue.

- Describe the situation.
- What made you consider modifying or implementing a new way of doing things?
- Describe the new approach you came up with.
- How was it an improvement over the existing approach?

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 3   PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a cultural barrier you identified in your community and what strategy you put in place to address it.

- What was the cultural barrier and what impact was it having on the community?
- How did you recognize it as a barrier that needed addressing?
- How did you and the community work together to address the barrier?
- What impact did your collective recommendations or strategy have on mitigating the barrier?

Notes		
Situation	Action	Results

Question 7: 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 3   PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a time when you had to adjust your communication for a diverse audience.

- What was the purpose of your communication?
- In what way was the audience diverse?
- How did you tailor your communication to achieve its purpose?
- How did you know that your audience understood what you were trying to communicate?

Notes		
Situation	Action	Results

Question 8: 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 2   DEVELOPING

Question

Please describe an ethical dilemma you faced and how you resolved it.

- What was the ethical dilemma?
- How did you address it?
- What was the outcome?
- What has been the long-term effect of that?

Notes		
Situation	Action	Results

Question 9: Interpersonal Rapport

Definition: Establish and maintain relationships based on mutual respect and trust, appropriate sensitivity and transparency, empathy and compassion with people using services, colleagues, and professional associates and the greater community. Encompasses skills of tact, engagement and sensitivity in all encounters with others.

LEVEL 3   PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a time when your ability to communicate effectively in a highly sensitive situation helped to produce a successful outcome.

• What was the situation and what made it sensitive?

• What aspects of your communication did you focus on to help produce a positive outcome?

• What was the outcome?

Notes		
Situation	Action	Results

Question 10: 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 3   PROFICIENT

Question

Tell me about a time when you worked collaboratively with people to resolve a complex issue or meet their needs.

- What was the issue and how did you respond?
- What made the issue complex?
- How did you go about helping the people using services?
- What was the outcome? What difference did your service make?
- What would you do differently next time?

Notes		
Situation	**Action**	**Results**

Question 11: Planning and Organizing

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

LEVEL 2   DEVELOPING

Question

Tell me about a time when you needed to break a large project or major activity into smaller components to get it done.

- What project or activity were you responsible for?
- How did you break it into smaller components?
- How did you go about deciding what needed to be done first, second, third, etc.?
- How did things work out?

Notes		
Situation	Action	Results

Question 12: 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 3   PROFICIENT

Question

Please describe a situation when you assisted a peer who had challenges with self-care.

- Describe the issues related to self-care that you were concerned about.
- How did you assist your peer?
- What was the outcome?
- What has been the long-term effect of your assistance?

Notes		
Situation	Action	Results

Question 13: Self-management

Definition: Appropriately manage one's own emotions and strong feelings; maintain a calm and respectful composure under a broad range of challenging circumstances; and think clearly and stay focused under pressure. Encompasses self-regulation and mindfulness.

LEVEL 2   DEVELOPING

Question

Sometimes we need to navigate complex problems and maintain the necessary focus despite challenges. Tell me about a time when it was especially important for you to maintain focus and composure when navigating a complex situation.

- Describe the situation.
- What were your strategies for maintaining focus and composure?
- How successful were you at dealing with the complex problem or situation?
- How do you know if you were successful?

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** *(significantly exceeds requirements)* 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** *(exceeds requirements)* 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** *(meets requirement)* 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** *(falls below requirements)* Evidence of candidate's demonstration of the competency is inadequate in key respects.
1	**Well Below Standard** *(falls significantly below requirements)* 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			
Effective Communication			
Ethical Conduct and Professionalism			
Interpersonal Rapport			
Person-directed Care			
Planning and Organizing			
Self-care			
Self-management			