Staff Retention in Child and Family Services

Recruiting and Selecting the Right Staff

Workbook 6

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Dedication

This workbook series is dedicated to child and family service supervisors everywhere who work tirelessly with their staff to make the world a better place for children and families at risk.

Acknowledgements

First, we gratefully acknowledge the authors, Judith McKenzie, John McKenzie and Rosemary Jackson, for their incredible commitment in developing this unique and useful workbook series. This inspired team brought years of child and family service experience and a sense of urgency to the work that comes from "knowing" that children and their families need a stable workforce to help them realize their potential and that effective child and family service supervisors hold the key to staff retention.

We wish to thank the Michigan Department of Human Services and the Michigan Federation for Children and Families for providing resources and support for this project.

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Contents at a Glance

Introduction to Workbook Series

Purpose of this Series

The purpose of this training and series of workbooks is to increase child and family service agencies' effectiveness in developing and retaining their staff by applying information from research and best retention practices to their work.

The foundation for this material is the important mission of child and family service to provide safety, permanence and well being for children, within a context of family-centered practice. Underpinning this foundation is a heightened sensitivity to the potential impact of significant emotional events on child and family service professionals which can lead to excessive stress, burnout and, possibly, secondary trauma. Case materials, tools and skills integrated throughout this workbook series intend to honor and support leaders and supervisors as they cope with the value dilemmas and emotional content found in the "real world" of child and family services.

The ultimate goal of this curriculum is to improve retention practices and outcomes for child and family service agencies. With such an end in mind everybody wins: the staff, the agency, the families and children, and especially the supervisor, whose life is vastly improved by having a stable, loyal workforce.

This curriculum has been designed with a series of workbooks. A workbook is provided for each of the following subjects in the core curriculum series.

Workbook 1 – The Role of Leaders in Staff Retention: provides information, tools and methods for leaders to use to support supervisors in creating and sustaining a positive culture for staff retention.

Workbook 2 – The Practice of Retention-Focused Supervision: provides research information and supervisory competencies for retaining effective staff, including self-assessment and planning tools. It includes methods and tools for setting objectives, structuring the supervisory process and managing stress in the workplace.

Workbook 3 – Working with Differences: provides understanding, methods and tools for tailoring supervision to the diverse characteristics, learning and behavioral styles and professional development needs of staff.

Workbook 4 – Communications Skills: provides specific information, tools and activities to adapt communication skills to the supervisory relationship.

Workbook 5 – The First Six Months: provides a structure, methods and tools for orienting, supporting and training new staff during their first six months on the job, with particular attention to helping staff cope with and manage the stressors of the job.

Workbook 6 – Recruiting and Selecting the Right Staff in Child and Family Service: provides information on promising practices and tools for recruiting and selecting front line staff; includes profiles of desirable qualities needed in front-line supervisors and staff and methods for developing effective collaborations with universities.

Child Welfare is not rocket science. It's harder than rocket science.

- David Liederman, former CWLA CEO

The Underlying Principles of this Training Curriculum

The *Staff Retention in Child and Family Service* workbook series is based on a review of research literature in child and family service, human services and business. The research focused on the many studies that have to do with staff turnover and retention. Additionally, resilient workers and supervisors who stayed with their current agencies for at least two years were interviewed and surveyed in public and private agencies throughout Michigan to determine what underpins their commitment to the field. There was a strong consensus about what was learned about workplace retention across business, human service work and child and family service, but there were also some significant differences. Understanding the differences between child and family service and business is critical to retaining and developing staff in human service. Those differences are fundamental to the approach that is expressed in this training program and are summarized as follows:

Child and family service is challenging and life-changing work

Child and family service staff, many of whom are young and inexperienced, often make "god-like" decisions every day that have profound effects on the lives and destinies of children and their families. They see and experience the most tragic human conditions, extreme poverty, child neglect and abuse, inter-generational violence and substance abuse. Yet, they have to find a way to assure safety of children while working toward permanence and well being for both children and their families. Child and family service staff do this in a system that is under-funded, under-staffed, and sometimes chaotic and hardened to the plight of the people who are served by it and those who work in it.

This curriculum does not minimize the difficulties of the work (the reality of low pay, high workloads, and high turnover) but it doesn't belabor these issues either. It recognizes that these issues need to be addressed, especially when an agency is not competitive with other similar agencies offering the same service. This curriculum stresses that child and family service retention rates can be improved by understanding and building upon those resilient factors that attract people to and keep them in the profession.

Child and family service is mission and values centered

Those who enter the profession of child and family service are not motivated by profit. They are mission-driven. They are usually motivated by "doing good and making a difference" for others, particularly children who have been victimized. They come to accept that child and family service work is mainly about working with and through parents.

This curriculum offers an understanding of the mission and value-centered nature of this work as a context for all of the materials developed. To undervalue the significance of idealism and a need to help others in the motivation of staff would be wrong. The concept of mission is what energizes child and family service people and needs to be reinforced at every step of the retention process. Attention to feelings, showing appreciation and strengthening resiliency are essential for prevention of burnout and achieving good outcomes for children and families.

The supervisor in child and family service is the most influential person in staff retention
The research shows that having a good relationship with the front line “boss” or supervisor is one of the most important factors in retention. This is even more essential in child and family service due to the stressful nature of the work. Managing one’s own feelings and learning effective relationship skills to help others manage their feelings and assumptions are a big part of the work that has to be done. The inadequacies of the system, along with the multiple demands and challenging relationships, can cause stress, burnout and result in “secondary trauma” for child and family service staff. An effective supervisor will facilitate professional development of his/her staff by consistently modeling effective relationship and strengths-oriented behaviors that help staff grow through their most difficult and/or emotionally charged times and events. An effective supervisor will pay attention to the personal and professional growth needs of their staff and offer recognition, encouragement and support. To do this well, supervisors have to be aware of their own vulnerabilities, while building on their personal style and strengths.

What a new staff person experiences within the first year is crucial to retention
An experienced supervisor recognizes that over half of turnover occurs in a staff person’s first year on the job. What a staff person first experiences, especially with their supervisor, will determine whether he/she will stay with the agency and ultimately build a career in child and family service.

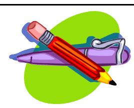
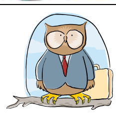
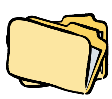
Respect for a person’s strengths, uniqueness, and rights are the primary elements in the success of all staff retention efforts
How a staff person is treated by the agency and, in particular, by his/her supervisor will become a mirror for how clients will be treated by staff. Honoring and building on staff strengths, including the individual’s capacity to cope with stress, learn and change, is key to successful retention in child and family service. Preserving the dignity of the individual is not only important in staff retention. It is a principle that is essential to achieving positive outcomes with families. A fundamental belief in the resiliency of people provides a reservoir of hope in child and family service.

This training curriculum takes the view that all participants: agency leaders, supervisors and staff, are partners in improving retention of staff in child and family service. The agency’s culture for retention will be continuously improved only to the extent that people share and learn from one another. Training materials, language and case examples are designed to be strengths-based and respectful of public and private agencies, supervisors, staff and families.

How to Use this Workbook

This training curriculum uses a workbook format for the following reasons:

- Participants who attend a training session have the information and tools at their fingertips to use as reference long after they attend the training
- Individuals can benefit from the program by using the workbooks as self-study tools, if they cannot attend a group training
- Learning activities appear throughout each workbook to encourage agencies and staff to use the materials in small groups during formal staff training or more informal sessions
- Participants attending the training can share the materials and coach others through the program
- Agencies can use the units within workbooks to review and build specific competencies e.g., when a supervisor is new to the position, following a performance review and/or when a need specific to the agency has been identified

Icon	Description
	**Activity –** this icon represents an activity that can be used by an individual for self-reflection and/or for small group discussions.
	**Small Group Activity –** this icon represents an activity that is best done in small groups where individuals can share insights and learn from each other.
	**Quotes –** this icon is to represent words of wisdom that are meant to be inspirational or to bring home an important point to the user.
	**Case Study –** this icon represents a case study where content from the workbook is applied to typical supervisor/staff situations and interactions.
	**Important Points to remember –** this icon represents a summary of the key points contained in the workbook unit.
	**Tools –** this icon represents a tool that can be adapted and used in the workplace to further enhance the supervisor's repertoire. All tools are provided in the appendix of each workbook for duplication and use in quantity.

Debriefing Small Group Activities

When discussion questions and/or other activities are used in a small group, it is helpful for someone to act as a facilitator and recorder of notes to engage the group in responding to at least two additional questions:

- What lessons did we learn from this experience?
- What implications does this have for what we will continue to do, start or stop doing in the future?

Sequence of Workbooks

All the workbooks were designed to stand-alone and can be used in any sequence based on the organization's and/or an individual's needs and priorities.

Each workbook has numbered units. For example Unit 3 in Workbook 3 will be numbered Unit 3.3. Units extracted from a workbook can be used in management and supervisory staff meetings, brief "Lunch and Learn" sessions, or in supervisor support groups. Using this material in the workplace is highly recommended because the sharing of ideas and synergy among like-minded people can aid and support individual growth and/or agency-wide culture change.

Participants can feel free to duplicate and share all activities and tools contained in these workbooks. Please acknowledge the source of the information when reproducing the materials.

Workbook 6 Table of Contents

6.0 Recruiting and Selecting the Right Staff

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the crucial role that recruitment and selection play in staff retention
- Establish a framework for an agency's staff recruitment program
- Learn a six-step process for recruiting and selecting the right people for jobs within child and family service agencies
- Become familiar with tools and resources to assist in the recruitment and selection process

Having the right people in the right positions is a critical success factor for any agency or organization. It is even more important in child and family services, where the future lives of children and families are at stake. Stephen Covey was asked, "What is the most crucial activity of any management or leadership team?" He answered, "Recruiting, selecting and positioning people." (Covey, 2004) Jim Collins, in his book, *Good to Great*, also makes the point that great companies seek first to "have the right people in the right seats on the right bus." (Collins, 2001)

This workbook describes five elements of recruiting and selecting the right staff and a six-step process for making it happen, with recommended tools to assist along the way.

6.1 Five Elements of Recruiting and Selecting the Right Staff

In child and family service agencies, uncovered workloads are both a cause and effect of high turnover. Having the capacity to hire good people effectively and efficiently must be a leadership priority, as having a high vacancy rate can lead to a chaotic and unsafe situation for supervisors, front-line staff and the children and families served.

Pay Me Now or Pay Me Later

Agency X had asked for consultation to address what they termed a "crisis." The agency had lost about 50% of their foster care beds and children were being moved daily from home to home because of lack of space. Many of the remaining foster parents were threatening to quit due to dissatisfaction with services. Upon inquiry it was learned that over 15% of staff positions had been left unfilled for months. When asked, the CEO said that maintaining these vacancies was the only way he had of staying in budget; upon further inquiry, he admitted that the empty positions were not officially frozen.

Not filling open staff positions may seem like a quick and easy way to save time and stay within budget. In the long term it can paralyze the recruitment and selection process, demoralize staff and give the wrong message about the value the agency places on its mission and on the importance of staff retention. This has major future cost and performance impact. "Pay me now or pay me later" means that organizations can either invest the time and energy upfront to recruit and select the right people, or pay the price later of missing important outcomes and demoralizing existing staff with excessive workloads.

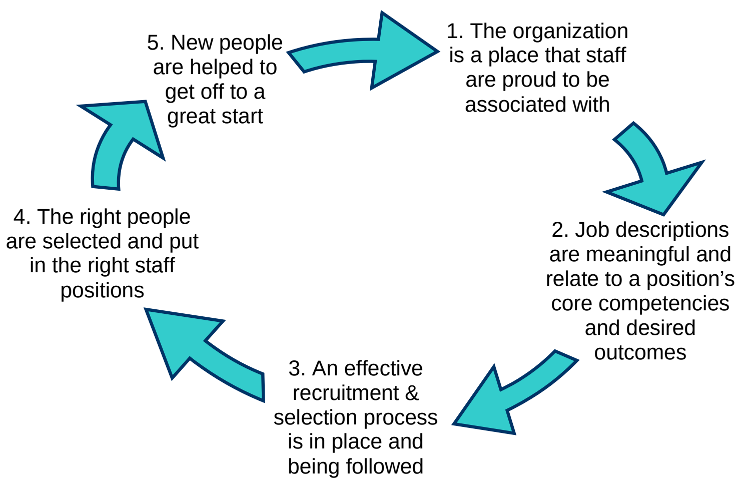


Figure 6.1 Five Key Elements of Recruiting and Selecting the Right Staff

Figure 6.1 illustrates five key elements of the recruiting and selecting the right staff. They are:

1. **The organization is a place that staff are proud to be associated with:** Everybody wants to be associated with a winner. The word of an agency's positive culture will get out into the greater community. The agency will be like a magnet, drawing good people in. Previous workbooks in this series provide information, tools and methods for leaders and supervisors to use in creating and sustaining a positive culture for staff and the agency.

2. **Job descriptions are meaningful and relate to a position's core competencies and desired outcomes:** Step one of the six-step process, described in Unit 6.3 of this workbook, is *Determine the Needs*. Too often job descriptions are generic and don't describe the real needs of the position. Good job descriptions and job profiles include a short list of core competencies required for the job. Core competencies get at the root of what makes the best people in this type of position truly the best.

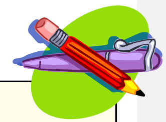
3. **An effective recruitment and selection process is in place and being followed:** This workbook describes a six-step process that is part science and part art. The science is in having well defined and repeatable processes that are actually being followed and used consistently. The art is the skill in interviewing, asking the right behavioral-based questions and understanding people. This takes some practice, but with proper understanding and coaching it can be done very effectively.

   Recruitment and selection are seen and treated as a top priority for the organization. Time is made available to follow the processes put in place. Leaders get directly involved themselves, as appropriate, and monitor progress and outcomes. Open positions are filled as soon as possible to reduce stress on supervisors and front-line staff. Supervisors are involved in the hiring process and seen as having a key role in hiring staff for their units/departments.

4. **The right people are selected and put in the right staff positions:** The responsibility for recruitment and selection to "get the right people in the right seats on the bus" belongs to all levels of management within the agency from the executive in charge to front line supervisors. After all, who knows the realities of what it takes to be successful on the job better than the direct supervisors? Supervisors and front-line staff are seriously impacted if positions go unfilled or are filled improperly.

5. **New people are helped to get off to a great start:** Workbook 5, *The First Six Months*, sets the tone for a successful new employee orientation plan and launch. A new employee's initial experience with supervision plays a significant part in his/her decision to stay or leave an organization. Most studies of turnover rates in child and family services report that the majority of staff who leave the agency or the field, do so within the first year of employment. One study of turnover rates in Michigan reported that 47% of staff, who leave foster care in the private sector leave within the first year of employment (Michigan Federation for Children and Families, 2000). Given this information, getting people off to a great start is critical.

Activity – What Would It Be Like?



Instructions:

1. Think about your organization and pick an area where the right person(s) is in the right job.
   a. How is it going in that area? (i.e., is morale good and are desired outcomes being achieved?)

   b. How much of your time is required to keep it going well?

2. Now pick an area where there is either no one in the job (where there is a job opening that really needs to be filled) or the wrong person is in the job.

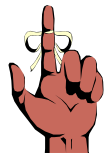
   a. How is it going in this area?

   b. What is different about these two areas of your organization?

   c. Which areas take up and/or waste more of your time?

   d. How much time and energy could be saved and how much better would the outcomes be if you had the right people in each position of your organization?

Important points to remember



- In child and family service agencies, uncovered workloads are both a cause and effect of high turnover. Having the capacity to hire good people effectively and efficiently must be a leadership priority, as having a high vacancy rate can lead to a chaotic and unsafe situation for supervisors, front-line staff and the children and families served.
- Not filling open front-line positions may seem like a quick and easy way to save time and stay within budget. In the long term however, it can paralyze the recruitment and selection process, demoralize staff and send the wrong message about the value the agency places on its mission and on staff retention.
- Five key elements necessary to recruit, select and retain the right staff are:
    - The organization is a place that staff are proud to be associated with
    - Job descriptions are meaningful and relate to a position's core competencies and desired outcomes
    - An effective recruitment and selection process is in place and being followed
    - The right people are selected and put in the right staff positions
    - New people are helped to get off to a great start

6.2 On-Going Recruitment

Agency Reputation and Public Relations

Effective recruitment is an ongoing agency process. Good public relations, a key component, starts from within the agency and radiates outward.

USA Today [1] reported that the majority of staff are recruited through referrals from existing employees and others that know the organization. It begins with having a positive culture and an attitude among staff that recruitment is everybody's business. Positive "word of mouth" about the agency and how staff are treated provides a basic foundation that draws good people.

> **Agency Ambassadors**
>
> An agency administrator talked about the importance of everyone being an agency ambassador. He said*: Whether they realize it or not, when employees finish their workday and go home they are still representing their organization. People will hear them talk about the internal politics, what is being done (or not done) for the kids and families they serve, how they are being treated by their leadership, all goes toward leaving impressions on the community.*
>
> *Employees need to be aware of the power they have to influence and realize that they are sending out both positive and negative messages that impact the agency's reputation and its ability to recruit strong candidates.*

It is important to work in collaboration with the community and media to enhance the agency's reputation to attract good staff. Developing good relationships with key media persons; having positive stories in the news about the good work the agency is doing; collaborating with other agencies who provide children and youth services; and having agency leaders, including board members, involved in other community efforts all contribute to building a strong and positive agency reputation.

It is important for leaders to know what attracts candidates to the agency and how the message can be shaped and put out there to be most effective. According to Kaye and Jordan-Evans in their book, *Love 'em or Lose 'em,* we often ask employees during exit interviews "Why are you leaving?" But the obvious is often overlooked. Think about regularly asking resilient employees "What attracted you to the agency and what keeps you at the agency?" Their responses can be incorporated in your recruitment message, allowing you to build on what is working. (Kaye and Jordan-Evans, 2002) Effective recruiters try to put themselves in the potential job candidate's shoes. They ask: "What would it take to attract the best candidates? What would it take to attract me?" It is important for leaders to know what will attract candidates to the agency and how that message can be shaped and put out there to be most effective. By being specific and insightful in constructing a recruitment message and other information about the organization and job opportunities, the agency can target and engage the right people.

[1] *USA Today* February 9, 2006

Activity – Attracting The Right Job Candidates to Your Organization

Instructions:
As a small group answer the following questions

1. Discuss and list what attracted each of you to your agency and also what keeps your there.

2. Write a brief recruitment slogan/message that describes the best aspects of your agency.

3. List three ways this slogan/message could be sent out into the community to be used to attract great job candidates.

Developing a Staff Recruitment and Retention Committee

One way an agency can keep a recruitment and retention focus is to develop a standing, cross-functional, cross agency committee to continuously explore and recommend ways to effectively recruit and retain employees. There is synergy in a team that can bring creativity to the process and capture the close connection between retention and recruitment. Some of the issues that could be considered include:

- How can we help recruit effective staff?
- What collaborations within the community could enhance our staff recruitment efforts?
- How can we help to make new staff feel welcomed and appreciated?
- What can we do to encourage cross-cultural understanding and support?
- How can we show appreciation for one another?
- What can we do to encourage having fun in the workplace?
- How can we reinforce creating a physically and emotionally safe work environment?

When this type of representative entity is endorsed by leaders and is empowered to influence agency practices, it can go a long way to improving the culture by making recruitment and retention everybody's business.

The committee shouldn't limit its search for candidates too narrowly. The next great hire may come from a totally unexpected source. The recruiting committee will want to broaden the search for candidates, casting out a large net. Staff in this group may be encouraged to attend job fairs, provide agency tours for prospective staff and get directly involved in promoting the agency as a good place to work. To do this they may consider encouraging current employees to refer good candidates for job openings. The best candidates often come from person to person networking that includes:

- Drawing on the resources of others in the organization from time to time such as requesting supervisors and managers to dedicate time during staff meetings to brainstorm new sources of good job candidates and ways to get the recruitment message out into the community
- Being proactive and partnering with universities and local colleges
- Encouraging students to tour the agency, meet the staff and learn about the good work that is being done
- Building community relationships that can provide a networking source for good candidates

Use of the Internet

The Internet has become a vital part of our culture. One of the first places people go to look for information, especially new graduates, is the internet. They *Google* it! The agency's website may be the first impression potential new staff have of the agency. It should be inviting, easy to navigate and kept up-to-date with information about what the agency is doing, its mission, scope of work and organizational structure. It is also a good place to feature current accomplishments and some human-interest stories and information about the agency and agency personnel. Job opportunities and contact information need to be included.

Partnering with Universities

Studies indicate that individuals with social work training are likely to stay longer and be more successful in human service delivery positions than individuals without degrees in social work.[2] Individuals with formal social work training are more likely to understand the demands of the job and are less surprised by them. This orientation comes, in part, from internship experiences in human service agencies as part of their social work training.

Consider developing partnerships with universities that have undergraduate and graduate programs in social work and other related programs. These partnerships can include co-sponsoring workshops, seminars and other continuing education programs with agency leaders as guest speakers. It is especially beneficial to have field placement and intern programs using undergraduate and graduate students. Working for your organization part time, these students can perform real work and be great candidates for full-time positions upon graduation. This may mean more orienting and training work for supervisors in the short-term, but it is an important investment that can lead to building a pool of pre-qualified candidates as well as hiring and retaining the right people in the long-term.

A number of states and local jurisdictions have developed partnerships with universities to better prepare the candidate pool. In Michigan, there is a program involving the state Department of Human Services (DHS) and the accredited graduate social work programs. Ninety percent of the university tuition is awarded to DHS employees who become students with the intention to pursue an MSW degree and careers in child welfare. In exchange, students agree to stay in the field of child welfare for at least the number of years that they receive funding for their education. Federal monies through the child welfare program funding known as IV-E, fund the program along with required state matching funds. To expedite the graduate's transition into the frontlines, the universities altered their Master's course offerings to encompass the core competencies that a social worker must have to work in the field. A further expansion of this partnership between the Department and schools is being explored in Michigan.

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[2] APHSA, Alliance & CWLA Workforce 2001 Survey: State & Private Agency Profiles

Pre-qualifying Potential Job Candidates

Consider working toward creating a pool of pre-qualified job candidates to draw from when needs arise. Some agencies have an open door policy for new candidates. They provide screening interviews with them with the idea that when a vacancy occurs, they will have a pool of screened candidates to call in for interviews.

Some states have also offered pre-service training for qualified candidates, so that the potential employee has a better understanding of the work required and an added advantage in being hired, having completed required training.

Example from Michigan a *Centrally Coordinated Hiring Pool* [3]

In 1999 Michigan's Family Independence Agency (FIA), Michigan's public assistance, child and family welfare agency, implemented a Centralized Coordinated Hiring Pool process (CCHP). FIA directly administers programs through a network of over 100 county departments of human service offices around the state.

The CCHP hires and trains new workers in anticipation of vacancies expected to occur weeks into the future. This creates a pool of "just-in-time" new employees resulting in:

- Reduced number of caseworker vacancies
- Reduced length of time that caseworker vacancies remain open
- Improved overall quality of children's services
- Savings in the cost of the hiring process

Other aspects of the CCHP process include online recruiting, behavioral interviewing, competency validation for child welfare positions and a thorough background and reference check process.

[3] Source *Tomorrow's Vacancies Today's Priority, An Overview of the Michigan Family Independence Agency Centrally Coordinated Hiring Pool*. Prepared by CPS Human Resource Services www.cps.ca.gov

Developing a Career Ladder

Agencies that provide leadership and supervisory training programs for staff interested in promotional opportunities are able to develop a pool of candidates for openings in management positions to shorten timeframes for filling these positions. This can promote retention of the agency’s most committed and talented people.

Likewise, the opportunity for staff to learn about other positions in the agency through job shadowing and cross-functional meetings, can encourage better collaboration among staff in different programs. In this way opportunities are provided for lateral transfers to reduce boredom and encourage career growth.

“Hire smart or manage tough.” No matter how hard you try, you can never atone for a weak-hiring decision. A weak candidate rarely becomes a great employee, no matter how much you wish or how hard you work. Instead hire smart.

- Lou Adler, *Hire with your Head*

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Activity – Casting a Large Net

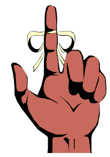
Instructions:
As a small group, answer the following questions:

1. How long does it currently take to fill open positions with qualified people?

2. List two ways that life in the organization would be different if there was a pool of qualified candidates to draw from when openings occur?

3. Brainstorm and then list three creative ways the organization could "cast a large net" to build a pool of pre-qualified candidates.

Important points to remember



- Effective recruitment is an ongoing agency process and is not just the job of senior management. Recruitment is everybody's business.
- Developing good relationships with key media persons; having positive stories in the news about the good work the agency is doing; collaborating with other agencies who provide children and youth services; and having agency leaders, including board members, involved in other community efforts can contribute to a good agency reputation.
- Effective recruiters try to put themselves in the potential job candidate's shoes. They ask: "What would it take to attract the best candidates? What would it take to attract me?"
- Develop a standing, cross-functional, cross agency recruitment committee to continuously explore and recommend ways to effectively recruit and retain employees.
- Develop a career ladder. Agencies that provide leadership and supervisory training programs for staff interested in promotional opportunities are able to develop a pool of candidates for openings in management positions. This shortens timeframes for filling these positions.

6.3 Six-step Process for Recruiting and Selecting the Right Staff

Interviewing and selecting staff for positions within the agency/organization can be a complex and time consuming process. It can often feel like trying to find a path through a maze.

To be done properly, selection requires a carefully thought-out and repeatable process. It is both an art and a science. The staff who are involved in hiring will need to have periodic training in the process and opportunities to sharpen their skills. Whether considering internal and/or external candidates, assure that the process will be designed to select people who will fit properly and will stay with the organization.

Following are six key steps to be considered in developing a selection process.

Step 1. Determine the real competencies needed for the position in question and reflect these in the job description / job profile

Step 2. Recruit for the specific job opening, including considering internal candidates for promotional and lateral transfer opportunities

Step 3. Screen resumes, assess and select the most promising candidates

Step 4. Conduct the interview(s), asking the right questions

Step 5. Compare, evaluate and select candidate(s)

Step 6. Make an offer

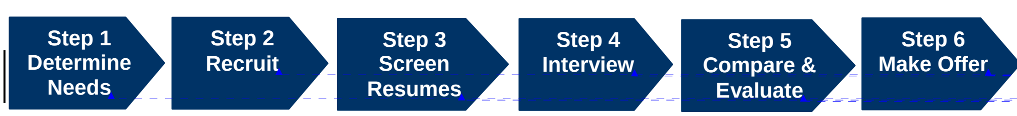


Figure 6.2 The Six-step Staff Recruiting Process

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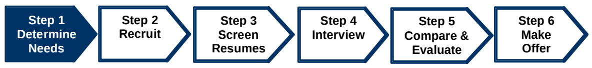


Step 1 Determine the real needs of the position – job descriptions and core competencies

Job descriptions are often too generic and not very helpful in defining the critical performance objectives of the position. They typically describe the number of required/recommended years of experience, level of education, basic work functions and the like. Although important, these pre-qualifications don't really get at the heart of what a successful match between job candidate and job position really is. The number of years of experience a person has had on a job does not necessary correlate to successful performance on the job. To be truly helpful, job descriptions need to clearly state what outcomes and accomplishments are expected from the job in addition to the skills required for the job. Job descriptions need to state what core competencies define success on the job.

So how does one determine the core competencies for a job? Often the best advisor for describing what it takes to do well in a particular position is to ask the "water walkers" in that or in similar jobs. Water walkers are the people who are the best at what they do. Core competencies are the attributes that make these people the best at what they do. Ask these people:

- What has it taken to succeed in this position, both in terms of ability/skills and motivation?
- What personality/behavioral characteristics would a successful candidate for this position possess e.g., their ability to deal with stress, ability to be an active listener, being flexible and tolerant of diversity, a person's underlying value system?
- What are the typical day-to-day tasks that have to get done?
- What technical skills are needed?
- What social skills are needed?
- What is the most difficult part about this job?
- Has the nature of the job changed recently?
- What is most gratifying about this job i.e., what motivates you?

Summarize the findings and look for common threads of what makes these people the best at what they do.

Writing the formal job description

A good job description begins with a careful analysis of the core competencies and important facts about a job, such as the responsibilities of the job, the individual tasks involved, the methods used to complete the tasks, the relationship of the job to other jobs, and the qualifications needed for the job.

Remember that the job description is a broad statement of the duties, responsibilities, accountabilities and outcome requirements of the position. It should not be too restrictive or limiting. It should not prevent the employee from being innovative, trying new things and learning how to perform their job more productively.

The typical steps to create and/or update job descriptions include:

- Identify the vision for the position
- Identify the stakeholder(s) that is, the current employees in the position and people associated with the position. If there is more than one employee, form a "slice-group," a cross section of employees. And always look for the water walkers.
- Interview the stakeholder(s) for:
    - Relevant skill areas
    - Behavioral statements (personality traits, motivators, etc.)
    - Training/educational requirements (job specifications; standards and requirements including the minimum qualifications needed to perform the essential functions of the job, such as education, experience, knowledge, and skills)
    - Purpose for the position
    - Other relevant data
- Draft/update the job description
- Review and validate the job description with the stakeholder(s)
- Finalize and implement

Be Aware

A job description can be viewed as a legal document so anything that is seen to be discriminatory on the basis of sex, national origin, race, color, age, nationality or physical or mental disability is illegal.

Tool: Sample Job Description Form

Title/Position: ____

Date _____________________ *(date this job description was written)*

Description of the service provided by this position:
(What is the purpose of this job? Write a brief summary describing this job. What are the desired processes used; desired outcomes; what are the locations and special environments in which the job will be done? What would doing this job successfully look like?)

Primary tasks to be accomplished:
(What are the performance objectives of this job? What are the specific day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month activities that need to get done to be successful at this job? Use verbs such as: plans, supervises, directs, recommends, documents, interviews, sets-up, etc. to describe functions and activities. Also describe timing of work i.e., what has to be done by when or how often, what the volume of work is such as typical caseload size.)

Prerequisites required:
(What are the prerequisites for this job including academic, certifications, etc.?)

Job skill, knowledge and experience and personality attributes:
(What skills, knowledge and experience do "water walkers"- people who do the job exceptionally well- have in doing this job? Think about what makes the best people in this job, the best.)

Behavioral traits, attitudes, motivational factors needed:
(What are the behavioral and overall personality traits, necessary to be successful in doing this job? Again, consider the water walkers.)

Primary people contacted:
(Who will the person doing this job be working with, including the clients/customers and peers? Who will the person doing this job work for?)

Developing and using the Candidate Profile Form [4]

Leaders who are part of the recruiting process will want to develop a mechanism to assess and determine the real competencies needed to perform the job(s) in question. Jobs will need to be analyzed to establish the core competencies and behavioral characteristics required. The *Candidate Profile* that follows is a tool that can be used to reach collective agreement among staff on these core competencies for the ideal job candidate. This form can then be used to:

- Evaluate resumes
- Conduct targeted job interviews
- Evaluate and measure one candidate's attributes against another's, based on pre-selected criteria (core competencies), and avoid over-reacting or making incorrect first impressions during interviews

The *Candidate Profile* is a summary tool meant to assess and determine the competencies needed to perform the job(s) in question. It is useful in:

- Summarizing the core personality traits, skills, knowledge and motivators desired in a job candidate
- Creating job recruitment ads
- Developing specific job interviewing questions
- Evaluating interviews and objectively comparing candidates against each other

A suggested candidate profile for a supervisor is provided as an example. Another example, for an entry-level child and family service worker, has been provided in the Appendix of this workbook.

Note that a rating scale can be included in the form. It may be used during the interviewing process to rate and help evaluate candidates more objectively.

> *Before you look for another person, define what top talent looks like, and then get every member of the hiring team to agree to this definition.*
>
> \- Lou Adler, *Hire with Your Head*

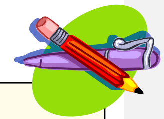
[4] The Candidate Profile form has been adapted from materials found in *Keeping the People Who Keep You in Business* by L. Branham

Tool: Candidate Profile – Example for a Supervisory Position

KEY KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS	
1.	Understands the laws, policies and procedures governing this area of work
2.	Understands impact of separation and loss on families; child & family and safety assessment skills
3.	Demonstrates knowledge of key community resources and how to access them
4.	Displays the skills needed to use computers and data to accomplish job tasks
5.	Understands the importance of meeting timely outcomes
6.	Demonstrates the ability to be organized and is effective in managing time
7.	
8.	
SOCIAL, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATIVE SKILLS	
9.	Demonstrates the ability to be practical, resourceful, flexible and use common sense to accomplish outcomes
10.	Has the ability to read situations, understand the social & political implications and adapt behaviors accordingly
11.	Demonstrates the ability to project trust worthiness, confidence and respect
12.	Displays the skills necessary to collaborate and work effectively with staff, other supervisors, managers and people in the community on projects… a good team player
13.	Demonstrates the ability to write clearly and coach others to write clearly
14.	Has the ability to express ideas clearly, use language that is appropriate to the situation, explain concepts, and persuade and teach others
15.	Displays good listening skills, gives appropriate responses and is empathic toward others
16.	
17.	
18.	

SELF-AWARENESS and SELF-MANAGEMENT	
19.	Demonstrates the ability to be honest with self and others and take responsibility for his/her own decisions and actions
20.	Exhibits the ability to understand the impact of personal history, biases and life experiences in interacting with others and in decision-making
21.	Understands cultural, racial, personal and other aspects of diversity; is able to manage his/her own biases and be effective with others who approach situations differently
22.	Has the ability to manage time, schedules and set priorities
23.	Displays personal and professional ethics in all that he/she does
24.	Demonstrates the ability to be flexible and adapt to changing situations
25.	Exhibits tolerance for ambiguity, manages risk and is able to make difficult decisions
26.	Demonstrates the ability to maintain balance between work, personal life and have appropriate ways of managing stress
27.	
KEY MOTIVATORS	
28.	Demonstrates understanding and commitment to agency mission, beliefs and the clients being served
29.	Exhibits commitment and sensitivity to the families and children the agency serves
30.	Displays commitment to reaching timely outcomes
31.	Takes satisfaction in working through others and has the interest and ability to coach/mentor others
32.	Is conscientious about work and helping others to meet performance expectations
33.	Has a positive attitude and contributes to building a positive culture
34.	
OTHER	
35.	
36.	
37.	

Activity - Identifying Core Competencies – Establishing a Candidate Profile



Instructions:

The Candidate Profile form that follows shows five major categories:

- Key knowledge and technical skills
- Social, communication and collaborative skills
- Self-awareness and self-management
- Key motivators
- Other

As an individual or as a small group

1. Pick a job position that currently or soon will need to be filled. Write the name of this position in the appropriate space on the form.

2. Fill in specific competencies successful candidates for this position will need to have in each category.

3. Think about these competencies and make sure that they are fair, complete and representative of the core competencies job candidates need to have for this job position.

A blank copy of the Candidate Profile form is provided in the Appendix of this workbook for adaptation to your organization. The Appendix also contains an example for an entry-level child and family service worker.

Tool: Candidate Profile Form

Candidate's name and contact information:						
Position applying for:						
KEY KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS		**Low**				**High**
1.		1	2	3	4	5
2.		1	2	3	4	5
3.		1	2	3	4	5
4.		1	2	3	4	5
5.		1	2	3	4	5
SOCIAL, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATIVE SKILLS						
6.		1	2	3	4	5
7.		1	2	3	4	5
8.		1	2	3	4	5
9.		1	2	3	4	5
10.		1	2	3	4	5

SELF-AWARENESS and SELF-MANAGEMENT		Low				High
11.		1	2	3	4	5
12.		1	2	3	4	5
13.		1	2	3	4	5
14.		1	2	3	4	5
15.		1	2	3	4	5
KEY MOTIVATORS						
16.		1	2	3	4	5
17.		1	2	3	4	5
18.		1	2	3	4	5
19.		1	2	3	4	5
OTHER						
20.		1	2	3	4	5
21.		1	2	3	4	5
Interviewer's signature:		Date:				

Step 2 Develop and work the recruitment plan

One never knows when a job opening will occur. A worker may leave unexpectedly. A new contract may be approved requiring additional staff or an emergency may occur, requiring qualified staff immediately.

Three typical traps to look out for in recruiting for a specific position in child and family service are:

1. The agency does not have a repeatable recruiting and selection process in place, making each hiring random and "ad hoc," meaning sometimes it works out and sometimes it doesn't.
2. The person who has the vacancy is too busy to give attention to the process. He/she doesn't get personally involved and delegates the process to someone else. This may result in costly mistakes and embarrassment.
3. People are needed to fill vacancies so fast that the agency does "crisis hiring." This can result in the "warm body syndrome" where the agency is looking to fill positions and hires the first person who comes along.

These traps may cause the agency to end up with "the wrong people in the wrong seats on the bus."

The organization needs an agreed upon plan in advance of starting the actual job specific recruiting effort that will mitigate these traps. The basic elements of a plan include:

- Personnel policies and plans that ask for as much advance notice of the organization's recruitment needs as possible, so that vacancies can be filled in a controlled way, not in a crisis. Ideally, work to have a pool of pre-qualified candidates.
- Job descriptions are kept current and available in a place where hiring supervisors and managers have access to the latest version (see the *Candidate Profile* form described in Step 1).
- The file containing job descriptions also includes pre-defined ads for print newspaper and the Internet, and a list of possible contacts for recruitment networking, e.g., local colleges, universities, professional organizations, churches and other community contacts.
- The agency has current resumes on file that have been submitted prior to the job opening for similar positions.
- Management and supervisory staff are provided periodic training in recruiting and interviewing.
- An executive/manager has been assigned to coordinate the recruitment process and selection team and for establishing and overseeing a timeline for filling the position(s).
- Ads, letters, civil service contacts are completed and posted as soon as appropriate.

- Internal staff are informed of the opening and encouraged to refer potential candidates and/or apply themselves.
- A process is established where resumes come to a central location for logging-in, sorting and processing, see the tool *A Guide for Establishing Your Candidate Screening Process* that follows.

Step 3. Screen resumes, assess and select the most promising candidates

Create an objective and repeatable process for how resumes will be collected and processed including who will be responsible for reviewing and screening them. The tool *A Guide for Establishing Your Candidate Screening Process* that follows has been provided as an example.

Tool: A Guide for Establishing Your Candidate Screening Process

1. Log in resumes as they are received

- Designate someone to track resumes
- Log resumes and date stamp them upon receipt. If candidates call in they need to know whether or not their resume has been received. Being able to respond to inquiries will leave candidates with a positive impression of the agency.

2. First level screening of resumes

- Establish minimum criteria for resumes to pass an initial screening such as relevant experience, education, licensing, certification and legal requirements
- Assess the overall look of the resume. Is it neat, informational and well presented?
- Create a checklist to insure all critical areas are covered and attach the completed checklist to the resume
- Look for a logical flow of activities and dates (such as job assignments). Are there any significant gaps or inconsistencies in employment that should be discussed during an interview?
- Note follow-up questions and points of interest to be discussed during an interview.
- Consider placing resumes in one of three piles.
    - Reject – does not meet requirement of the job (skills, education, etc.)
    - Unsure – pass on to the next level of screening, but at the bottom of the pile
    - Definite possibility – put on top of pile for next level of screening

3. Second level screening of resumes

- Determine the key candidate attributes that a screener needs to be looking for based on the position's core competencies detailed in the *Candidate Profile Form*, Step 1.
- Review each resume based on the selection criteria to determine which candidates are qualified and warrant an interview.
    - Often the supervisor for this position will perform this next level of screening. But whomever does this will find it helpful to rate candidates in a measurable way for a more objective comparison.
    - Be sure to apply the process fairly to all candidates and to rate substance over style. A resume may have great style and be flashy looking but is there substance behind it? Content and structure need to be the main focus.
    - Consider using some variation of the *Candidate Profile Form* to qualify and rate/compare candidates, Step 1.

4. Conduct telephone interviews

- Consider conducting a phone interview for those few candidates whose resumes have passed the first two levels of screening.
- Prepare a standard list of questions in advance to ask during telephone interviews as well as candidate specific questions to clarify the candidate's resume and particular situation.
    - Remember that these questions should be designed to seek out performance, character and personality attributes as illustrated in *Figure 6.3 Formula for A Great Hire.*
- During a phone interview:
    - Verify details that were questioned on the resume

- Describe some specific employment content and ask the candidate for their related experience
    - Evaluate the communication style and clarity of the candidate
- Be professional on the phone:
    - Ask the candidate if this is an OK time to talk or if you could set a time when it is more convenient
    - Set the candidate at ease but don't use humor inappropriately
    - Don't ask questions that are inappropriate or illegal
    - Ask open-ended questions followed up with clarifying questions.
    - Actively listen
    - Take notes during or immediately following to document key points from the interview

5. Determine how candidates are to be informed of the next steps of your recruitment and selection process.

Be Aware

Don't screen potentially good candidates out. You may let a star slip through your fingers. Look at the reasons behind your minimum set of job requirements.

For example could a minimum number of years of *professional* experience filter out a desirable candidate who may have equivalent experience in a relevant *volunteer* position?

Technical skills can be trained. Attitude, values, self-motivation and intelligence are what stars are made of.

Self Screening Process, Setting Realistic Job Expectations

It is difficult for new job applicants to fully appreciate the realities of a career in child and family services until they have actually experienced it. And it may take six months for a new applicant to gain this first hand experience. Research shows that a significant amount of drop out occurs during the first year due to unrealistic expectations about the job.

A study done by the Michigan Federation for Children and Families in 2000 shows that 47% of staff who leave foster care in the private sector leave within the first year of employment. Another research study done in thirty-three North Carolina counties during 2005-2006 indicates that workers who had an unrealistic understanding of child welfare work were likely to leave the profession, whereas workers who had realistic job expectations were prone to stay on the job.[5]

Providing job applicants with a realistic and balanced overview of what they are likely to experience in their day-to-day life as a child and family service worker can help them make an informed decision early on in the process. There are a variety of ways to do this. Such as, inviting qualified candidates to attend a group orientation meeting prior to application, providing case scenarios and detailed information in an information packet and/or providing applicants with a copy of a realistic job preview video DVD as used in Michigan and North Carolina.

Frequently asked questions addressed by North Carolina's *An Invitation to Choose Realistic Job Preview* video DVD series include:

- How often will I have to respond to emergencies?
- How will I know whether kids are safe or not?
- Will I have to remove children from their homes?
- Are the police involved in every removal situation?
- How often will I have to work overtime or stay late at night?
- How often will I have to go to court?
- Will I have to deal with angry people?
- How much time will I spend on paperwork?
- How many families will I work with?
- Is the work primarily with families? I thought it would be with children.
- How often will I make home visits?
- How concerned do I have to be about my own, personal safety?
- How will I know when I've made a good decision about a child or family?

Consider providing a realistic job preview to job candidates either

- Before they complete their formal job application,
- As part of the interviewing process, or
- Prior to their accepting a formal job offer.

[5] Source *An Invitation to Choose Realistic Job Preview of North Carolina Child Welfare Work*. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work and the Jordan Institute for Families http://ssw.unc.edu/jif/rr

Step 4. Conduct the interview(s), asking the right questions

The interview is a time for two-way communication. The organization seeks to gain information about the job candidate and the candidate seeks to gain information about the organization. This is a time for the interviewer to do some talking and a lot of active listening.

Active listening is a structured form of listening and responding that focuses the attention on the speaker. The interviewer should take care to really pay attention to what the interviewee is saying. Ask clarifying questions and try not to be distracted, half listening or half thinking about something else.

During this time of pre-employment, the interviewee wants to put his/her best foot forward to get the job. He/she may have little knowledge about the job or how to do the work but does have a great deal of enthusiasm. It is also a time that the interviewee is forming his/ her first impressions about agency and its’ representatives, based on how he /she is treated through the interviewing and hiring process.

The selection process needs to consider what style the interviewing process will follow. Will interviews be conducted by a panel of interviewers or conducted in series of one-on-one interviews (round robin style)? Will the candidates be brought in by groups or individually?

It can be a real time-saver for the first interview to be conducted with a group of interviewees of three (3) or more at a time. This way they can all hear the introduction and basic orientation presentation together and ask questions. Interviewees will benefit from hearing the responses to each other’s questions. The group introduction may then be followed by a round robin of individual, one-on-one interviews. This technique can save hours in the time it takes to give the basic introduction and orientation individually. It has the added benefit of demonstrating how the candidates conduct themselves in groups.

Just as in Stage 3 of the tool *A Guide for Establishing Your Candidate Screening Process*, the interviewer is well advised to have a list of open-ended and fact finding questions prepared in advance to ask each candidate, see the behavioral interview questions that follow. This list of prepared questions contains some core questions that are asked consistently of each candidate. Responses from candidates can then be rated, compared and evaluated.

If there are to be multiple interviewers, they will need to get together in advance to discuss and agree on a strategy for who will be asking which questions. This avoids wasted time asking candidates the same questions over and over again.

Behavioral Interview Questions

Traditional open-ended interview questions may include:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why are you interested in working for us?

Behavioral interviewing emphasizes work related past performance and behaviors. They are open-ended questions but are more directed. When formulated properly they will elicit detailed responses that get at the candidate's core competencies (summarized in the Candidate Profile Form discussed in Step 1). Behavioral interviewing questions are based on the belief that past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance. Interviewees are encouraged to draw on their past work experiences, activities, hobbies, volunteer work, school/church projects, family life to get at past work related behavior which can have great relevance on how they will behave in the future.

Look for three (3) types of skills to be described during a behavioral interview:

- Content skills - knowledge that is job specific and can be directly applied to the position being interviewed for

- Functional or transferable skills - past experiences that are job related such as ability to organize, manage time effectively, formulating plans and schedules, communicating, etc.

- Adaptive or self-management skills - personal characteristics such as being dependable, a team player, self directed, punctual, etc.

When in doubt, don't hire, keep looking. It is better not to hire than hire the wrong person.

- Jim Collins, *Good to Great*

Tool: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions [6]

Decision Making and Problem Solving

- Give me an example of a time when you had to keep from speaking or making a decision because you did not have enough information.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision.

Leadership

- What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from?
- Describe a time that you had difficulty getting others to accept your ideas. What was your approach? Did it work?

Motivation and initiative

- Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.
- Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the action of others.
- Describe some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were implemented, or carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts.
- Describe a situation that required a number of things to be done at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
- Have you found any ways to make school or a job easier or more rewarding?

Communication

- Tell me about a situation when you had to speak up (be assertive) in order to get a point across that was important to you.
- Have you ever had to "sell" an idea to your co-workers or group? How did you do it? Did they "buy" it?

Sensitivity

- Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle that person?
- Describe a situation where you found yourself dealing with someone who didn't like you. How did you handle it?

Teamwork and interpersonal skills

- Describe a recent unpopular decision you made and what the result was.
- What have you done in the past to contribute toward a teamwork environment?
- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
- Tell of a time when you worked with a colleague who was not completing his/her share of the work. Who, if anyone, did you tell or talk to about it? Did the manager take any steps to correct your colleague? Did you agree or disagree with the manager's actions?
- Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to a compromise.

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[6] Adapted from Suny Brockport Student Life Services found at http://www.brockport.edu/career/behave.htm

Planning and organization

- How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time?
- What do you do when your schedule is suddenly interrupted? Give an example.

Technical and professional knowledge

- Sometimes it's easy to get in "over your head." Describe a situation where you had to request help or assistance on a project or assignment.
- Give an example of how you applied knowledge from previous coursework/job experience to a project in another class/job.
- Describe a situation in which you found that your results were not up to your professor's/ supervisor's expectations. What happened? What action did you take?

Job motivation

- Give examples of your experiences at school or in a job that were satisfying. Give examples of your experiences that were dissatisfying.
- What kind of supervisor do you work best for? Provide examples.

Other behavioral questions

- Give a specific example of a policy you conformed to with which you did not agree.
- Give me an example of an important goal that you set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
- Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.

Fact Finding Questions [7]

It is often difficult to listen to what a candidate is saying during an interview while taking notes and thinking about the next question to ask. The following fact finding questions are provided for the interviewer to use to help him/her probe deeper into what the candidate is saying. These questions can be used to assess, clarify and validate accomplishments and specific statement(s). They can also be used when more information is needed in areas that are especially critical to the job.

Fact Finding Questions Check List

Consider asking some of the following fact-finding questions to "peel the onion" and probe for specific facts during the interview:

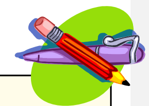
- When, what dates, how long?
- What was your actual role?
- What were your biggest challenges?
- How did you prepare for this? Did you develop a plan? How did your actions deviate from the plan?
- What do you consider the most significant work you did in this job?
- Give me three (3) examples where you showed initiative.
- How did you grow or change as a result of this experience?
- What were the outcomes from this? How did they differ from what you expected?
- How would you rank your overall success?
- What aspects did you enjoy the most?
- What aspects did you dislike?
- How would others involved with this describe you?
- What would you do differently if you had it to do over again?

See the appendix at the end of this workbook for "Best Practices for a Successful Interview." This is an article from Indiana University, Bloomington, Human Resource Services that contains a list of questions not to ask.

[7] Adapted from *Hire with Your Head,* Lou Adler (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2002)

The tool and activity that follows, *Candidate Interview Form*, gives examples of open-ended, fact-finding and follow-up probing questions that could be asked of candidates. This tool can be used as a model to establish a list of predetermined questions for use during actual interviews. Consider structuring the form in a way that will facilitate rated responses to questions and note taking.

Activity – Create a Candidate Interviewing Form



Instructions:

Using the *Candidate Interviewing Form* as an individual or in a small group:

1. Select key attributes/core competencies that were detailed in the *Candidate Profile form* and write them into the first column of the tool*: Candidate Interview Form.*

2. Construct a list of open ended, behavioral and fact finding questions to ask during the interview that will address the specifics of each attribute. Write these questions in the second column.

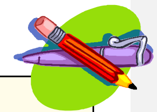
Tool: Candidate Interview Form [8]

	KEY KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS	EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK
1.	Understands child and family service policies and procedures including the importance of meeting timely outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being for children	What have you done to acquaint yourself with child and family service laws, policies and procedures? Why is this important to you as a supervisor? What have been your best and worst experiences in working with the court?
2.		
3.		
	SOCIAL, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATIVE SKILLS	**EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK**
4.	Demonstrates teamwork – ability to collaborate and work effectively with staff, other supervisors, managers and people in the community on projects	What are your best experiences of teamwork? What was your role in making it happen? How would you handle… (include a hypothetical problem with a colleague or client)?
5.	Demonstrates the ability to write clearly and coach others to write clearly	What were the best reports you have written? Can we see them? What will you find to be the most challenging thing about keeping up with paperwork?
6.		
	SELF-AWARENESS and SELF-MANAGEMENT	**EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK**
7.	Exhibits tolerance for ambiguity, manages risk and is able to make difficult decisions	Give me an example of a situation when you handled a crisis or high-risk situation very well? What did you like about the way you handled the situation? What would you have changed? What did you learn about yourself in this situation?
8.		

[8] Adapted from *Interviewing Skills* by Tim Hindle (Essential Managers Series, DK Publishing, Inc., 1998) and *Hire with Your Head*, Lou Adler (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2002)

KEY MOTIVATORS		EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK
9.	Demonstrates commitment and sensitivity to the families and children the agency serves	What motivates you to seek a job in child and family services? Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the lives of others.
10.		
11.		
12.		
OTHER		**EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK**
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		

Activity: Interview Questions and Responses



Instructions:

1. In the first column of the chart that follows write in several of the key competencies that you would be looking for in a candidate.

2. In the second column write questions that would help determine if the candidate possessed that competency.

3. In the third column write down the desired responses that you would be looking for.

Core Competency	Question to ask during interview	Desirable responses
Commitment to mission	What motivates you to seek a job in child and family services? Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the lives of others.	Is able to link personal motivation to the agency’s mission. Describes situations where he/she showed initiative in working with others, ability to listen and understand, adaptability-flexibility to new and changing situations, rapport building, etc.

Step 5. Compare, evaluate and select candidate(s)

Selecting the best candidate(s)
It is imperative to look beyond first impressions and look to the real needs of the position and the future needs of the organization. In doing so, the real needs of the position will be matched with the talent and energy of the candidate.

Use the *Candidate Profile/Evaluation Form*, discussed in Step 1, or a similar tool to objectively match the candidates to the job. Weigh each candidate's ability to do the job. In hiring for any child and family service position, remember the following basic personal characteristics necessary for resilient staff:

- Sense of personal values and mission that is in alignment with the organization's values and mission
- Desire to make a difference in the lives of the children and families being served – human caring
- Strong feeling of effectiveness in doing the work
- Goodness of fit with child and family service work and the agency's mission
- Relevant education and length of time in the field
- Feeling of belonging and personal pride in the agency and its mission

Figure 6.3 *Formula for a Great Hire* illustrates the formula of attributes/core competencies that sum up to making a great hire.

Great Hire	=	Performance	+	Character	+	Personality
		The person's job-related competencies, communication skills and commitment to effectiveness		The person's underlying value system, sense of mission and "goodness of fit" to the work		The person's self-awareness, sensitivity to others, and ability to manage relationships with others

Figure 6.3 Formula for a Great Hire [9]

[9] Adapted from *Hire with Your Head*, Lou Adler (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2002)

Check references
Schedule follow-up interviews and check references for those candidates who are being considered for hiring. This is necessary to:

- Verify the facts written in the candidate's application
- Verify that licensing and legal requirements are met
- Follow-up on questions from the interview that need clarification and/or verification

It is helpful for the person doing the reference checking to follow a repeatable process. Consider preparing a reference checklist form. Be sure to include room to write-in additional questions that come up during the interviewing process. This form can be used as a script during a telephone reference check.

When checking references, be prepared to bump up against Human Resource departments that have strict policies about not giving out employee information. Sometimes they will only provide job title, dates of employment and salary information. To gain more detailed information it is often useful to ask the job candidate for the names of three or more former coworkers, supervisors and individuals outside of HR.

Formal testing
Some agencies utilize search consultants, standardized assessment tools and/or testing to determine a candidate's fitness for a particular position. This practice can be useful for upper management and leadership positions. Formal testing is usually appropriate to use after it is determined that a person is a viable candidate for a position, not as a way to screen people out of the process at an early stage. Used with finalists, testing can help identify blind spots that may otherwise go unnoticed. It can help inform difficult choices, when there is more than one finalist. It can also be used to develop an orientation and/or coaching plan to help the successful candidate become aware of and master his/her blind spots.

As I studied the recruiting and hiring process, I found out some interesting things. Foremost was the fact that the best candidate rarely got the job, the best interviewee did. Determine if you like or dislike the candidate after you've determined his or her competence. Substance is more important than style, but it's sometimes hard to tell the difference.

- Lou Adler, *Hire with Your Head*

Be courteous to unsuccessful candidates
Send out a polite letter thanking them for their time and the interview. If appropriate, advise them that their application will be kept on file in the event that there is a future opening that they may be interested in. All candidates need to be given the courtesy of being informed of a decision not to hire in a professional, respectful and timely manner. The way they are treated reflects directly on the organization. This will get back to the greater community and may impact other candidates or future candidates.

Activity – Looking Beyond Chemistry

Instructions:
We are all human. And as such, it is all too easy to hire people we like based on chemistry and not necessarily based on who would be best on the job. First impressions can be deceiving.

Consider the following questions:

1. List three people *in your life* who have had the greatest impact on you.

2. List three people *in your organization* who are the best at what they do. And try to remember your first impressions of each of them.

3. Were your first impressions of any of these people less than positive?

4. Were you able to get beyond that first impression and establish a good working relationship with them?

~~2.~~

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Step 6. Make the Offer

When a decision is made to select a candidate for a position, act on it. Be aware of the time it takes from the interview to the time the final hiring decision and offer is made. Candidates have a sense of urgency and need to be treated respectfully. Their sense of time may be quite different from that of the agency. A week to the agency may seem like a month to the candidate. So act as quickly as possible. This is the candidate's first real experience with how the agency really treats its' people. A simple phone call to keep the candidate informed of the hiring decision progress can insure that this is a positive experience.

Consider the following when making an offer:

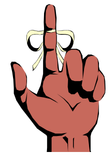
- Insure that the offer is fair and competitive
- Follow-up the verbal offer with an offer in writing, thus avoiding misunderstanding and possible confusion
- Discuss the offer directly with the candidate to clarify details
- Celebrate

Additional recommendations
Have documentation that substantiates the hiring decision(s) in a file that is available to respond to any questions that may arise. Include information on:

- Job descriptions and profiles
- Internal job postings
- Ads placed and other recruiting activities
- Resumes screened
- Phone interviews conducted with notes
- On-site interviews conducted with notes
- Hiring decisions criteria
- Salary decision criteria
- Phone logs and logs of contacts with candidates

This information is also valuable to evaluate what works and what doesn't work in the hiring process so it can be continuously improved.

Important points to remember



- Recruiting and selecting the right people for the job requires a carefully thought out and repeatable process. The staff who are involved in hiring will need to have periodic training in the process and opportunities to sharpen their skills.

- This workbook details a six-step process for recruiting and selecting the right people. This can be adapted to different organizations. These steps are:

  Step 1. Determine the <u>real competencies</u> needed for the position in question and reflect these in the job description / job profile

  Step 2. Recruit for the specific job opening, including considering internal candidates for promotional and lateral transfer opportunities

  Step 3. Screen resumes, assess and select the most promising candidates

  Step 4. Conduct the interview(s), asking the right questions

  Step 5. Compare, evaluate and select candidate(s)

  Step 6. Make an offer

- Remember the *Formula for a Great Hire*

  Great Hire = Performance + Character + Personality

6.4 The Supervisor’s Role in Recruiting and Selecting Staff

Recruiting and selecting the right staff is a team process between the Human Resource Department, agency leaders and managers and the direct supervisor of the position. As much as a front-line supervisor may feel it is not his/her job to do hiring, or he/she does not have time for it, getting directly involved in selecting his/her own staff for the team is crucial to success.

Getting the Real Work Done

Alice works as a supervisor for a fairly large organization and had critical approved openings in her unit that needed to be filled. She called Human Resources to get the process started. Much to her surprise, HR proceeded to tell her of all the things she had to do. “But hiring new staff is your job”, Alice told them. “Oh no,” they said. “We are here to assist you. Getting the right people into your unit is the job of the supervisor. After all they are going to be working for you and not the HR department.”

So HR coached Alice on how to review and make the necessary updates to her job description. Then based on these job descriptions, HR was able to place the ads and do the initial resume screening. The final resume screening was up to Alice.

Alice is a conscientious and very busy supervisor, who concentrates on getting the “real work done.” So when HR delivered a stack of 20+ resumes she thought to herself, “I don’t have time to go through all these.” The resumes sat on her desk day after day. And day after day she and her staff got busier and busier, and further behind in their work. After all, they had to do their jobs plus the extra work that would have been done by the people who would have filled the open positions.

Finally, in desperation, Alice took the resumes home and went through them, highlighting those qualifications that best matched the needs of the open positions in her unit. She even wrote in some follow-up questions to ask during phone and face-to-face interviews.

Alice took her short list of prospective candidates down to HR for them to set-up interviews. “Oh no, that’s your job too” they said. “After all, who knows your schedule better than you? And you will also need to do a phone interview with each candidate so you don’t waste your time or their time bringing in people who aren’t qualified.” Alice was feeling more than a bit resentful of HR. After all she had “real work” to do.

HR coached Alice on how to prepare a telephone interviewing form with critical questions to ask each candidate. They also coached her on how to conduct the on-site team interviews to get to the candidate’s core competencies and sell the candidate on the organization and the job. Alice was starting to appreciate how much effort had to go into getting qualified people on board.

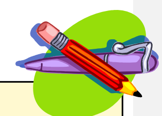
During the interviews Alice first tried to set the candidate at ease by asking some general questions and then progressed to asking the more difficult questions. She was amazed by some of the responses she got. One candidate in particular seemed like a perfect match for the job at first but when asked a technical question, actually lied about the answer rather then just saying he didn't know the answer. To Alice, it wasn't so much about knowing the answer as it was about how the candidate would handle him/herself during a difficult situation and work toward an answer. Trying to bluff oneself through the interview questions just wasn't going to cut it.

Another candidate at first didn't seem to fit but upon further discussion looked pretty good.

Alice, with her team of two other interviewers, was able make an informed decision as to who would best qualify for the job openings. Alice knew then that she had the first hand knowledge needed to make an informed hiring decision. And an offer was extended.

Now six months later things are moving along smoothly in Alice's unit. The workload is spread out appropriately and outcomes are being met. Alice now realizes that the "real work" can't get done without having the right people in the right positions.

Activity – What the Supervisor Can Do



Instructions:

1. In the *Getting the Real Work Done* story of Alice, what could HR have done to help Alice fill her vacancies in a more timely and productive way?

2. Review and fill out the "*Selection and Hiring, What/How Resource Chart*" that follows. Consider the examples shown then:
    - Write-in additional ideas about "**What the supervisor can do**."
    - Write-in your ideas for "**How the supervisor can do this**."
    - Add any **Resources** or tools that you currently use or know about.

Selection and Hiring, What/How Resource Chart

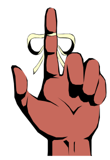
<u>What</u> the supervisor can do	**<u>How</u> the supervisor can do this**	**Resources**
1. Make filling vacancies a high priority	• Continuously encourage feedback from staff on how to recruit new staff • Anticipate in advance when vacancies are occurring • Activate the agencies hiring process as soon as possible • Understand the core competencies needed for jobs within the unit •	•
2. Hire the right people	• Match job candidates to job requirements and characteristics of resilient workers • Plan interviewing techniques and behavioral-focused questions in advance • Make sure that you, the supervisor, is an active participant in the hiring process and key person in the hiring decision	• *Candidate Profile Form*
3. Have a mutually informative and inclusive interviewing process	• Clearly explain the job and the agency's mission to candidates • Have interviewees meet with staff to discuss the realities of the job and the agency's culture • Encourage prospective staff to make inquires about the agency within the community •	•
4. Model how staff are treated at the agency during and after interview	• Follow-up quickly with job candidates regarding any delays and the yes or no decision to hire • Schedule and coordinate orientation of new staff as a high priority	• See Workbook # 5

Closing Thoughts

Getting the right people in the right seats of the bus is essential to an organization's success. This can seem like a time consuming, long-term and sometime never ending process, but studies and experience show that this is perhaps the single most important thing managers and supervisors can do. Filling positions with individuals who have the performance, values and personality to match the job will pay off richly for the organization and for the individual supervisor's work group. This is an effort worth careful planning and attention.

It is important to remember that the job is not done once the new employee(s) is on board. Every new hire needs to get off to a great start. Workbook 5, *The First Six Months*, provides a structure, methods and tools for orienting, supporting and training new staff during their first six months on the job. Workbook 5 gives particular attention to helping staff cope with and manage the stressors of the new job.

Important points to remember



- Recruiting and selecting the right staff is everybody's job. As much as a front-line supervisor may feel it is not his/her job to do hiring or he/she does not have time for it, getting directly involved in selecting his/her own staff for the team is crucial to success.

- What the supervisor can do
  - Make filling vacancies a high priority
  - Participate in the process to hire the right people
  - Have a mutually informative and inclusive interviewing process
  - Model how staff are treated at the agency during and after interview

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Appendix

Tool: Sample Job Description Form

Title/Position: ____

Date ____________________ *(date this job description was written)*

Description of the service provided by this position:
(What is the purpose of this job? Write a brief summary describing this job. What are the desired processes used; desired outcomes; what are the locations and special environments in which the job will be done? What would doing this job successfully look like?)

Primary tasks to be accomplished:
(What are the performance objectives of this job? What are the specific day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month things that need to get done to be successful at this job? Use verbs such as: plans, supervises, directs, recommends, documents, interviews, sets-up, etc. to describe functions and activities. Also describe timing of work i.e., what has to be done by when or how often, what is the volume of work such as typical caseload size.)

Prerequisites required:
(What are the prerequisites for this job including academic, certifications, etc.?)

Job skill, knowledge and experience and personality attributes:
(What skills, knowledge and experience do "water walkers" have in doing this job? The term "Water Walker" refers to a person who does this job exceptionally well. They are the best performers in this position. Think about what makes the best people in this job, the best.)

Behavioral traits, attitudes, motivational factors needed:
(What are the behavioral and overall personality traits, necessary to be successful in doing this job? Again, consider the water walkers.)

Primary people contacted:
(Who will the person doing this job be working with including the clients/customers, peers? Who will the person doing this job work for?)

Candidate Profile/Evaluation Form – Blank

Candidate's name and contact information:						
Position applying for:						
KEY KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS		**Low**				**High**
1.		1	2	3	4	5
2.		1	2	3	4	5
3.		1	2	3	4	5
4.		1	2	3	4	5
5.						
6.		1	2	3	4	5
SOCIAL, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATIVE SKILLS						
7.		1	2	3	4	5
8.		1	2	3	4	5
9.		1	2	3	4	5
10.		1	2	3	4	5
11.		1	2	3	4	5
12.		1	2	3	4	5

SELF-AWARENESS and SELF-MANAGEMENT		Low				High
13.		1	2	3	4	5
14.		1	2	3	4	5
15.		1	2	3	4	5
16.		1	2	3	4	5
17.		1	2	3	4	5
KEY MOTIVATORS						
18.		1	2	3	4	5
19.		1	2	3	4	5
20.		1	2	3	4	5
21.		1	2	3	4	5
22.						
23.		1	2	3	4	5
OTHER						
24.		1	2	3	4	5
25.		1	2	3	4	5
26.						
27.		1	2	3	4	5
28.		1	2	3	4	5
Interviewer's signature:		Date:				

Tool: Candidate Profile/Evaluation Form Example – Entry Level

Candidate's name and contact information:						
Position applying for: *Entry Level Child and Family Service Worker*						
KEY KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS		**Low**				**High**
1.	Meets entry level educational requirements	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Has a basic understanding of the professional ethics and requirements of the job	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Has specific certification and/or evidence of practicing needed skills	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Demonstrates the ability to use technology appropriate to the job	1	2	3	4	5
5.		1	2	3	4	5
6.		1	2	3	4	5
SOCIAL, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATIVE SKILLS						
7.	Demonstrates teamwork – ability to collaborate and work effectively with others	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Exhibits openness to learning about diversity and the impact of personal bias on decision making and interaction with others	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Has the ability to express ideas clearly, use language that is appropriate to the situation, explain concepts	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Displays good listening skills, gives appropriate responses and is empathic toward others	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Demonstrates good writing skills	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Has the ability to use supervision effectively	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Demonstrates effective organization and time management skills	1	2	3	4	5
14.		1	2	3	4	5
15.		1	2	3	4	5

	SELF-AWARENESS and SELF-MANAGEMENT	Low				High
16.	Demonstrates the ability to be open and honest with self and others and take responsibility for his/her own decisions and actions	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Has the ability to be flexible and adapt as situations change	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Has the ability to project trust worthiness, confidence and respect	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Displays personal and professional ethics	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Demonstrates the ability to tolerate ambiguity, risk and make difficult decisions	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Is able to maintain balance between work and personal life	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Has the ability to manage stress	1	2	3	4	5
23.		1	2	3	4	5
	KEY MOTIVATORS					
24.	Demonstrates some experience with and has a strong personal commitment for working with families and children at risk	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Demonstrates commitment and sensitivity to the families and children the agency serves	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Displays commitment to achieving outcomes in a timely manner	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Understands that child and family service is a family centered service and is motivated to work with and through families to achieve outcomes for children	1	2	3	4	5
28.						
29.		1	2	3	4	5
	OTHER					
30.		1	2	3	4	5
31.		1	2	3	4	5
	Interviewer's signature:	Date:				

Tool: A Guide for Establishing Your Candidate Screening Process

1. Log in resumes as they are received

- Designate someone to track resumes
- Log resumes and date stamp them upon receipt. If candidates call in they need to know whether or not their resume has been received. Being able to respond to inquiries will leave candidates with a positive impression of the agency.

2. First level screening of resumes

- Establish minimum criteria for resumes to pass an initial screening such as relevant experience, education, licensing, certification and legal requirements
- Assess the overall look of the resume. Is it neat, informational and well presented?
- Create a checklist to insure all critical areas are covered and attach the completed checklist to the resume
- Look for a logical flow of activities and dates (such as job assignments). Are there any significant gaps or inconsistencies in employment that should be discussed during an interview?
- Note follow-up questions and points of interest to be discussed during an interview.
- Consider placing resumes in one of three piles.
  - Reject – does not meet requirement of the job (skills, education, etc.)
  - Unsure – pass on to the next level of screening, but at the bottom of the pile
  - Definite possibility – put on top of pile for next level of screening

3. Second level screening of resumes

- Determine the key candidate attributes that a screener needs to be looking for based on the position's core competencies detailed in the *Candidate Profile Form*, Step 1.
- Review each resume based on the selection criteria to determine which candidates are qualified and warrant an interview.
  - Often the supervisor for this position will perform this next level of screening. But whomever does this will find it helpful to rate candidates in a measurable way for a more objective comparison.
  - Be sure to apply the process fairly to all candidates and to rate substance over style. A resume may have great style and be flashy looking but is there substance behind it? Content and structure need to be the main focus.
  - Consider using some variation of the *Candidate Profile Form* to qualify and rate/compare candidates, Step 1.

4. Conduct telephone interviews

- Consider conducting a phone interview for those few candidates whose resumes have passed the first two levels of screening.
- Prepare a standard list of questions in advance to ask during telephone interviews as well as candidate specific questions to clarify the candidate's resume and particular situation.
  - Remember that these questions should be designed to seek out performance, character and personality attributes as illustrated in *Figure 6.3 Formula for A Great Hire.*
- During a phone interview:

    - Verify details that were questioned on the resume
    - Describe some specific employment content and ask the candidate for their related experience
    - Evaluate the communication style and clarity of the candidate
- Be professional on the phone:
    - Ask the candidate if this is an OK time to talk or if you could set a time when it is more convenient
    - Set the candidate at ease but don't use humor inappropriately
    - Don't ask questions that are inappropriate or illegal
    - Ask open-ended questions followed up with clarifying questions.
    - Actively listen
    - Take notes during or immediately following to document key points from the interview

5. Determine how candidates are to be informed of the next steps of your recruitment and selection process.

Tool: Sample Behavioral Interview Questions [10]

(Note that some of the questions that follow are written as though they were being asked of a recent college graduate.)

Decision Making and Problem Solving

- Give me an example of a time when you had to keep from speaking or making a decision because you did not have enough information.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision.

Leadership

- What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from?
- Have you ever had difficulty getting others to accept your ideas? What was your approach? Did it work?

Motivation and initiative

- Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.
- Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the action of others.
- Describe some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were implemented, or carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts.
- Describe a situation that required a number of things to be done at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
- Have you found any ways to make school or a job easier or more rewarding?

Communication

- Tell me about a situation when you had to speak up (be assertive) in order to get a point across that was important to you.
- Have you ever had to "sell" an idea to your co-workers or group? How did you do it? Did they "buy" it?

Sensitivity

- Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle that person?
- Describe a situation where you found yourself dealing with someone who didn't like you. How did you handle it?

Teamwork and interpersonal skills

- Describe a recent unpopular decision you made and what the result was.
- What have you done in the past to contribute toward a teamwork environment?
- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
- Tell of a time when you worked with a colleague who was not completing their share of the work. Who, if anyone, did you tell or talk to about it? Did the manager take any steps

[10] Adapted from Suny Brockport Student Life Services found at http://www.brockport.edu/career/behave.htm

to correct your colleague? Did you agree or disagree with the manager's actions?

- Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to a compromise.

Planning and organization

- How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time?
- What do you do when your schedule is suddenly interrupted? Give an example.

Technical and professional knowledge

- Sometimes it's easy to get in "over your head.” Describe a situation where you had to request help or assistance on a project or assignment.
- Give an example of how you applied knowledge from previous coursework to a project in another class.
- Describe a situation in which you found that your results were not up to your professor's or supervisor's expectations. What happened? What action did you take?

Job motivation

- Give examples of your experiences at school or in a job that were satisfying. Give examples of your experiences that were dissatisfying.
- What kind of supervisor do you work best for? Provide examples.

Other behavioral questions

- Give a specific example of a policy you conformed to with which you did not agree.
- Give me an example of an important goal that you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
- Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.

Tool: Candidate Interview Form [11]

Use this tool to structure an interview with job candidates. It is important that interviews be specific and consistent, especially when interviewing multiple candidates. The interview process is a time to assess a candidate's professional, technical and practical abilities. Construct a list of open-ended and fact-finding questions to get at the specifics.

KEY KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS		EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
SOCIAL, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATIVE SKILLS		**EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK**
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		

[11] Adapted from *Interviewing Skills* by Tim Hindle (Essential Managers Series, DK Publishing, Inc., 1998)

SELF-AWARENESS and SELF-MANAGEMENT		EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
KEY MOTIVATORS		**EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK**
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
OTHER		**EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK**
18.		
19.		
20.		

Fact Finding Checklist [12]

Often it is difficult to listen to what a candidate is saying during an interview while taking notes and thinking about the next question to ask. Following is a list of fact-finding questions for the interviewer to use to help him/her probe deeper into what the candidate is saying. Use these questions to assess and validate accomplishments and specific statement(s); when more information is needed in those areas that you believe are especially critical to the job.

Consider asking some of the fact-finding questions from the list that follows to “peel the onion” and probe for facts.

- When, dates, how long?
- What was your actual role?
- What were your biggest challenges?
- How did you prepare for this? Did you develop a plan?
- What do you consider the most significant work you did in this job?
- Give me 3 examples where you showed initiative
- How did you grow or change as a result of this experience?
- What were the outcomes from this? How did they differ from what you expected?
- How would you rank your overall success?
- What aspects did you enjoy (dislike)?
- How would others involved with this describe you?
- What would you do differently if you had it to do over again?

[12] This list has been adapted from Lou Adler’s book *Hire with Your Head Using Power Hiring to Build Companies* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2002)

Best Practices for a Successful Interview [13]

The goal of the interview is to collect accurate information in a uniform manner from all respondents. The people interviewed must be asked the same questions in the same way if that goal is to be reached. When conducting the interview, follow these tips:

- Base interview questions on job criteria.
- Ask the same questions of each candidate.
- Conduct the interview in a private location accessible to people with disabilities.
- Take notes to minimize interviewer bias or subjectivity.

Common Interviewing Biases

There are several problems that interviewers run into when they allow biases to get in the way. These include:

Stereotyping: Forming an opinion about how people of a given gender, religion, race, appearance, or other characteristic think, act, respond, or would perform the job - without any evidence that this is the case.

Inconsistency in questioning: Asking different questions of each candidate leads to a skewed assessment of who would best perform the job. Questions designed to get particular information about a specific candidate are only appropriate in the context of a core set of questions asked of all candidates.

First impressions: An interviewer might make a snap judgment about someone based on their first impression - positive or negative - that clouds the entire interview. For example, letting the fact that the candidate is wearing out-of-the-ordinary clothing or has a heavy regional accent take precedence over the applicant's knowledge, skills, or abilities.

Negative emphasis: This involves rejection of a candidate based on a small amount of negative information - a common occurrence. Research indicates that interviewers give unfavorable information about twice the weight of favorable information.

Halo/horn effect: The "halo" effect occurs when an interviewer allows one strong point about the candidate to overshadow or have an effect on everything else. For instance, knowing someone went to a particular university might be looked upon favorably. Everything the applicant says during the interview is seen in this light. ("Well, she left out an important part of the answer to that question, but, she must know it, she went to XYZ University). The "horn" effect is just the opposite - allowing one weak point to influence everything else.

Cultural noise: Since the candidate wants the job, she or he will provide the words the interviewer wants to hear, even if those words are not entirely truthful. For example, an applicant might say that he has no problem reporting to someone younger, or working in a team setting,

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[13] Article from Indiana University, Bloomington, Human Resource Services. Source: http://www.indiana.edu/~hrm/employment/best.html

when this is not the case. Interviewers should prepare questions that probe for specific examples and stay away from questions that elicit "yes" or "no" answers.

Nonverbal bias: Undue emphasis might be placed on nonverbal cues that have nothing to do with the job, such as loudness or softness of voice, or the type of handshake given.

Contrast effect: Strong(er) candidates who interview after weak(er) ones may appear more qualified than they are because of the contrast between the two. Note taking during the interview and a reasonable period of time between interviews may alleviate this.

Do's and Don'ts of Interview Questions [14]

	Do's - questions you may ask	Don'ts - questions and statements to stay away from
Age	• Are you 18 years of age or older?	• How old are you? • When did you graduate from high school? • How do you feel about working for a person younger than you? • You must be getting close to retirement age. . .
Gender	• Do you have responsibilities other than work that will prevent you from performing specific job requirements such as traveling? • What hours and days can you work? • Have you ever worked under a different name?	• Do you have plans for having children? • Childcare is so hard to get. Do you have any baby-sitting problems? • What is your maiden name? • How would you feel working for a man/woman? • Our customers sometimes prefer to be served by men. I hope you don't have a problem with that. • Do you think your women's intuition would come in handy on this job? • Tell me, how did a man come to be interested in this kind of work?
Disability	• Are you able to perform the duties of the job with or without accommodation? • If the applicant indicates that she/he can perform the tasks with an accommodation, you may ask: • What accommodation would you need in order to perform the tasks?	• Do you have any disabilities? • Are you in good health? • Do you have any physical defects that prevent you from performing certain kinds of work? • That's a noticeable limp. . .Those are very thick glasses. . .How severe is your disability? • What is the prognosis for your condition? • Will you require a special leave because of your

[14] Adapted from Society for Human Resource Management, 1998

	Do's - questions you may ask	Don'ts - questions and statements to stay away from
	• Now that you have heard the hours, leave policies, and other requirements of this position, do you feel you will be able to meet these requirements? • How many days were you absent from work last year? • An employer may make medical inquiries or require a medical examination of all candidates at the stage a conditional offer is made.	disability or its treatment? • Please list any conditions or diseases you were treated for in the last 3 years. • How many days were you absent last year because of illness? • Have you ever been treated by a psychiatrist or counselor? • You mentioned your daughter has multiple sclerosis. Will that have an affect on your attendance? • Do you have any family members or relatives who are disabled?
Race	• None	• There aren't very many minorities in our department. Will that be a problem for you? • You look like you have an interesting family history. How would you define your race?
Sexual Orientation	• Request the name of a person to contact only after the individual is employed.	• What is the name of a relative to be notified in case of emergency? • Are you married? • You people are so creative, you'd be just perfect for the job. • This is a real family-oriented department. Is that okay with you?
National Origin	• Are you legally eligible to work in the United States? • After making a conditional offer, an employer may inform the applicant that he/she will have to produce documents for work eligibility. • Inquiry into languages applicants speak fluently, if it is a requirement for the job.	• Where were you born? • Of what country are you a citizen? • Yablonski, what kind of name is that? • I see you speak Spanish. Did you learn that in your native country or in school?
Religion	• Will you be available to work the required schedule?	• What church do you attend? • Will you need to take time off from work to observe (name of particular religious holiday)?
Education	• Do you have a high school diploma or equivalent?	• When did you graduate from high school or college?

	Do's - questions you may ask	Don'ts - questions and statements to stay away from
	• Do you have a university degree?	
Finances	• None	• Do you own your own home? • How long have you lived at your present address? • Have your wages ever been garnished?
Military	• What type of education, training, and experience did you receive in the military?	• What type of discharge did you receive?
Unions	• Inquiry into membership in organizations the applicant	• Are you a union member? • List all clubs, societies, and lodges you belong to.
Workers' Comp	• None	• Have you ever filed for Workers' compensation? • Have you had any prior work injuries?
Arrests	• It is best to only ask about *convictions* for crimes related to the job.	• Have you ever been arrested?

About the Authors

John and Judith McKenzie, along with their colleague, Rosemary Jackson, are the principal authors, organizational consultants and trainers for the Michigan State University Workbook Series on *Staff Retention in Child and Family Services*. Their results-oriented work ethic, combined expertise, and successful work histories are ideally suited to assisting child and family service agencies in developing a culture for staff satisfaction and retention.

Judith was the CEO and President of Spaulding for Children for 22 years. Under her leadership, Spaulding grew from a small special needs adoption program to a renowned multi-service agency that has been the National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption continuously since 1985. In addition, she has several years experience administering public child and family service programs, including public assistance, protective services, foster care and adoption and child welfare agency licensing. Judith has provided training, keynote addresses, and has written extensively on child and family services, public and non-profit agency management and strategic planning. Judith received her MSW from the University of Michigan.

John has been a "hands on" manager and organizational consultant in business and industry for over 25 years. He has led a number of change initiatives and implemented many new projects throughout his career, winning six executive level awards for his contributions to General Motors, TRW and Unisys. John has experience and proven expertise in strategic planning, change management, teambuilding, project management, and implementation of workforce and quality processes. He has adapted these proven methods and materials from business to provide assistance to state child welfare programs and non-profit agencies. John received his BS in Industrial Engineering from the University of Maryland.

John and Judith have provided consultation and training in strategic planning and change management for over fifteen states' child welfare programs. In addition, they have written a series of five, *Answering the Call*, publications for AdoptUsKids on recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive parents, which have been published and distributed to over 60,000 individuals and agencies nationwide.

Rosemary Jackson is an accomplished trainer, consultant, program developer and clinician. Rosemary has developed curriculum for clinicians and parents to address the post placement needs of foster and adoptive families and she currently offers post adoption services to adult adoptees and families who have adopted internationally. She has also developed training materials on a variety of topics including grief and loss; workplace stress and burnout; secondary trauma and others that are germane to staff offering services to children and families. Her years combining service delivery and product development make her uniquely qualified to offer training and consultation services in child and family services.

Project Services

With a flexible design, agency leaders, supervisors and front-line staff will be able to benefit from using the curriculum in many ways. However, it is important for users to understand that the curriculum, at its best, is intended to facilitate cultural change within agencies to support staff retention and job satisfaction and improve agency outcomes. Therefore, states and agencies that make a commitment to obtain professional services to facilitate the implementation of the curriculum will experience better and more lasting results. The various ways the curriculum can be accessed and used are described below.

Self-study - Specific workbooks target the needs and interests of agency leaders, supervisors and front-line workers. Workbooks include learning activities, case studies and tools to enhance individual learning.

Workshops - Trainers and advisors are available to conduct workshops for leaders, program managers and/or supervisors. These workshops are tailored to the specific audience and (when available) will include use of media to present learning principles, engage participants in small group learning activities and demonstrate how the program can be used in the work setting.

Training of facilitators - Project staff will provide facilitator training for individuals or agency teams. Sessions will equip teams to facilitate learning groups in an agency and to use the curriculum in a combination of self-study and small group activities.

Multiple agency user group(s) - Project staff will provide ongoing training and support to a regular group of selected and trained agency facilitator teams, who will form a User's Group. The advantage to this model is that teams will be supported and encouraged to share their promising practices.

Single agency model - An experienced project faculty team will facilitate an agency's development plan over a mutually agreed upon period of time. Services will involve high-level administrative commitment and involvement. Agency assessments will be conducted and an agency-specific plan developed. Internal leadership team(s) will determine and facilitate changes. Staff will be involved at all levels of the agency.

Project staff will work with interested states and agencies to explore options for delivering services tailored to agency needs and available resources. Fees will be established based on scope of work, staff time, travel and material costs to deliver the services requested.

If you are interested in learning more about the availability of training and consultation services, contact:

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