

Eli's Rehab Report

Staffing Strategies: Perfect Your Interviewing Skills

Use these tips to weed through the noise and find the person best fit for the job.

Think all the pressure to perform is on the interviewee during the interview process? Think again. Your rehab practice is depending on you to find the person who will perform the best for the longest amount of time.

The key to finding the right applicant for the job is to ask questions that will help you make an educated decision about how well the candidate will be able to perform the job. Ask these questions when interviewing job applicants, suggests business writer and editor **John McAlister** on his website www.businessknowhow.com:

"Why did you leave your last employer?" (Or, "Why do you want to leave your current employer?") Determining the circumstances for her departure can give you insight into many things. If she left because of pay, maybe she's expecting to move up quickly in her new environment. If she was fired for an argument with another employee, perhaps she lacks the emotional intelligence you need your staff members to have.

"What did you like or dislike about your last job/employer?" Obviously something made her unhappy if she left on her own terms, but this is an important question because it tells you about her work attitude. If she has nothing good to say about the previous practice or her employer and complains about the conditions, she might be a very negative worker.

"What are your long-term goals?" If the candidate is honest, you'll get an idea of where she wants to be in a few years and if she plans to stay on with you. It's OK if she isn't quite sure of what she wants to do, but you'll want to know your prospective employee's sense of direction.

"How did you get along with your fellow employees?" The candidate's answer to this question gives you a good idea about her emotional intelligence and her ability to work well with others, which can be crucial in a healthcare setting.

"How would you describe your work ethic/habits?" The applicant should be able to give you specific examples of her work ethic and times when it influenced her at her last job. You want to be sure that she isn't just telling you what you want to hear.

"Are you willing to work special hours and weekends?" Many people are unwilling to work more than the bare minimum. You'll want to know this ahead of time. When staff sickness or disaster strikes, you'll want to be sure that your employees are going to go above and beyond their normal limits to work for you.

"Have you done this kind of work before?" Often, applicants are just looking to start fresh in a new job, and that might not be what you're looking for. Or, they could be relatively new or unskilled at the position, but you're looking for more experience. Ask ahead of time, or suffer the results of being surprised later on.

These questions will help you get a good idea of how well the applicant will fit in with your department and the position, but of course, there are some topics everyone knows not to delve into -- such as questions regarding race, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, arrest records, and personal activities not related to work such as smoking and sexual orientation, warns McAlister. These kinds of questions could land you with a discrimination suit.