

Interview practice sheet for students

We asked managers to think of a real-life question they would ask/have asked in an interview and what they would expect to hear in a response.

Responses can be found at the end, after the questions.

Feel free to try answering some of the questions to help prepare you for future interviews.

You may wish to use the STARR technique outlined below when thinking about how to formulate your answer as it helps create a well-thought out and well-rounded response.

Interview tip – the STARR interview technique		
S	Situation	Describe a situation or problem that you have encountered
T	Task	Describe the task that the situation required and why it was important
A	Action	Describe the action(s) you took, obstacles that you had to overcome
R	Result	Highlight outcomes achieved and how success was measured. Employers like results driven employees.
R	Reflect	Sometimes it is appropriate to say that you reflected on what happened and decided how you would tackle the problem next time.

Questions

Health, wellbeing and personal development

1. How would you manage your clinical and non-clinical responsibilities including considering your own goals and wellbeing?
2. Working in a children's speech and language therapy service can be challenging at times. What strategies have you developed to support and maintain your resilience?
3. In this role, there may be times you are required to work independently on your own, in a clinic or in schools. How would prevent yourself from feeling isolated and what would you do if had a query or wanted support?

Team working

4. Explain the possible roles of SLT when it comes to discharging a client with communication needs (neuro rehab setting)
5. Working as part of an MDT is vital to achieving the very best outcomes for our young people. How would you ensure a positive relationship with both education and care?

Problem solving

6. Tell me about a time when you have experienced a situation in either your work or personal life where you have not agreed with a decision being made. How did you deal with it?
7. Tell us about a time you had to use problem solving skills; what skills did you use, what was the outcome, what would you do differently?
8. Tell us about a time you have had to change your plan or do things differently. What happened and what was the outcome?
9. You have been given three clinical patients to see this week, explore each patient and their context and explain your prioritisation for the order in which you would see them

Managing conflict

10. You have assessed a child and identify that their speech and language skills are within a normal range for their age and suggest discharge. The school contact you and say they are not happy with your decision. What would you do?
11. You find out that a therapy assistant is not following the therapy plan that you set. What would you do to resolve this?
12. You are at a parent coffee morning and the parents request more hours on their child's EHCP querying how the 'limited' hours are going to support his complex needs.
13. Tell us a time that you managed conflict with another person. What did you learn from this experience.

Time management

14. Your colleague has left you a handover with tasks needing to be completed that day. This includes conversational practise with a dysarthric patient, a discharge report, assessment of a new patient and 2 therapy sessions with aphasic patients. During board round the ward also asks you to see a newly admitted patient. How would you prioritise your day?

Clinical

15. What do you see as the benefits and challenges of providing a clinical service within a residential, educational setting?
16. Can you describe a communication client that you have worked with focusing on how you have been holistic in your management?
17. If you could only take 3 things into every session from now onwards, what 3 things would you choose?
18. Can you give an example of a situation where your clinical input made a difference to the life of a young person?

Preparation and knowledge about the post

19. What question haven't we asked that you were expecting us to?

Personal motivation

20. Who or what inspires you and what are your career aspirations?
21. Please tell us why you have applied for this role and why you are suitable?

Values and attitude

22. Tell me three words that describe you?
23. What does good clinical supervision look like?
24. Tell us how you celebrate neurodiversity?

Responses

We asked managers what they would be looking for in the interviewees responses and comments can be found below.

If you have any questions in regards to questions which did not receive a response, please contact info@rcslt.org

Health, wellbeing and personal development

1. How would you manage your clinical and non-clinical responsibilities including considering your own goals and wellbeing?
2. Working in a children's speech and language therapy service can be challenging at times. What strategies have you developed to support and maintain your resilience?
3. In this role, there may be times you are required to work independently on your own, in a clinic or in schools. How would prevent yourself from feeling isolated and what would you do if had a query or wanted support?
 - If not urgent keep a list of queries
 - Develop communication channels e.g., MS teams meetings, emails, and phone calls
 - Explore opportunities for face-to-face meetings with colleagues /
 - Establish contact with other professionals that you feed back to and regularly check in
 - Clinical supervision
 - Mentor/Mentor Meetings
 - Contacting TM or other SLTs for support
 - Make sure access CPD opportunities
 - Being involved in other projects e.g., service improvement projects
 - Get to know the team - Reach out to colleagues in a pro-active manner
 - Wellbeing - work life balance, taking breaks, time away from screen
 - Resilience
 - LCH trust wellbeing support – giving examples – MHFA tea and chat sessions
 - Chat function in S1 for queries /questions
 - Online support for example, twitter

Team working

4. Explain the possible roles of SLT when it comes to discharging a client with communication needs (neuro rehab setting)
 - joint assessment of risk with OT (can client call for help? Do they have a pendant alarm)
 - mental capacity (supporting conversations and assessment) with social worker
 - supporting conversation with client to establish needs/wants
 - advocacy
 - liaison with family and wider team re: client wants
 - referral onto community team
 - provision of guidelines/communication aid
 - provision of a report
5. Working as part of an MDT is vital to achieving the very best outcomes for our young people. How would you ensure a positive relationship with both education and care?
 - Close liaison with staff.
 - Viewing person holistically and valuing the insight and opportunities that the other disciplines might offer.
 - Flexible with working hours to allow time in both environments.

- Joint setting of aims.

Problem solving

6. Tell me about a time when you have experienced a situation in either your work or personal life where you have not agreed with a decision being made. How did you deal with it?
 - Having reflected in the event, what have you learnt from the situation and would you do anything different, if a similar situation arose?
7. Tell us about a time you had to use problem solving skills; what skills did you use, what was the outcome, what would you do differently?
 - Looking for an example that can demonstrate skills of active listening, expressive communication, solution focussed, empathy, helpful, professionalism, seeking advice and support, recording, follow-up etc
8. Tell us about a time you have had to change your plan or do things differently. What happened and what was the outcome?
 - For this question we want to see: Clear explanation; problem solving skills; actions linked to outcome; reflective thinking; using initiative. I usually ask 6 questions and include things from all of the above categories.
 - I am keen to hear about experience related to SLT - so from placements or from the course but also happy to hear about other experience as well.
9. You have been given three clinical patients to see this week, explore each patient and their context and explain your prioritisation for the order in which you would see them
 - Include three clinical examples

Managing conflict

10. You have assessed a child and identify that their speech and language skills are within a normal range for their age and suggest discharge. The school contact you and say they are not happy with your decision. What would you do?
 - Talk to the school - find out what their reasoning is compare with parental report on skills at home
 - Share assessment findings - check they match what school have identified. If your assessment matches explain your rationale why discharge is suitable and suggest ongoing resources the school can use to continue progress. If there is discrepancy you may want to investigate further and potentially observe in school. If you cannot come to an agreement, ask a senior colleague or manager to support you
11. You find out that a therapy assistant is not following the therapy plan that you set. What would you do to resolve this?
 - Review therapy plan and rationale for why targets were set.
 - Discuss with assistant on what they've been doing in therapy.
 - Discuss reason why assistant has not been following therapy plan.
 - Explain rationale to assistant for therapy plan.
 - Offer support on how to follow therapy plan eg. Training.
 - If assistant continues to not follow plan, to speak with line manager to discuss next steps.
12. You are at a parent coffee morning and the parents request more hours on their child's EHCP querying how the 'limited' hours are going to support his complex needs.
 - Explain to parents that you are happy to discuss but within a more private forum, then arrange a time to meet so that they feel their query will be discussed and their concerns are listened to.

- Generally, explain the process to all parents and how hours are calculated, emphasising that each child's hours are unique. Also summarise how SLTs work in schools.
- During the meeting with the parent, listen to their concerns, thinking about if the hours are adequate, if so explain the reasoning to parents, if not discuss any changes.
- Discuss in supervision before or after the meeting. Escalate if needed, i.e. if parents continue to express that they are unhappy. Ensure parent feel listened to, explain rational clearly and factually, without comparison with other pupils. If needed meet with parents a second time, i.e. you might want to discuss further with a supervisor or if parents getting increasingly agitated.

13. Tell us a time that you managed conflict with another person. What did you learn from this experience.

- The answer must show that the candidate is invested in finding a way to work with the person in the most effective way. T
- The first element will need to be active listening, some elements of assertiveness and use of phrases to support a positive conversation.
- I will be expecting the answer to be professional, showing levels of maturity and solution-focused attitude.
- I would expect lots of balanced reflection from the person with their learning points as well as what they would do in the same way again.

Time management

14. Your colleague has left you a handover with tasks needing to be completed that day. This includes conversational practise with a dysarthric patient, a discharge report, assessment of a new patient and 2 therapy sessions with aphasic patients. During board round the ward also asks you to see a newly admitted patient. How would you prioritise your day?

- Organisational and time management skills, awareness of SSNAP priorities NPs, aphasics, dysarthric, report flexibility – responsive to new information, delegation to assistants

Clinical

15. What do you see as the benefits and challenges of providing a clinical service within a residential, educational setting?

- Benefits: MDT availability, client motivation, holistic interventions to support transition to adulthood aspirations, embedding skills within meaningful settings / situations, contextual role modelling / training opportunities, broad clinical cohort, likely transition from a long-established school (potentially since preschool) = post-16 skill development opportunities associated with a new setting / change of face etc.
- Challenges: capacity constraints - timetabling clashes with other therapies / educational provisions and agreeing areas of focus in line with wider client profile and motivation, impact of staff shortages / turnover on embedding skills, MDT training opportunities around multiple shift patterns, parental expectations, possible skill plateauing.
- It is completely understandable that a candidate may not have experience of a service such as ours, but this question is really useful in demonstrating how well they have researched the organisation as well as their considerations relating to an educational V more medical / traditional clinical service.

16. Can you describe a communication client that you have worked with focusing on how you have been holistic in your management?

- Want answers to give a very brief summary of the communication difficulty and the background to set the scene but then focus on how they supported that patient in the context of their family, work, social situation.
- Would hope that it would include joint goal setting with the patient, consideration of the communication partners and environment, and consideration of how this may have changed across their time in the service (i.e if moving from acute to community)

17. If you could only take 3 things into every session from now onwards, what 3 things would you choose?
- I would be looking for 3 different things with explanations about how they could be used flexibly for different age groups and difficulties
18. Can you give an example of a situation where your clinical input made a difference to the life of a young person?
- The candidate has had a positive impact on the young person/ service delivery and own development, demonstrating a genuine journey of improvement due to their input. They articulate their answer with specific evidence that instils confidence in their abilities.
 - The answer is underpinned by theoretical models. The answer(s) that the candidate has given are relevant and transferable to working within Witherslack, showing research into students likely to be at a witherslack setting.
 - The candidate summarises the impact and mentions how the impact has been measured e.g through the use of outcome measures.
 - There is some thought given to how things could have been adapted or next steps for the client.
 - The student should ensure the question is answered with most areas covered. All relevant points of the person specification are linked into the answer where appropriate.

Preparation and knowledge about the post

19. What question haven't we asked that you were expecting us to?
- This is an opportunity for a candidate to share their knowledge /experience / interests and gives good insight into a candidate's ability to think on their feet and to give them the opportunity to shine at the end of an interview and to demonstrate their preparation ahead of the interview

Personal motivation

20. Who or what inspires you and what are your career aspirations?
- This question gives the panel an opportunity to get to know the candidate more and understand what drives them.
 - Who or what could be personal or professional, there is no right or wrong answer.
 - Career aspirations also can be specific or generic, again it allows the panel to get to know the candidate and hopefully understand more about their drivers, values and beliefs.
21. Please tell us why you have applied for this role and why you are suitable?
- Candidate should express, passion, willingness to learn, interest, experience

Values and attitude

22. Tell me three words that describe you?
- kind - I care how I treat people and expect to treat people the way I want to be treated. I also use that kindness in my day-to-day clinical work. What is just a day in my work life can be an awful day in a patient's life, so showing kindness is easy. It also helps build rapport and trust in the clinics setting
 - Empathetic - I use this skill with work colleagues and my patients. Being able to see things from another person's perspective helps to understand their behaviour and how they interact with you. Empathy improves our capacity to communicate well with others, not just individually but as part of a team.
 - I'm a Team player, I'm flexible, keen to work alongside my colleagues & communicate well with them. It also lends itself incredibly well to working within this team as we all need to be flexible, communicate well and actively listen to those around us. This lends itself to a more productive & collaborative & happy workplace.

23. What does good clinical supervision look like?

- Themes on reflective practice, safe space, proactive learner - bringing ideas rather than problems.
- Recognition of scope of own practice, when to seek support.
- Consideration of how they would like to receive, but also how they would offer supervision.
- An example of when they have experienced this and the value they took from it

24. Tell us how you celebrate neurodiversity?