

NEWS & VIEWS

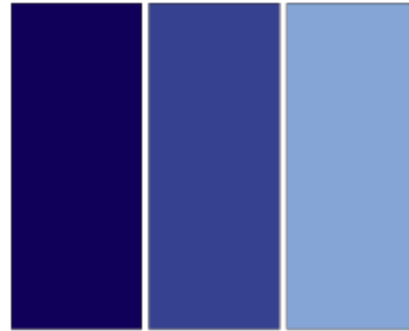
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Potential Skilled Nursing Staff**

**ATTENTION: NEW JERSEY
FACILITIES Human
Trafficking Training**



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Best Practices for Interviewing Potential Skilled Nursing Staff

By:
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Interviewing potential candidates for skilled nursing staff positions is probably not the thing that a manager, administrator or DON of a skilled nursing home would place on a list of the things they most enjoy about their jobs. However, finding the best qualified and best suited personnel for the unique aspects of your facility is extremely important. Whereas, satisfied, dedicated staff in a skilled nursing home can be the keys to attaining a Five Star Quality Rating by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), a mediocre, disgruntled--just working for the paycheck--staff member can cause all kinds of havoc. Such havoc can result in high turnover rates, costly fines, constant citations and even the potential closure of what could and should have been an excellent place for providing care.

Today, it is incumbent upon those whose jobs involve interviewing potential skilled nursing staff to realize that there are some very specific, "Do Not Ask and Do Not Go There" areas to be aware of when asking questions and generally communicating with a prospective employee. However, these seemingly shark-infested waters can be navigated safely by being informed and approaching the interviewing process with an attitude of learning a new, more effective skillset, and being willing to let go of old, ineffective and potentially litigious approaches.

According to Wolters Kluwer's "Checklist for Improving Managers Interviewing Skills," there are four areas that contribute to a manager's shortcomings in the interviewing process:

- Lack of Focus
- Lack of Control
- Poor Balance
- Failure to Get In-depth Responses

Lack of Focus

Starting an interview with a question like, "Tell me about yourself?" seems like a relaxed, open question. However, this approach is so open-ended and lacking in structure or focus, it often does not provide the interviewer with much information. This is especially true with a person who finds it difficult to talk about themselves or who may be nervous and have trouble getting started. This type of question gives the impression that the interviewer may lack interest or has not prepared for the interview; and, frequently, leaves the candidate not knowing where or how to respond. Questions that lack focus are not helpful with meeting the interviewer's need to discover the applicant's experience regarding the job.

Lack of Control

An interviewer who relies solely on the resume of the applicant surrenders control of the interview to the candidate because the resume is prepared to convey only the applicant's positive aspects. This approach may also tend to inhibit the response of the candidate, and it causes the interviewer to be formulating their questions from the resume at the same time the applicant is responding to the interviewer's previous question. This means that the interviewer is not really listening to what the candidate is saying. The way for the interviewer to maintain control of the interview is to think about the questions that provide information not reflected in the candidate's resume of past jobs and education. Good questions answer who, what, where, when and why.

Poor Balance

A good interviewer does not dominate the interview by just collecting as much information as possible, as quickly as possible. It is essential for the interviewer to provide the candidate with information about the company and its culture. In interviewing staff for a skilled nursing home, it is very important for the interviewer to share the unique nuances that may exist in their nursing home and that may vary from unit to unit. Also, the interviewer needs to make sure that the candidate understands the requirements and duties of the position. This requires a back and forth balanced communication.

Failure to Get In-depth Responses

Interviewers should ask questions that solicit more than a one-word response and that are non-directive with no obvious right answer. For example, instead of asking a candidate, "What are your weaknesses?" try asking, "What are some of your professional strengths and weaknesses?" This will keep the candidate from feeling attacked and will enable a more comprehensive and reflective response. The interviewer should follow-up a candidate's responses with questions that will draw out more facts and information like, "Can you give me an example of what you specifically accomplished?"

An important aspect that needs to be paired with this checklist for improving a manager's interviewing skills are the specific characteristics that were identified in the Nursing Home Best Practices Evaluation Final Report prepared in July 2014 for the CMS National Nursing Home Quality Care Collaborative. When interviewing and employing staff, these aspects as explained by the Society for Human Resource Management in an article titled "Hiring Skilled Nursing Staff for Nursing Home, Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation should be in the forefront of the interview:

- **"Passionate about providing compassionate care"** - Interviewers should use "behavioral-based questions like, "How would you respond to a resident's or family member's concern?" Or, "What would you consider to be a high-quality nursing home?"
- **Conveyance of the expectation regarding the kind of staff being sought** - Seeking persons who fit in with the "mission, vision and values" of our organization.
- **New staff are welcomed and supported initially through orientation and training** - On an ongoing basis, staff will receive regular training and check-ups to ensure that they are being helped with any new challenges that often come with a new position.
- **There is a focus on building and assessing skill-based competencies and levels** - Follow-up and training where needed are used to reinforce this focus.
- **Staff are given opportunities and encouraged to shadow other disciplines**

within the nursing home - This expands an employee's understanding of how their role fits and operates within the whole nursing home.

- **All staff are expected to respond to the needs and requests of residents** - Staff provide input and feedback regarding the quality of care provided to the residents and are expected to respond in a timely manner to any needs that may arise.
- **Staff will understand the basics of being a reliable team member** - A person who is reliable arrives for work on time, provides a high quality of care for the residents, follows residents' care plans, supports other staff and reports and informs leadership of anything that may prevent the providing of high quality care.

Topics to Avoid When Interviewing

There are some topics that should be completely avoided in an interview because there are no questions regarding them that are not discriminatory; and, these topics have no relationship to any job. These topics are:

- Race or ethnic origin
- Religion
- Sex or sexual preference
- Marital status
- Children
- Personal obligations
- Health

Some other areas require delicate and careful handling. For example,

- Availability to work outside or beyond routine working hours.
- Residence
- Age
- Past criminal behavior
- Citizenship
- Language

The suggested way to avoid asking anything that might be judged discriminatory is to not ask any questions that do not have a direct connection to the requirements of the position, and to be sure that every candidate for the job is asked the same questions. In considering the formulating of questions, a good rule of thumb is to talk with someone who is familiar with the requirements of the job.

For more information regarding this article, call 609-454-5020 or email info@mednetconcepts.com

ATTENTION: NEW JERSEY FACILITIES

New Regulation on Human Trafficking Training Effective March 18, 2018

Human trafficking became a federal crime in 2000 with the passage of the Trafficking Victim's Protection Act or TVPA. The TVPA defines human trafficking as a crime involving the exploitation of someone for the purposes of compelled labor or a commercial sex act using force, fraud, or coercion. Victims can be anyone: women and men, adults and children, citizens and noncitizens alike.

Studies have shown that the healthcare system is often one of the most frequently accessed services by human trafficking victims. In one study, 87.8% of trafficking survivors reported accessing healthcare services during their trafficking situation.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2C:13-12/.c, all New Jersey Department of Health licensed healthcare facilities shall require workers to receive training related to Human Trafficking.

All existing employees & volunteers who have direct contact and/or interaction with facility patients and/or visitors of facility patients must be trained by March 18, 2018 by following one of the governmentally approved online educational presentations noted below. It's required that your facility track and log each employee and volunteer participation in the program as they complete the review of the presentation. Employees hired after September 18, 2017 must have completed the training within 6 months of their first day of employment.

Government Approved Online Educational Presentations

1. The NHTRC website at <https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/audience/service-providers>
OR
2. Through the website of the N.J. Hospital Association at <http://njha.com/education>; or
3. The online or in-person training entitled, "Stop. Observe. Ask. Respond to Human Trafficking (SOAR): A Training for Healthcare and Social Service Providers," published August 2016, by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, which is incorporated herein by reference as amended and supplemented;

Registration for the SOAR training is available through the website of the Office on Trafficking in Persons of the Administration for Children and Families of the United States Department of Health and Human Services at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/endtrafficksing/initiatives/soar>. Participants who successfully complete SOAR training may apply for continuing education and continuing medical education credits from the SOAR training provider.

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