

Recommended Interview Questions:

Trauma Informed Approaches

The questions below are intended as a guide for interviewers interested in exploring candidate's skills, knowledge, and attitudes towards trauma-informed approaches.

You may also want to probe for competency in the following "soft skills" that are essential to a trauma-informed approach:

- Empowering clients
- Trustworthiness
- Dependability and reliability
- Strengths-based
- Empathy and compassion
- Non-judgmental listening
- De-escalation
- Problem-solving

Providing support; showing compassion

- Tell me about a time you worked with a client who had a history of trauma. How did you respond to their specific needs? How did that experience inform your work with other clients?
- Describe the things you do to create an environment of that is trauma-informed.
- Give some examples of how you connected with clients who seemed distrustful or distant.

Dealing with crisis and handling escalations

- Tell me about a time when you had to calm down a person who was upset and behaving irrationally.
- Tell me about a time when someone was very agitated and you were not able to help them de-escalate.
- Tell me about a time when you had to respond quickly to a crisis. What was your approach? What was the outcome?
- Sometimes our work is judged or criticized unfairly, or our intent is misunderstood. Can you tell us about a situation that fits this description?
- Talk about the steps you personally take to build trust with your supervisor and co-workers.

Creating safety

- What are some things you consider when you want to make sure a client feels safe? (*look for examples of both physical and emotional safety*)
- What are some strategies you use to maximize opportunities for choice with clients?
- Tell us about working with a client with a trauma history. What coping skills did you work on with this person and what was the outcome?
- Talk about a time you had to anticipate a situation that would be re-traumatizing or trigger to a client.

Working with youth and families

- Think about a young person you have worked with who has a history of trauma. What were some of the situations that were triggering to this person? What did you do to support them in coping and managing their emotions?
- Please share any ideas you have for building resilience in youth who have experienced trauma.
- What is something people who have only worked with adults get wrong about working with young people who have experienced trauma?

For candidates for Supervisor and Leadership positions

- Describe ways you both model and encourage trauma-informed care and practice.
- How do you provide corrective feedback to staff who are not working with clients in a trauma-informed way?
- What strategies have you built into your work to build resilience on your team, and address secondary traumatic stress, vicarious trauma and burnout?

Some of these questions are derived from the National Council of Behavioral Health's initiative on Trauma Informed Primary Care's Trauma Informed Care Interview Questions.