

BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance
Use Workforce v. 3

**Interview Tool for
Public Safety Personnel**



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

Evidence. Engagement. Impact.

MODIFYING INTERVIEWING TOOLS FOR THE NEW OCCUPATIONAL CLUSTERS

Each of the new occupational clusters has an associated competency profile that outlines the required **behavioural competencies** and the recommended **proficiency levels**.

There are different positions that can fall under each of the occupational clusters. Therefore, the competency profile for each occupational cluster should be reviewed to determine whether modifications are required. For example, some of the positions that fall under a particular occupational cluster may require a different proficiency level for one or more of the competencies. In these cases, adjust the proficiency level to best reflect the position of interest. Similarly, some of the positions that fall under a particular occupational cluster may not require some of the competencies included in the competency profile. In these cases, remove any nonessential competencies to ensure that **only** essential competencies are focused on during the interview.

The steps for modifying the existing interview tools for the new occupational clusters are outlined below. Additionally, Figure 1 illustrates the steps in a flow chart.

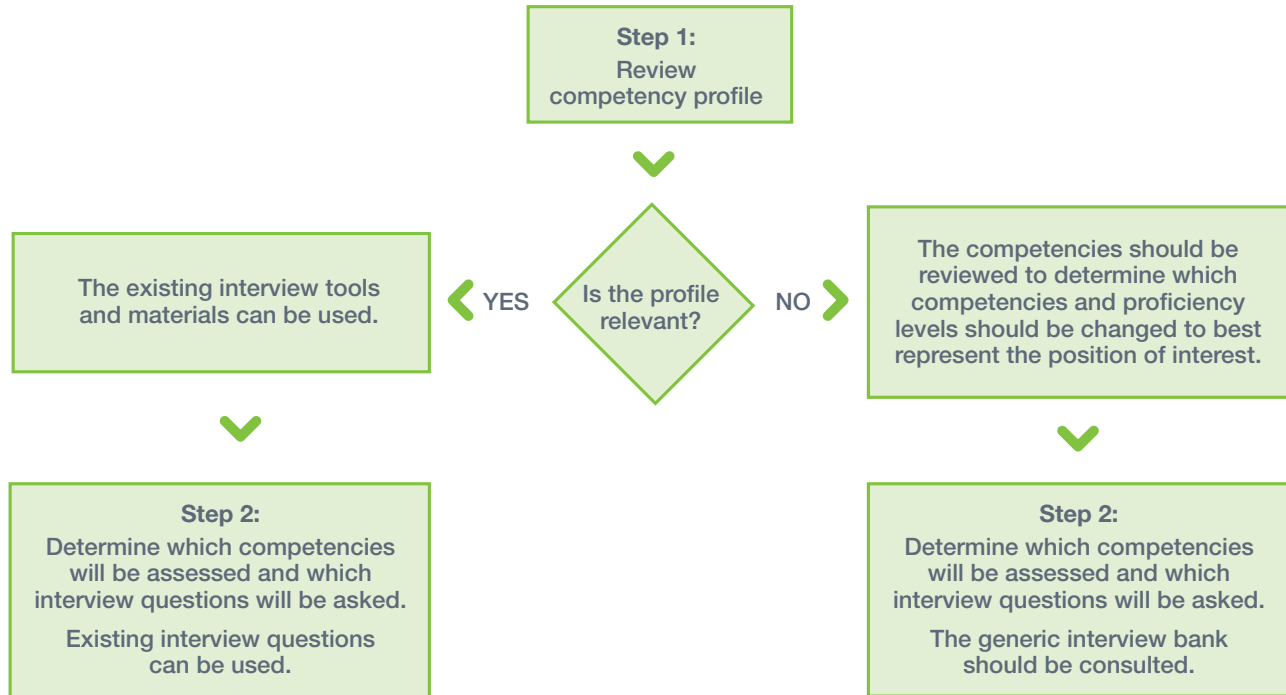
Step 1: Review Competency Profile to Determine Relevance.

- If the competency profile is relevant (i.e., no changes are required), then the existing interview tools and materials can be used.
- If the competency profile is not relevant, then the competencies should be reviewed to determine which competencies and proficiency levels should be changed to best represent the position of interest.

Step 2: Determine Which Competencies Will Be Assessed in the Interview and Decide on the Questions that Will Be Asked.

- Each competency profile is associated with sample questions for the relevant proficiency levels.
 - If no changes were made to the competency profile, then the existing questions can be used.
 - If changes were made, then the generic interview bank should be consulted to help select and adapt alternative questions.

Figure 1. Modifying interview tools for the new occupational clusters



Competencies and Interviewing Best Practices

- Prioritize the competencies you will evaluate.
A typical competency profile will consist of **only** critical competencies (i.e., those essential to perform the job successfully). Generally, a profile *will not exceed 12 competencies*. Although all these competencies are essential, *not all competencies can be assessed through an interview*. For a one-hour interview, a reasonable number of competencies and questions to assess or ask can range between five and seven.
- Make it relevant to your work and organization.
The questions included in this guide are samples of **generic behavioural interview questions** for each proficiency level of each of the behavioural competencies. These questions can be used with their original phrasing, or they can be used as the basis for developing more tailored questions.
- Maximize efficiency and prioritization by minimizing redundancy.
In deciding which questions to ask, the **relative importance of a competency should be considered**. In some cases, there will be overlap between competencies. In these cases, only assess **one** of these competencies as the interviewee's answer may provide valuable information that is relevant to the overlapping competency. For example, two competencies that overlap with one another are **Effective Communication** and **Interpersonal Rapport**. If both competencies are included in the competency profile, only assess **one** of these competencies.

New Occupational Cluster: Public Safety Personnel

Interviewing Tool for Positions Related to Public Safety Personnel

Position Title:

Candidate's Name:

Interviewer's Name:

Interviewer's Title:

Date of Interview:

Location of Interview:

Interview Preparation Checklist

- Review resumé and candidate file for skills and experience that are relevant to the job competition.
- Review the required competencies for the position.
- Determine which five to seven competencies to focus on in the interview.

Suggested Competency Profile

Job Cluster	Example Job Titles
Public Safety Personnel	Intake Worker, Corrections Officer, Parole Officer, Police Officer, Ambulance (e.g., Paramedic) and Rescue Personnel, Border Services Officer, Communications and Dispatch Specialist

Competency Required	Proficiency Level
Adaptability and Flexibility	3
Analytical Thinking and Decision Making	3
Collaboration and Network Building	2
Continuous Learning	3
Creativity and Innovation	2
Culturally Safe and Anti-Opressive Practice	3
Developing Others	3
Effective Communication	3
Ethical Conduct and Professionalism	3
Interpersonal Rapport	3
Leadership	3
Person-Directed Care	3
Planning and Organizing	2
Self-Care	3
Self-Management	2
Self-Motivation	3

Sample Questions

Choose five to seven of the most relevant or most important questions.

Question 1: 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 style to build trust with someone very different from you.

- What was the purpose of your communication?
- In what ways was the person or group different than you?
- 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 2: 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 3 [PROFICIENT]

Question: Describe a time when you had to ensure that others understood the organization's ethics and values.

- What were the values and ethics involved?
- How did you deal with the situation?
- How did you model professionalism and ethical behaviour in this situation?
- What information did you communicate?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 3: Adaptability and Flexibility

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

LEVEL 3 [PROFICIENT]

Question: Tell us about a time when you adapted your approach when responding to a situation involving a person who uses substances.

- What made you realize that you had to adjust your approach?
- How did you respond?
- What was the outcome?
- How might you do things differently next time?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 4: 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 3 [PROFICIENT]

Question: Tell us about a time when you had to make a quick decision in a situation that involved a person who uses substances.

- What was the situation?
- What did you do?
- What was the decision?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 5: 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 who use services include individuals, groups, organizations and communities.

LEVEL 2 [DEVELOPING]

Question: Describe a time when you developed community contacts to help respond to situations involving people who use substances.

- Describe the situation.
- How did you develop the network?
- How did you identify the appropriate contact to make?
- Who was involved?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 6: 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 3 [PROFICIENT]

Question: Tell us about a time when you shared best practices with others on how to respond to situations involving people who use substances.

- What was the situation?
- How did you identify the learning opportunity?
- How did you implement these best practices?
- What challenges or resistance did you experience and how did you manage it?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 7: 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 system partners to optimize improvements in service delivery and professional practice.

LEVEL 2 [DEVELOPING]

Question: Describe a time when you responded to an acute situation involving unique circumstances or needs unfamiliar to you.

- Describe the situation.
- What were the challenges?
- What were the methods or techniques you used?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 8: Culturally Safe and Anti-Oppressive Practices

Definition: Provide inclusive, anti-oppressive, sex- and gender-sensitive, equitable and timely services to diverse populations and cultures, including but not limited to, 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, 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. (*Refers to the distinct cultures that exist around Indigeneity, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, substance use, etc.)

LEVEL 3 [PROFICIENT]

Question: Describe a time when you addressed inappropriate behaviour or discriminatory practices toward a person who uses substances.

- Describe the situation.
- How did you approach this situation?
- Were there any challenges with your approach?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 9: 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 3 [PROFICIENT]

Question: Describe a time when you created a safe environment for learning and sharing with other people.

- Describe the situation.
- How did you create a safe environment?
- Why was it important to create a safe environment for people to share and learn?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 10: 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, 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 you looked for ways to understand the perspectives of people who use substances.

- Describe the situation.
- What did you do to seek diverse points of view?
- How did you mitigate differences in opinions?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results



Question 11: 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 3 [PROFICIENT]

Question: Describe a time when you led the response to a crisis involving a person who uses substances.

- What was the crisis?
- What was the goal or anticipated result from your or your team's intervention?
- How did you respond to this situation?
- What role did you take in the response?
- What worked well? What didn't work well with your approach?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 12: Person-Directed Care

Definition: Support people to exercise choice in the services and supports they are seeking, and to practise self-determination in all aspects of their unique goal of well-being. Also described as service engagement led by people seeking services. 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: Describe a situation where you supported the autonomy and choice of an individual you interacted with.

- What was the situation?
- How did you support their autonomy and choice?
- How did the individual respond?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 13: 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 us about a time when you found relevant resources and service providers to help support a person who uses substances.

- Describe the situation.
- How did you identify the resources and service providers?
- What did you do?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 14: 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: Describe a time when you shared best practices for self-care with your peers in coping with stress and fatigue.

- Describe the situation.
- What were the best practices?
- How did you share the best practices?
- How did they help you and your peers?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 15: Self-Management

Definition: Appropriately manage one's 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: Tell us about a time when you responded to a situation that was mentally or emotionally challenging to you.

- Describe the situation.
- What were the emotional or mental challenges that you personally experienced as a result?
- What did you do to manage these thoughts and feelings?
- What was the outcome?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 16: Self-Motivation

Definition: Remain motivated and focused on goals until the best possible results are achieved, with both passion for making a difference in the substance use field and persistence despite confronting obstacles, resistance and setbacks.

LEVEL 3 [PROFICIENT]

Question: Tell us about a time when you looked for additional solutions to respond to a situation involving substance use.

- Describe the situation.
- How did you approach this situation?
- What was the outcome?
- What would you do differently next time?

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-Opressive Practice			
Developing Others			
Effective Communication			
Ethical Conduct and Professionalism			
Interpersonal Rapport			
Leadership			
Person-Directed Care			
Planning and Organizing			
Self-Care			
Self-Management			
Self-Motivation			