Behavioral Interviewing

A Users Quick Guide

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Behavioral Interviewing: A Users Quick Guide

Instructions for Frontline Supervisor completing interview

This interview guide will provide you with information on how to best use structured behavioral interview questions. It is intended to be used for external Direct Support Professional candidates. This tool is part of a greater toolkit developed with ANCOR by the University of Minnesota's RTC on Community Living. Its purpose is to provide you with tools and resources to recruit, select and hire the best possible candidate for your organization.

Prepping for the Interview

As you conduct the interview, use the following Likert scale to assign a score to each response

>   5 = Excellent; response demonstrated knowledge and experience, and included concrete examples
>   3 = Average; response demonstrated some knowledge or experience, and included limited examples
>   1 = Poor; response demonstrated no knowledge or experience, and included no examples

For the best and most efficient use of this tool, we make the following recommendations:

- Prior to the interview, identify which questions will be asked. having too many questions can be frustrating for the interviewer and interviewee; 8-10 questions are sufficient for a one-hour interview.
- Choose only the questions that are in alignment with your organization's mission and goals
- Ask the same questions of all applicants
- Use probing and clarifying follow-up questions as necessary to gather complete information

Interview Question Breakdown

There are 15 pre-organized categories with multiple questions available to provide options for discovering as much about the applicant as possible within a specific area. Choose questions based on what type of position you are looking for the person to fill.

Guiding Principles
- The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior in similar circumstances that was recent or that reflected long-standing behavior patterns.
- Ask candidates to describe situations they have faced and how they handled them. (Situation, Behavior, Outcome).
- If you use more than one interviewer, divide up the competency areas ahead of time, allow each interview to address a smaller number of areas.
- When you sell your organization be realistic.
- Keep your questions open-ended.
- Start with the assumption that the candidate has no skills and allow him or her to demonstrate capabilities.

Things to Avoid
- Assuming that people are better at the things they like to do.
- Taking information on strengths and weaknesses at face value.
- Asking why do you want the job or what are your career goals (most candidates cannot predict accurately their future career paths).
- Statements of attitude and philosophies are poor predictors of people's actual behaviors.
- Hypothetical questions force candidates to say what the he/she thinks the interviewer wants to hear.

Strategies for Gathering Information in an Interview

Experience Questions
- Used to put candidate at ease, provide overview of past experience, and to set stage for other questions
- Example questions
  - Duties in last job
  - Responsibilities in last position
  - What do you typically do when you have a difference of opinion with your boss
  - Describe a typical day in your most recent position

Credentials
- Obtain information about a person's education, employment history, and past achievements which is verifiable using other sources
- Example questions
  - What degrees do you hold?
  - What was your major?
  - What special recognition have you received?

Self-Evaluation Opinion
- Yields information about what the applicant thinks about a topic
  - Reveals areas for probing
  - Provides information the applicant thinks is important
  - Invites applicant to say what he thinks you want to hear
  - Makes a candidate who thinks quick and speaks fluently seem very competent
  - Don't provide any evidence about what the candidate has done
  - Falsely implies that if a candidate likes a task that he or she can perform it

Behavior Description
- Situation, behavior, outcome - detailed accounts of specific events from an applicant's past
  - Example: tell me about the last time you solved a problem where you had to do a lot of hard thinking and analysis; what difficulties did you encounter, how did you overcome them, what was the result?
- Types of Behavioral Questions
  - Superlative adjectives
    - most/least
    - best/worst
    - hardest/easiest
  - First and last questions.
    - Tell me about the last time you...
  - Accomplishment.
    - Describe your most significant accomplishment in ...

Advantages of these questions more objective assessment of applicant qualifications, applicants enjoy telling what they've done, top performers can describe accomplishments
- Disadvantages: takes more time, requires more skill and effort

Technical Questions

- Technical questions - help determine if a candidate has the technical knowledge needed
- Example: How do you write a goal or objective?

Advantages of technical questions: can provide clues about whether the applicant has the skills indicated on the credential

- Disadvantage: may be easier to collect as a work sample test; requires technical knowledge to evaluate the response.