

Questions Employers Might Ask at a Community Counseling Interview

- What interests you about working with the XYZ (type of client the organization serves) population?
- Tell me about a case you worked on where you felt you were particularly effective.
- Tell me about the toughest case you ever worked on.
- Walk me through the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation process of a case for a client with XYZ (type of disorder or personal issue).
- What types of clients are difficult for you to work with? What are your thoughts on why that might be?
- How and when do you use supervision? What type of supervision do you prefer?
- What is it about supervisors, coworkers, or clients that can frustrate you? How do you handle frustration?
- What is your work style? What do you do to seek balance in your life?
- What do you do when you are faced with an ethical conflict? Have you experienced this in your work?
- What can you tell me about how you handled this?
- Why are you interested in the Human Services field?
- What kind of experience have you had with different populations? (i.e., women, youth, impoverished)
- What are your attitudes towards supervision (Doing it? Do you need it? How do you react to it?)
- Why do you want to work with the elderly? Mentally retarded? Etc.
- What is your knowledge of disabilities?
- What types of clients have you worked with?
- What is your background and philosophy of social services? Counseling? Etc.
- What are your counseling strengths and weaknesses?
- What was the most difficult/interesting case you had?
- What is your particular area of interest?
- What techniques do you use in crisis intervention work?
- What techniques do you use most and why?
- What do you like about working with children?
- What attracts you to this type of work?
- What types of things go into a psychosocial assessment?
- What supervisory experience have you had?
- Do you like doing research?
- How do you describe your professional boundaries?
- How did you decide on a career in psychology?
- Describe your strengths, especially those that will help you excel in counseling, therapy, or advocacy.
- In communicating, people's gestures or verbal cues can give us information. Give me an example of how your interpretation of verbal or non-verbal behavior has helped you.
- Talk about a time when you were able to make someone feel comfortable when dealing with a difficult situation.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses as a clinician? As a tester? As a supervisor? As a diagnostician?
- What do you plan to do once you have finished your training?
- What do you look for in supervision?
- What is your theoretical orientation?
- What are your specific clinical interests?
- Why have you selected a career in social services?
- What do you hope to accomplish as a counselor?
- Have you had the experience of working with people of a race or sexual orientation different from yours?
- Do you feel you can be objective in counseling a teen about abortion?
- What do you think of the welfare system?
- What is your philosophy of counseling?
- What techniques do you use in crisis intervention work?
- What kinds of things go into a psychological assessment?
- How do you describe your personal boundaries?
- What do you think of the recent welfare changes?
- What do you think is going to happen in the field in the next five years?
- What are your thoughts on managed care?
- How would you handle a psychotic outburst in the clinic waiting room?
- In terms of family therapy, what is your theoretical orientation?
- How do you handle termination?
- Do you believe in short-term or long-term treatment?
- Think of a client you have liked/disliked and tell me how you dealt with the counter transference issues.
- Are you sensitive? Are you intuitive?

- Are you an active listener? Are you able to engage clients?
- This position requires a lot of independent thinking and initiative, and there is minimal supervision.
- Could you handle that?
- What kinds of problems do you like to handle? Can you give me an example?
- What kinds of problems are you good at solving? Give me one example.
- How would your weaknesses interfere with your ability to do this job?
- Knowing what you know now, is there something you would do differently in the management of one of your fieldwork cases?
- What do you judge to be your major successes or accomplishments in your fieldwork? How did you achieve them?
- What major disappointments/failures have you had in fieldwork?
- Are you prepared to make home visits?
- How is your previous experience applicable to the work we do here?
- What is your philosophy of life?
- Describe the process you go through in developing a case plan. Workshop.
- What is your understanding of service delivery in [a particular field]?
- Tell me about a time you were in a disagreement over a treatment plan.
- What has been your experience with agency paperwork and how do you feel about it?
- How will you deal with the dual-relationship issues of working in a small community?
- How would you go about locating community resources in a neighborhood where you have no relationship?
- What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives?
- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your business career?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- How do you know you will like this career path?
- What new challenges are inviting to you?
- What other career paths have you considered?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- What five skills best describe you?
- Describe a professional skill that you developed in your last job/activity.
- What do you hope to achieve in your next job?
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
- Tell me about a quantifiable outcome due to one of your efforts.
- How would you explain your success level in your current job?
- What are the most/least rewarding aspects of your current job?
- Tell me about a major contribution you have made to a team/organization.
- What achievements have eluded you?
- How would you describe yourself?
- Tell me something I would not know about you from reading your resume.
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- Why should I hire you?
- What qualifications do you have that make you think that you will be successful in business?
- Describe your ideal job/work environment.
- What kind of a starting salary would you expect to earn in this job?
- In what previous jobs have you been most interested?
- How would you describe the ideal job for you?
- What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
- Which is more important to you, the money or the type of job?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? \
- What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
- Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?
- What outside activities complement your work interests?
- What community projects are interesting to you?
- What skills have you improved through outside activities?
- What have you learned from your participation in activities?
- How has your education prepared you for a career?
- Describe your most rewarding academic experience.
- Why did you select your college or university?

- What led you to choose your field of major study?
- What subjects did you like best/least?
- If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently?
- What changes would you make in your college or university?
- Do you have plans for continued study/an advanced degree?
- Do you think that your grades are a good indication of your academic ability?
- Are you willing to travel?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in an organization like ours?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- If you were hiring an individual for this position, what qualities would you look for?
- Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
- What do you know about our company?
- Why are you interested in this work?
- What are you particularly good in this field of work?
- How do you stay current about this field/industry?
- What do you think is our company's distinct advantage over the competition?
- Where is our company most vulnerable amongst its competitors?
- What skills do you feel are most critical to this job?
- What skills would you like to develop most in this job?
- How are your experiences relevant to this job?
- Why do companies with good products sometimes fail?
- Give me an example of when you were resourceful.
- Tell me about your input into your work/extracurricular organization's last strategic plan.
- What is the most creative/innovative project you have ever helped develop?
- How do you organize and plan for major projects?
- Give me an example of something you did to build enthusiasm in others to take action.
- Describe your relationship with your supervisors/co-workers.
- Do you work more productively by yourself or with others?
- Describe your comfort level working with people of higher or lower rank.
- Describe your worst/best supervisor.
- What qualities should a successful manager possess?
- Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to them.
- What management style do you most/least prefer?
- What is your favorite type of co-worker?
- Tell me about a time when you had to defend an idea to a boss or co-worker.
- How do you handle criticism of your work?
- Do you prefer a structured or unstructured environment?
- Give me an example of when a co-worker or classmate criticized your work in front of others.
- Give me an example of when you sold your supervisor or professor on an idea or concept.
- Give an example of how you saw a project through, despite obstacles.
- Describe a situation when you had to do a project you really did not want to do.
- Tell me about a time when you did not perform up to your capabilities.
- How do you manage stress?
- How do you regroup when things have not gone as planned?
- Why is service such an important issue?
- How do you manage your work schedule?
- How do you handle multiple responsibilities?
- Tell me about an important decision you had to make.
- How do you work under pressure?
- Describe a time when you worked under extreme pressure.
- How do you feel about working overtime?
- How do you balance work time and home time?
- What might you like to change about your current work habits?
- Tell me about a time you experienced frustration at work.
- What have you learned from your mistakes?
- Tell me about a difficult situation when it was desirable for you to keep a positive attitude.
- Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline.

- Tell me which computer applications you have used and for what purposes.
- Describe your problem-solving process.
- How do you measure the success of your work?
- What was the greatest problem-solving issue you had to work through in your last job?
- How do you balance your reliance on facts with your reliance on intuition?
- Tell me about a problem that you failed to anticipate.
- Tell me about a time you were not able to resolve a problem to your satisfaction.
- If a client called you with a complaint, what would be your first reaction?
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult person (customer, classmate, co-worker).
- Describe a specific problem you solved for an employer.

Questions to Ask an Employer at a Community Counseling Interview

- What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
- What would you consider the most challenging aspect of this position?
- What would my typical workday be like?
- How do you encourage employees to keep current with professional developments in the field?
- What opportunities in the organization are there for serving on committees?
- What kinds of community service projects does your organization engage in?
- Does your organization encourage further education?
- How often are performance reviews given?
- What do you like best about your job/organization?
- What do you think are your organization's greatest advantages?
- Where does this position fit in with the organizational structure?
- What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you?

*Sources: Human Services Career Network
 Planning Job Choices
 Career Development Guide
 The 250 Job Interview Questions You'll Most Likely Be Asked*

Skills/Qualities Employers Seek in Community Counselors

Adaptability/Flexibility
 Analytical Skills
 Communication Skills
 Cooperative
 Initiative
 Integrity
 Interpersonal Skills
 Listening Skills
 Mediation Skills
 Non-Judgmental
 Organizational Skills
 Patience
 Persistence
 Problem-Solving Skills

*Sources: Human Services Career Network
 Occupational Outlook Handbook
 America's Career InfoNet*

Sample Thank You Letter

10325 S. State Street
Orland Park, IL 60462
708-555-1111
kdoe@mailbox.com

March 10, 20xx

Kimberly Smith
Outreach Director
Greenway Park Horizons
123 S. Main Street
Oak Lawn, IL 60453

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you very much for interviewing me for the Phase 1 Caseworker position with your organization today. You and your colleagues provided me with a very warm reception and informative discussion.

As mentioned during our conversation, my two years as a part-time intake specialist at a runaway youth shelter and my three years as a volunteer mentor at a youth activity center have helped me develop sound counseling abilities. In addition, my counseling internship allowed me to work with a wide array of cultural backgrounds and personal issues, and it required me to present to teens on key current issues such as substance abuse, pregnancy, relationships, and self-image. All of this experience has enhanced my communication, interpersonal, organizational, and problem-solving skills, all of which would enable me to make a positive impact as a caseworker.

Once again, I wish to reiterate my genuine interest in the position and your organization. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 708-555-1111 or at kdoe@mailbox.com. Thank you very much for your valuable time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kerry J. Doe

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