BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance Use Workforce v. 2





Evidence. Engagement. Impact.

GENERIC QUESTIONS FOR THE BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

The primary responsibility of the interviewer is to collect behavioural information about the candidate's experiences and accomplishments that relates to the target job, so that the best selection decision can be made.

The questions provided in the following pages are sample **generic behavioural interview questions** for each proficiency level of each of the Behavioural Competencies. Use these questions as a foundation for developing job-specific interview questions that are relevant to the proficiency levels you have identified for the position.

Use the definitions of the Behavioural Competencies and the interview tools for specific occupations available on our website as a supplement to the generic interview questions.

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Adaptability and Flexibility

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Tell me about a time when you needed to recognize the value of another person's point of view about the best way to handle a situation or problem when it differed from your own.

- What was the situation or circumstance and how did you respond to it?
- Describe your perspective and the other person's perspective on how it should be handled.
- How did you decide on the approach given your differing perspectives?
- How did the situation or problem end up being handled?
- What would you do differently next time?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Provide an example of a situation where you changed your behaviour or approach according to the circumstances and the people involved.

- Why did you need to change your approach?
- Describe how you changed your approach or behaviour.
- How did you respond and adapt to the situation?
- What was the outcome?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a time when you anticipated a change that would impact your organization.

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

Question

Provide an example of a situation where you adapted your behaviour or approach in response to barriers to engagement that were experienced by a community or population.

- Why did you need to change your approach?
- What were the barriers experienced by the community or population that were of surprise to you?
- Describe how you changed your approach or behaviour.
- How did you adapt to the situation?
- What was the outcome?
- What would you do differently next time?

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?

Analytical Thinking and Decision Making

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Describe a situation where you were able to identify a certain factor that was contributing to a complex issue.

- Describe the issue.
- What was the key factor contributing to the complexity of the issue?
- How did you identify it?
- What were you able to do to address the key factor contributing to the complexity of the situation?
- What would you do differently next time?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Tell me about a situation where you had to make a decision or recommendation.

- Describe the situation and your response.
- 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?

Question

Describe a situation where an individual wanted to withdraw from services and you had to make a decision or recommendation.

- Describe the situation, barriers (structural or other) and your response.
- What were the options available to you?
- What were the advantages and disadvantages?
- 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?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Tell me about a time when you used evidence-informed knowledge, past experience or consultation with others to determine a solution to a complex issue where no precedent existed.

- Describe the nature of the issue and why it required a creative solution.
- What factors did you consider in trying to understand the issue in greater depth?
- What knowledge, experience or consultation did you use to analyze the issue and why?
- What solution did you develop and what were the results?

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe a time when you needed to make a strategic decision and needed to consider the possible outcomes for 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?

Collaboration and Network Building

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Talk about a time when you were particularly effective in responding to a request from another team, organization or community.

- What need or request was involved?
- What was required of you?
- How did you respond to the request?
- What was the outcome?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Tell me about a time when you made a point of staying in touch with a contact outside your work unit that 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?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a time when you developed a network of contacts to address a specific need.

- Why did you need to build this network of contacts?
- How did you build this network of contacts?
- What was the result of your efforts?
- What has been the long-term effect of your efforts?

Question

Describe a time when you facilitated the development of a community collaboration to address a specific need.

- Why was the collaboration needed?
- What was your role in facilitating the collaboration?
- What were the results of your efforts?

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?

Continuous Learning

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL Question

Describe a time when you learned from previous experiences to improve your work.

- Describe a specific situation.
- What was the experience you learned from?
- What did you learn?
- Describe any other opportunities you've had to apply this knowledge to other situations.

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Describe an example of 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?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a time when you sought a challenging learning opportunity or experience that was outside your usual role or area of expertise but that contributed to enhancing your performance in your current role.

- What learning opportunity did you pursue? Why?
- How did your learning apply to your work?
- What impact, if any, did this experience have on your performance?
- What effect, if any, did this have on your current work area?

Question

Please describe an example of a time when you needed to learn a new approach or strategy related to health promotion.

- What was the situation? Who was your audience?
- In what area were you trying to increase your knowledge or skills?
- Describe the methods you used.
- Talk about lessons learned. What would you do again and what would you change?
- What impact did the learning have on you, the situation and others?

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

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 the organization?

Creativity and Innovation

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Tell me about a time when you questioned a practice or procedure in your job or work area that you thought should be changed.

- What was the practice or procedure?
- What changes did you propose?
- How did you get others to consider and approve your proposed changes?
- Did you get a chance to try the new approach?
- What was the outcome?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

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

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

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a complex issue that you have been faced with and how you generated a new approach or explanation or solution.

- What was the issue?
- What new approach or explanation did you come up with?
- What was new about it?
- How did you arrive at the solution?

Question

Describe a complex situation that you faced and how you used the best available evidence to recommend a new or improved approach to your organization's services and supports?

- What was the context or environment?
- From where did you draw your inspiration?
- What adaptations did you introduce?
- How did you know that your strategy was effective?
- How did it impact your audience or community?

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 specifically did you do to promote creativity?
- How successful were your efforts? What makes you say that?
- What would you do differently another time?

Culturally Safe and Anti-oppressive Practice

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Give an example of when you adjusted your actions in working with a person, family, group or community with a different culture, belief, value system or background from your own.

- What was the situation and how did you respond?
- What difference did you identify?
- Why did you need to adjust your actions and what did you do?
- How did it work out?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Describe a time when your understanding of people's* cultural, ethnic or spiritual context, or sexual orientation supported you to build rapport and mutual respect.

* People can include individuals, families, friends, groups, communities and organizations.

- Describe a particular instance.
- How did you respond?
- How did your understanding help you to build rapport?
- What impact did this have on the relationship?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Tell me about an experience where you worked collaboratively with an individual, family, group or community from a diverse background (e.g., culture, faiths, sexual orientation) and how your understanding of their circumstances prepared you to provide a service tailored specifically to their needs.

- Describe the situation, background and unique characteristics of the person, family, group or community.
- How did you assess the sensitivities of the situation?
- What practices, services or techniques did you employ to adapt to their needs?
- What was the outcome?

Question

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

- What was the 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?

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe a systemic barrier within your organization that prevents engagement or access for people, families, groups or communities from diverse backgrounds. What strategy did you put in place to overcome or mitigate it?

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

Developing Others

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Tell me about a time when you offered your advice or assistance to others because you possessed related experience.

- What was the situation?
- What kind of advice did you provide?
- How was your assistance received?
- How did it work out?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Tell me how, in your current job or a previous job, you assessed the development needs of team members and ensured that they were met.

- Describe a particular instance.
- How did you recognize the need for development of team members?
- How did you meet these needs?
- What impact did this have on the overall effectiveness of your team?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Give an example of what you have done to encourage team members to learn from each other.

- What was the specific situation?
- What did team members have to offer each other in this case?
- What did you do to facilitate an exchange that would allow them to share their knowledge?
- How was this exercise successful?

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 vision 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?

Effective Communication

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Sharing information is often important to success at work. Tell me about a time when your listening and speaking skills proved to be especially critical in ensuring that an objective was met.

- Describe the situation (e.g., work being done; your role; others' roles) and how you responded.
- What were you or others trying to communicate?
- In what way did your listening skills prove to be useful?
- How did you ensure that others would really understand what you had to say?
- What challenges, if any, did you encounter in communicating with others?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Give me an example of a time when establishing two-way communication with an individual or group required awareness on your part.

- What was the situation?
- What barriers did you experience to establishing two-way communication?
- What steps did you take to address these barriers and to ensure that communication was two-way vs. one-way?
- To what extent were you successful in your communication efforts?
- What leads you to say that? On what evidence do you base that evaluation?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a time when you had to adjust your communication style 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?

Question

Describe a time when you had to adapt the content and style of your communication for diverse stakeholders to achieve consensus.

- In what ways were the stakeholders diverse?
- How did you tailor your communication to achieve consensus?
- How did you ensure that people received the information they needed?
- What were the lessons learned?

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

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

- Who was your audience and what was the idea or issue you were explaining?
- Describe your communication approach or strategy.
- Describe your success in getting the message across or persuading the stakeholder or the organization.

Ethical Conduct and Professionalism

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Tell me about a particular time when you had to ensure that your behaviour would reflect your organization's ethics or values.

- What was the situation and how did you respond?
- Why did you feel your behaviour was important?
- How did you react? Why?
- What was the reaction of others?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

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 were the lessons learned?

Question

Describe a situation in which you contributed to a discussion of how ethical issues might impact a proposed community action.

- What was your contribution?
- Describe the key ethical factors you had to consider.
- What was the outcome of these efforts?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a specific example 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?
- What information did you communicate?
- What was the outcome?

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe a time when you have 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?

Interpersonal Rapport

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Describe an example of a time when you changed your communication style or actions, responding to others' feelings, opinions, experiences and background.

- Describe the situation and how you responded.
- Who was involved?
- What types of feelings, opinions, experiences or backgrounds did you have to consider?
- How did you change your communication?
- What was the result? What was the response?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Describe an instance when you took into account the individual needs of people in order to build a relationship of trust with them.

- What was the situation?
- What individual characteristics or factors did you consider?
- How did you use your understanding of these needs or factors to build trust?
- How do you know that the relationship was successful?

Question

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

- What was your contribution?
- Describe the key ethical factors you had to consider.
- What was the outcome of these efforts?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a specific example when you had to ensure that others understood the organization's ethics and values.

- 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?

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Describe an example of a time when you sought to continually expand your network of contacts to meet one or more strategic goals.

- Describe the situation, including the strategic goals involved and your role in meeting them.
- What did you do to expand your network of contacts and relationships?
- How successful were you in identifying and building relationships with the new contacts?
- How did this expanded network contribute to meeting your organization's strategic goals?
- How do you know?

Leadership

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Describe a time when your role or work was contributing to the achievement of the organization's mission.

- What was the situation and how did you respond?
- Why did you feel your work was important?
- What did you do as a result of your understanding?
- What was the reaction of others?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Describe a time when the members of your team did not have the basic resources needed to effectively do their jobs and you provided support.

- What was the situation and how did you respond?
- What did you do to address this problem?
- What was the outcome or response?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a time when you were required to assist others to help them successfully navigate barriers related to a change in their work or the organization.

- What was the situation? What change affected these employees?
- What was your role?
- What method did you use to support them?
- How did you respond?
- What was the result?

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

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

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

Person-directed Care

In the questions below, "people" can include individuals, families, friends, groups, communities and organizations.

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Describe a situation where you worked collaboratively with people seeking services to respond to a request or need.

- Describe the situation, including the need or request.
- What was your role in meeting the request?
- What did you do to meet the request?
- What effect did your response to the people using services have on the work being done?
- Would you do anything differently next time?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Describe a time when you actively maintained a collaborative relationship with people using services and their external supports.

- Describe the situation.
- Was any plan for staying in touch put in place at the start of the activity?
- What role, if any, did the people using services have in staying in touch?
- What impact, if any, did staying in touch have on the activity?

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?

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?

Planning and Organizing

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL Question

Provide an example of a time when planning and organizing your work tasks was especially critical in meeting a tough deadline or to deal with several priorities.

- What was the situation?
- Describe how you planned and organized your tasks.
- How did you ensure that your tasks were completed on time and that priorities were met?
- What was the outcome?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Describe 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 and in what sequence?
- What was the outcome?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Describe challenges you encountered in coordinating a number of complex activities or projects and how your planning and organizing abilities proved to be key in keeping things on track.

- What activities or projects were you responsible for?
- What challenges did you encounter?
- How did your planning or organizing skills prove to be key?
- What was the outcome?

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?

Self-care

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Describe a situation when you were able to recognize an important factor about yourself that you needed to change and that had a positive impact on your work performance or overall health and well-being.

- Describe the situation. What was the issue you identified?
- How did it impact your work performance or well-being?
- How did you manage the situation?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- In hindsight, what would you have done differently, if anything?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Describe a time when you faced a challenge around professional or personal boundaries and found your own solution.

- Describe the situation.
- What made it a boundary challenge?
- What strategy did you develop to find a solution?
- What was the outcome?
- What was the impact on you and the people involved?
- How did it change your behaviour after the experience?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a situation when you assisted a colleague who was experiencing challenges with their self-care or well-being.

- Describe the issues related to well-being that you were concerned about.
- How did you assist or support the person?
- What was the outcome?
- What has been the long-term effect of your support or assistance?

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

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

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

Self-management

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL Question

Tell me about a time when you had to make a special effort to remain focused despite competing pressures or interruptions.

- What interruptions or competing pressures were you dealing with?
- What strategy or techniques did you use to remain focused?
- How well did that strategy work for you? Why?
- What lessons did you learn?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

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 and your response.
- 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 you were successful?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Provide an example of a time when you took steps to assist or support a colleague with a difficult situation.

- Who was involved and how did you assist or support this person?
- What steps did you take?
- How do you know that your actions were successful?

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Tell me about a program, resource or intervention you provided to support or reinforce positive self-management in your organization.

- Describe the situation, including your role.
- What kind of program, resource or intervention did you provide?
- What was the outcome?
- How did employee self-management improve?

Self-motivation

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL Question

Please describe a time when you completed a work assignment on time despite unexpected obstacles.

- What was the work assignment?
- How much time did you have to complete the task?
- What were the challenges related to completing the task?
- How did you ensure that you completed the task promptly?
- How did you ensure you met performance standards?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Please describe a time when you took the initiative to find a solution to a challenging problem related to your work or tasks.

- Describe the situation and your response.
- What means did you employ in trying to solve the problem?
- How were you successful?
- What would you do differently next time?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Describe a specific situation where you inspired and motivated co-workers to succeed.

- What approach did you employ to get team members to commit to success?
- What strategies did you use to inspire or motivate others?
- Has this approach been successful for you? Why?
- What would you do differently another time?

LEVEL 4 ADVANCED

Question

Tell me about a time when you identified and acted on an opportunity to advance an organizational goal or enhance organizational performance.

- What organization goal or aspect of organizational performance was involved?
- What was the opportunity you identified?
- How did your initiative advance the organizational goal or enhance organizational performance?

Teamwork and Cooperation

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

How have you helped or supported someone else to complete a project or activity in the past?

- Describe the situation, your response and your role.
- Were you in a position to offer help or was it requested?
- Was the project one that you were already working on?
- What were you helping out with?
- How did you help?

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Describe a time when you were working with a team and took on additional tasks to support the group's efforts.

- What was the situation?
- Why did you volunteer to take on those tasks?
- How was this received by others on the team?
- How were you able to complete these additional tasks?
- How did you complete your work while supporting others?

LEVEL 3 PROFICIENT

Question

Discuss a time when you helped your team achieve team consensus despite varying views and opinions.

- Describe the situation and your response.
- On what issue was the team unable to reach consensus?
- Can you elaborate on how the team experienced differences of opinion?
- What did you do that helped the team work through their differences and reach consensus?
- What was the outcome?

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?
- What did you do to enhance cooperation between others?
- How did the partnership help to achieve the goal?
- What was the result?