

Guidelines for Interviewing Behavioral Health Staff in Integrated Settings

Before the Interview

- Make sure the job posting has clear expectations of the position, as well as who is the “right fit” for the position.
 - Include language requirements needed.
 - Include credentials or training level needed.
 - Include coverage hours or days needed (evenings? Weekends?)
- Develop a consistent interview process to make it easier to compare applicants.
- If there is more than one interviewer in the room, have agreed upon signs or special questions that when given or asked, indicate to your team mates that you are done interviewing the applicant. This will help avoid continuing with an applicant longer than is necessary.

Sample Interview Questions and Requests (In No Particular Order):

- What makes you interested in working in integrated care? How would you define or describe integrated care? How is working in an integrated setting different than working in other settings? What experience prepares you for working in an integrated setting?
- Talk me through what you consider to be a good warm-handoff and give an example.
- What is your experience working with teams, what do you see as the value of working on a team?
- Tell me what you know about this organization and the position.
- What was the last thing you did to make your job more efficient and/or effective?
- What have you done to reduce costs or save time in your current position?
- Tell me about the results your last workplace evaluation.
 - You can ask them to submit a copy.
- Give an example of how you adapt to change.
- Give an example of how you solved a specific problem.
- What is one policy in your current organization that you would change and/or would add and why?
- Give an example of how you have provided culturally competent care?
- Give an example of your creativity at work.
- What modality do you find yourself using most often and why do you find it effective? Which evidence-based practices are you trained in?
 - Look out for their knowledge of what an EBP is and is not.
- Give an example where you used XXX intervention with a client/patient.

- Describe something you have done that shows your commitment to ensuring customer satisfaction.
- What tools do you currently incorporate into your practice?
- Talk me through how you assess a patient/client for suicidality.
- When do you feel it is appropriate to refer a patient / client to a higher level of care?
- What is your experience with providing a safety planning intervention?
- What is your experience with working with people with co-occurring disorders?
 - Look out for their understanding that the term “co-occurring disorder” relates to substance use
- How do you manage a late patient / client?
- What are some of the ways in which you engage with a client/patient?
- How have you used data and reporting to make programmatic changes to the center or your practice? Tell me, how you have used data clinically? How do you measure or track clinical outcomes or successes? Give an example of how you used data.
- Tell me about a concern or conflict you had with a manager/peer and how you handled it.
- What are some of your self-care activities?
- Discuss a time you stepped into a challenging situation, took charge, fostered collaboration and achieved quality results.
- What is your understanding of productivity and capacity expectations?
- What is your experience working with children and their families?
- What is rewarding for you about working with children? With families?
- Tell me about a time when you had a difficult situation with a family and how you resolved it?

Areas of Focus During the Interview

- Balance the types of questions such as behavioral questions, experience verification questions, opinion questions, competency questions, etc.
 - Include more behavioral and competency questions to see how the applicant applies skills and shows how past behavior can predict future behavior.
- When asking questions, be as neutral and as non-leading as possible, so that an applicant gives you an unbiased answer and not based on what they perceive to be the “right” answer.
- Start interview by asking the applicant about what they know about your agency / organization. This can show whether the applicant did their research and took time to gather information before they showed up.
- Ask their understanding of integrated care, what is it, why are they interested?
- Depending on your major focus, other potential topic areas to cover and ask about are their experiences with and/or perceptions of:
 - Substance use
 - Documentation experience, use of an electronic health record and/or Collaborative documentation

- Client/patient follow-up and outreach
- Prescribing controlled substances
- Population health management and use of metrics
- Session times, management of walk-ins, late arrivals and other patient flow
- Use of medication assisted treatment
- Training, professional development, clinical and administrative supervision
- Make sure to be transparent and clear around expectations and requirements of the position.
- Consider using a case vignette to observe typing proficiency, diagnostic and clinical assessment, as well as treatment planning skills by asking the applicant to use the vignette to create a case profile and small treatment plan for the client/patient case.

After the Interview

- Reflect on the applicant's ease of answering, their presentation, their professional attire, etc.
- Did they have thoughtful questions about the position?
- Did they come prepared with extra resumes, to take notes, references, questions to ask, etc.?
- Keep interview notes in a routine and objective way to help compare applicants and to substantiate hiring or not hiring an individual. For example, consider a Likert scale. All notes including comments written on a resume/CV are a part of the applicant's job application could be subject to review.