

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P.O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

October 5, 2005

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Interview Questions for In-house IIS applicants

MEMORANDUM

TO: REGIONAL EXECUTIVE STAFF, CIRCUIT MANAGERS AND CHILDREN'S DIVISION STAFF

FROM: FREDERIC M. SIMMENS, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: IN-HOUSE IIS PROVIDER INTERVIEW PROCESS

REFERENCE: CHILDREN'S DIVISION

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce policy regarding the interview process for potential in-house Intensive In-Home Services (IIS) staff. This policy will address requirements for S20.6.02 and S20.6.03 standards for accreditation.

Through agency job descriptions and interviewing processes, the Children's Division's IIS program establishes the expectation that most work with the family will take place within the family's home and community. When interviewing potential staff for in-house IIS positions, specific questions should be asked to explore the applicant's understanding of the values of family-centered services, as well as the applicant's commitment to child(ren) safety and family stability.

In addition, families are diverse and have a right to be respected for the special cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious traditions that make them distinct. The interview process should evaluate the applicant's cultural competence and their ability to interact with diverse cultural backgrounds. Each IIS site, in itself, may be culturally diverse and potential staff interview questions should illicit responses which may assist in determining an applicant's ability to work in such a community.

It is recognized interview questions for potential in-house IIS applicants may be derived from the Department of Social Services Skill Based Interview Guide. In addition, many sites have developed their own interview tools which may include direct questioning, written responses as well as role play scenarios. Attached to this memo are interview questions previously developed by an IIS site which address the standards mentioned above.

In-house IIS staff Coordinators and supervisors should review their current in-house IIS applicant interview questions to ensure they comply with noted standards for accreditation. If current questions do not address the applicant's ideas and perceptions

of FCS and cultural diversity, the attached questions should be included in the interview process.

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| NECESSARY ACTIONS: | |
| 1. Please review this memorandum with all Children's Division Staff involved with interviewing in-house IIS staff. | |
| 2. All questions should be cleared through normal supervisory channels and directed to: | |
| | PROGRAM MANAGER: Cindy Wilkinson, Unit Manager 573-522-5062 Cindy.R.Wilkinson@dss.mo.us |
| CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS: N/A | |
| RELATED STATUTE: N/A | |
| ADMINISTRATIVE RULES: N/A | |
| COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA) STANDARDS: | |
| S20.6.02 S20.6.03 | |
| PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP): N/A | |
| SACWIS REQUIREMENTS: N/A | |

Attachment

CG/cg

QUESTIONS FOR FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW
(What to look for on specific questions)

NOTE: Interview questions are numbered, followed by suggested responses.

- 1. What are some of the reasons you're interested in this position? What is it about IIS that appeal to you?**

Working with families.
Belief in in-home counseling.
Has crisis orientation – helping people when they need help.
Likes idea of teaching skills approach.
Opportunity for training.
Independent/flexible schedule.
Likes idea of keeping families together.

- 2. Tell us what you know about IIS.**

The idea here is to elicit the candidates doubt/misgivings about doing the job, so we can address these, i.e., confirm whether or not their ideas about how it works are realistic. Want candidate to thoroughly understand on-call and evening/weekend requirement as crisis nature of the job and unpredictability. Some people have had visions of doing family therapy like it would be done in an office – - Other considerations – willingness to follow clients' agenda, provide concrete services, etc.

- 3. What are your greatest strengths that you would utilize in a job like this?**

Good listening/communication skills.
Engaging, nonjudgmental, value people and believe in building on their strengths.
Knowledge of behavioral-cognitive strategies.
Likes being part of a team.
Believing people can and want to change.
Sense of humor, compassion, energy, flexible.
Ability to stay calm during crisis.

- 4. What weakness or limitations do you anticipate bringing to the job?**

Not much experience with families.
Setting limits – could become “workaholic”.
Not strong in behavioral-cognitive interventions.
Paperwork not a strong point.
May get too involved in family's problems.

- 5. This job requires interactions with people of diverse cultural backgrounds. Tell about a problem arising from cultural differences which you believe you handled appropriately.**

How about a problem you wish you had handled differently?

These questions are looking for candidates awareness of cultural differences and if the person is aware of the effect of their own behavior in situations where they are dealing with cultural differences.

6. **Tell about any experiences you might have in the following areas:**
(Note to Interviewers: These areas lend themselves to on-the-spot role plays as the candidate details experiences. You can choose to ask them to demonstrate teaching based on one of their stated experiences.)

A) **Crisis Intervention:**

Crisis lines
Suicide
Domestic Violence
Runaways
Hospice
Any on-call/go out position
Mental Health Practitioner
Child abuse/neglect

B) **Working with children and/or families:**

Maternal home health
Residential treatment
Day Care
Head Start
Youth Service Bureaus
Juvenile Court
CPS/State worker
School Counselor
Teachers
Out-patient counseling

C) **Teaching parenting skills:**

Teaching classes or working with individuals with a parent
Families with P.E.T. or STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting), use of praise and positive attention, time out, reinforcement, consequences

D) **Teaching communication skills or assertiveness skills:**

Teaching classes or working with individuals on these.
Familiar with active listening and “I” statements.
Advocate for themselves

E) **Cognitive inventions:**

Teaching R.E.T.
Identifying negative beliefs/self-talk, “shoulds” and “awfuls”
Challenging self-talk, looking for evidence.

F) Behavioral interventions:

Use of behavior charts, reinforcement, shaping techniques, breaking tasks into small steps, teaching interactions, look at environment.

- 7) What clinical problems or situations would you say are most difficult for you to understand and/or work with?**

Drug/alcohol involved

Depression

Clients that are unmotivated/don't want to work with you

Clients who won't open up

Developmental delays

Teenagers

Abusive/neglectful families

Clients who deny there is a problem

Aggressive or uncooperative men

Mentally ill

You want to be sure candidate does not identify entire target population.

- 8) Hypothetical Situation:**

"Let's say you are out at a family's home and the father and daughter are in a heated argument. As the conflict escalates, you begin to feel some concern that it is leading up to a physical confrontations. What do you do?"

Good Answers:

Use calm voice

Active listening to defuse

"I" statements of concern

Structure by separating – different rooms or take one out (time out)

Call police if necessary (last resort, but need to keep clients' and self safe)

Ideally looking for a continuum of action beginning with least intrusive.

Poor Answers:

Tell them to STOP!

Call police before trying less intrusive options

Try to reason with them

Attempt to teach problem-solving or communication skills

Leave