Master of Science in Counseling

The Process & Helpful Hints for a Successful Job/Internship Search

A Partnership between Career Development & Graduate Counseling Program
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Job Search Suggestions for Those Starting in the Program
(or for those further along who haven’t found a job yet)

The following ideas about finding jobs are primarily from our students and have been compiled by Dr. Virkler.

1. Begin your job search with prayer (for guidance and for God to open up a good ministry opportunity for you).

2. Be open to trying areas of counseling that have a strong demand, even if you aren’t initially interested in them. Often students have found that they really like an area of counseling to which they didn’t initially feel attracted.

3. Develop a strong resume.
   - Use the Resume Writing Guide developed by PBA’s Career Center staff to strengthen your resume.
   - If you wish more help, contact Jennifer Fonseca at the Office of Career Development (803-2060) or Jennifer_Fonseca@pba.edu and make an appointment to work up a professional resume with her. Must have reviewed and applied suggestions from above mentioned guide before scheduling an appointment.

4. Use online sources for resume suggestions and examples: e.g. Career Builder.

5. Use a professional-sounding screen name/email when contacting potential employers: e.g., Firstname_Lastname@gmail.com

6. Review what you have on social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace from the perspective of a potential employer. In a recent survey, more than 3/4 of recruiters say they check out what applicants have on their social networking sites, and 1/3 say they have rejected potential applicants based on what they have seen there.

7. Ask Dr. Virkler to be added to the job list if you are in the mental health, marriage and family track or substance abuse track (This job list doesn’t include jobs for school guidance track—talk with Dr. Dodson about his recommendations if you are in the school track.)

8. **The #1 way our students say they get jobs is through networking:** this could involve asking fellow students who are working in counseling agencies to put in a good
word for you. Also, see if folks in your church have suggestions or can help you. Sometimes also previous employers can put in a strong recommendation for you to an agency you’re interested in. 80% of jobs are never advertised!

9. If you don’t get a job immediately, **volunteer** at a place that you’d like to work—Jerome Golden, Children’s Home Society, Hospice, the Hanley Center or some sort of church counseling ministry. Work as a volunteer will make you more attractive to potential employers and may open up a paid job at the place you’re volunteering. Also remember that working 3 to 5 hours per week as a volunteer is required if you’re not working in the field, so that you can practice the skills you’re learning.

10. Some jobs say that you must have one or two years of experience in the counseling field, but because of the very good experience they have had with our students, they frequently waive this requirement. Two agencies that do this regularly are Boys Town and Jerome Golden Mental Health Center. So if you see an ad from one of these places and the ad says you must have experience, it’s probably worthwhile to apply anyway (and let them know that you’re in our program).

11. Many places just want you to send in a resume over the Internet, and they will contact you if they want you to come in for an interview. A few of our students said that going in and establishing a good relationship with the HR person was helpful in getting a job. Remember, resumes uploaded via the internet are often screened through a program called an Applicant Tracking System (ATS). This is a software programmed to search only for key words. If your resume does not contain the key words it is tossed out of the system and not considered for the position even if you are qualified and have the experience.

12. Be willing to start at entry level positions. There are a limited number of counseling positions are available with a bachelor’s degree. You usually need to start as a case manager or behavioral tech. If you start with these your first or second semester, you will often be eligible for a move within your organization by the time you get to Internship (fifth semester). Also, you will learn valuable things if you work as a behavioral tech or case manager that you won’t learn if you never fill these positions.

13. Set aside some time each day (or at least a certain number of hours each week) to work on looking for a job until you find one. Many students have said that **persistence is the key to finding a job**.

14. If you do all the above and still have not found a job after a few months, make an appointment to sit down with Kim Ladd (for job search suggestions), Jennifer Fonseca (for resume/interview assistance) or a faculty member to brainstorm and pray together.
Keys to Understanding/Reading Job Postings in the Counseling Field

- Sometimes agencies advertise based on their ideal requirements, but are willing to be flexible if they have a strong candidate that does not meet all those requirements. If you feel drawn to a particular job and do not meet all the posted requirements but have some other kinds of experience that you believe demonstrates your ability to work in that setting (or have taken several courses in the Counseling program) do not immediately decide that there’s no use applying for that position.

- Often the ads treat the terms “social work” or “human services” as a general title, rather than as a specific degree. Therefore some of the positions below refer to someone who does counseling/social work, and are not restricted to someone with a degree in social work (I try to omit from this job list any jobs that require that you have a degree specifically in social work). Since licensure as a social worker in Florida only requires a 30 hour degree and you are receiving a 60 hour degree, you are clearly as well trained or more thoroughly trained than a person with a degree in social work. Some Human Resource personnel are not aware of this and advertise only for social workers when they are looking for Master’s level counselors.

- Don’t exclude positions requiring only a High School diploma. If you are having trouble getting your first job in the field because you have no experience in the field or your undergraduate major is not psychology, these might be worthwhile considering. If you were accepted and have a bachelor’s degree, I would recommend that you see if you can negotiate a higher salary than they are offering to those with a high school diploma.

- If you are registered for Internship I, II or III, do not take an administrative or supervisory job unless you will be able to do at least 10 hours of counseling per week as part of your job: You will need this much counseling in order to meet state requirements for internship. Negotiate this before taking a job: If you accept a full-time job as an administrator your employer may not let you amend your job description when you need to do so for Internships I, II, and III.

- Caution for graduates (Registered Interns): Be careful about administrative jobs such as supervisory positions. Unless these jobs include some actual counseling you may not get the clinical hours you need to move toward licensure. If accepted, try to negotiate some hours per week where you can provide some direct counseling services before accepting the job, so you can make progress toward licensure.

- Case management positions: Until you have your Master’s degree, often the jobs that will be open to you are case management positions (positions as therapists often will not be available until you have graduated). The positions where you can do counseling with a bachelor’s degree will normally only be found in non-paid positions such as church counseling centers or non-paid internships. However, you can learn a lot about the field from a case management position, and there are frequently opportunities for you to use your counseling skills, even though your official title is “case manager.” If you need to be paid for your work while you go through the program, a case management position is often the best entry into the field.
Limiting Thoughts that Prevent You From Finding Jobs in the Field

Dear Counseling students,

In talking with students in the past who haven’t found jobs in the field until several semesters into the program, one of the major things that prevented them from getting a job is that they were dismissing potential positions that could have worked for them. There are two things that have caused them to dismiss jobs that could have prepared them for jobs that would work as internship sites:

**REASONS STUDENTS DISMISS JOBS TOO EARLY**

A. **Discomfort in applying for jobs that include home visits.** Some of you, understandably, have dismissed jobs that include home visits for fear that you wouldn’t be safe. When I first started supervising students who were doing home visits that was a concern of mine too. However, those fears turned out to be unnecessary. All agencies that have employees do home visits have policies and procedures designed to help you stay safe. If you feel unsafe in any situation, you can talk about this with your supervisor and find some solution that will help you stay safe. And God certainly has been watching out for students as well. **In 39+ years of supervising students doing home visits, I don't know of a single student who has been attacked or hurt while doing a home visit.** So between agency policies and God’s protection, I think you can look at jobs that involve home visits without worrying that your own safety will be at risk.

And for many of you, jobs that include home visits are the primary jobs you will be using for the next three years to obtain the counseling hours you need for licensure (the majority of jobs where you sit in an office and clients come to you aren’t available until you are licensed). Thus if you exclude all jobs that involve home visits, you may not be able to complete internship requirements and the hours you’ll need as a Registered Intern to qualify for licensure.

B. **Dismissing jobs that include the words “case manager.”** Case management jobs are the primary ones that you’ll be able to get with your bachelor’s degree: therapist jobs are usually available only after you complete your master’s degree. As a case manager you will have opportunities to practice your counseling skills as you evaluate services a family or individual needs and help them connect with those services. In addition, once in Internship you’ll be asked to do two Treatment Plans. One is the Treatment Plan you’ll use as case manager for your agency. The other is a Treatment Plan that you would develop if you were the client’s therapist. Thus you’ll be learning to think like a therapist, even though your official title is Case Manager. And we have found that if you’ve developed a Treatment Plan from the perspective of therapy, you’ll often have opportunities to work on parts of that Treatment Plan with your clients. Many times we have had clients tell our students (whose title was case manager) that they are more helpful than the client’s therapist, and that they wish that our student could be their therapist.
There is another important reason for spending some time as a case manager: In the future, once you have completed your Master’s degree, you will want case managers to select you to be the client’s therapist. If you know what case managers look for in selecting therapists for their clients, you will have a better chance of being selected to be the therapist for that case manager’s clients. Thus case management jobs are one of the primary ways that students obtain the hours needed to complete internship hours, they give you opportunities to practice your counseling skills and your case conceptualization skills, and they also provide opportunities to learn things that will be valuable in your professional careers in the future.

C. This Position is too low on the counseling rung.
Expect to start at the bottom and work your way up. This is especially true for those with either very little counseling experience and/or those who are career changers. Set a realistic expectation that you may need to gain experience through volunteer work or at lower paying positions before you are able to secure a position more to your liking. Manage your expectations, as there are many counseling programs in Palm Beach County producing students with very similar degrees to yours. While this is true, it is also true that God’s favor rests on those whom He chooses. Pray for God’s favor as you apply for positions. Pray that your resume rises to the top. Pray for divine connections. All the while remind yourself that between God’s promise and the palace is the process. For Joseph, that meant being sold as a slave, being accused falsely and going to jail before he was promoted.

THREE QUESTIONS STUDENTS ASK
1. Paid or unpaid internships?
Some people believe that to get the best internship experience, you should do an unpaid internship rather than find a paying job in the field. It is true that there are some unpaid internships that offer you excellent experience (for example, the internships at Christ Fellowship and The Hanley Center, to name a few). It is also true that if you can’t find paid employment in the field, sometimes you can start at an agency as a volunteer, and ask that they keep you in mind when a paid employment position opens up. However, a 2011 Student Survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers showed that the belief that an unpaid internship will give you superior training is untrue. That survey revealed that paid interns spent more of their time on professional duties, while unpaid interns often were given clerical ones. Also, paid interns were more likely to receive a job offer than those working as unpaid interns. And lastly, those who were paid interns received higher average starting salaries than unpaid ones did. Thus if you can afford to do an unpaid internship (most of our students can’t afford to do 1,000 hours of internship for free) and the internship site offers excellent training, then there is nothing wrong with doing an unpaid internship. But you shouldn’t limit yourself to only unpaid internships based on the belief that you will get a better training experience that way.
2. If I start at a very low-paying job, will I have to remain at that pay level throughout the entire 2 ½ years I am in the program?

There are some entry-level jobs (particularly behavioral tech jobs in the substance abuse and mental health fields) that start in the $10.00 per hour range. If you want to work in the field and have no mental health experience, these may be the only jobs initially offered to you. However, if you start there, once employers see your skill level, they are likely to promote you to jobs with higher pay and more counseling opportunities fairly rapidly, especially if you let them know you are in a Master's-degree program and would like to be considered for higher level jobs once they have seen your work. We have many students who started as behavioral techs and were promoted to higher positions once they were part way through the program. (And there are some entry-level jobs that start in the high $20s to $30,000.00 from the very beginning, so you don’t have to resign yourself that your first job in the field will be a low-paying one.)

3. Should I take a job my first year that won’t give me opportunity to do much therapy? The answer is “Yes.” If you take a job your first or second semester as a mental health tech, by the time you get to Internship (fifth semester), you will often have been promoted to a job that involves more counseling. However, if you wait until the fourth or fifth semester to look for a job, and then can only get mental health tech jobs, those positions may not involve enough counseling to serve as internship sites.

So please review the Job Search Suggestions you were sent when you began receiving the job list (particularly using the Resume Writing Guide to help you strengthen your resume and asking your classmates who are working in agencies where you’d like to work to recommend you to their employers when there is an opening). If you’ve lost those Job Search Suggestions, feel free to ask me to email you another set of suggestions.

Sincerely,

Henry Virkler (Henry_Virkler@pba.edu or HVirkler@aol.com)
The Job Search Process

Most jobs fall into the following three categories:

1. **Anticipated:** These jobs are typically filled very quickly. They are typically well-advertised and available through campus interviews, job fairs, or other similar events. The anticipated job market covers about 5% of all jobs.

2. **Published:** The published job market includes positions that are found through employment agencies and advertisements. This job market only covers about 10% of available jobs.

3. **Hidden:** The hidden job market contains the positions that are not advertised and are usually acquired through networking and contacts. This market covers 80-90% of the overall job market.

To have the most success in your job search, you should focus your efforts on the **hidden job market**. There are several strategies and resources available to you and the most successful method is usually a combination of strategies. Listed below are a few of the most common strategies.

- **Networking:** Networking is the #1 best job search strategy because it provides you with access to the hidden job market. Expanding the list of people who know about you and your knowledge and skills will give you a better chance of hearing about unpublished job opportunities. 67% of individuals in internships were offered full time employment by their employers. Use social media platforms such as Linkedin to expand your network. Be specific when sharing with contacts what you are looking for (e.g. Do you know of any counseling positions in a faith based agency that works primarily with children?) Ask for a warm introduction from someone you know to someone who you would like to know at a place you would be interested in working/interning.

- **Informational Interviews:** An informational interview is basically a short interview with someone currently in the field you are exploring. This is not a job interview and you should never ask for/about a job during an informational interview. Informational interviewing can also help you develop your list of network contacts. Ask for 30 minutes and take only 20 so that you over promise and under deliver. Have your questions prepared in advance.

- **Career Development & Career Fairs:** The Career Development office coordinates all Career Fairs. It is also a great resource for general career advice, resume critique, mock interviews, and other related job search assistance.

- **PBA JobLink:** While only 4% of individuals actually are hired from applying to jobs listed on online job boards, PBA JobLink’s employer database is different. Employers are specifically contacting Palm Beach Atlantic University’s Career Development office to seek out PBA students. Our database includes both PB County positions as well as state, national and international positions. [www.pba.edu/joblink](http://www.pba.edu/joblink)
- **Classifieds**: While the classifieds and other job postings in print are actually a small percentage of the actual jobs available, they can be very helpful in your job search. You can use these advertisements to gauge the qualifications and experience necessary in a certain field. You may also be able to learn more about the companies you are interested in by what they advertise.

- **Direct Visits/Cold Calling/Public Job Fairs**: This strategy involves most of your face-to-face contacts. It can be very time-consuming, but it is a valuable way to expand your list of network contacts. Public job fairs are typically advertised by the Career Development office. You may also find job fairs open to the public by contacting local community colleges.

- **Internet**: Similar to classified advertisements, it may be hard to find most available positions online. Use the internet to research companies and find their contact information. Most professional organizations also maintain websites with up-to-date information for the field and specialized job boards. The internet can be used successfully if you know where to look.

- **Employment Agencies**: NEVER USE AN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY THAT MAKES YOU PAY A FEE! Employment agencies are most helpful if you are planning to move out of state or to an area where you are unfamiliar with local businesses. Be sure to get recommendations and ask the agency about their success rate.
Your Job Search Campaign

An average job search can last from 3-6 months. This includes the time it takes you to build your list of contacts, polish your resume, apply for several positions, and complete the interviewing process. You should start the job search process at least by your last semester before graduation. Consider the job search process at least a part-time job and dedicate that amount of time and resources to your search. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Start by building your list of contacts** and begin to meet with them. Refer to our networking guide.
- **Use a calendar and maintain a schedule.** You should be dedicating a specific amount of time each day to your job search – whether calling a contact, researching an industry, or searching job listings.
- **Take a second look** at your resume and cover letter, especially if you have been looking for a while with little success.
- **Personalize cover letters and emails.** Addressing an application/resume generically will almost guarantee it ends up in the trash – it is the same for ‘Director of Human Resources’ or ‘Hiring Manager’. Find out who is actually responsible for hiring and address your materials to him/her. Be a super sleuth and find a name and title.
- **Don’t wait for the phone to ring.** About a week after you submit an application, make sure to call the contact person to make sure they have all your materials. It will also help to bring your name back to the top of the pile.

Doing Your Own Job Search

By Dr. Virkler

These are the sites I usually use to compile the job list for mental health, marriage and family and substance abuse tracks. You can search them yourself to look for applicable jobs:

1. There are several substance abuse and West Palm Beach websites that list counseling positions on the first few pages of the standard job list I send out that you can search first. Then look at the following sites:
   - Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County: [http://www.cscpbc.org/provider-agency-employment](http://www.cscpbc.org/provider-agency-employment)
7. Family Preservation Services: [http://www.simplyhired.com/a/jobs/list/q-family+preservation+services+of+florida](http://www.simplyhired.com/a/jobs/list/q-family+preservation+services+of+florida)
8. South County Mental Health Center: [http://scmhcinc.org/employment.html](http://scmhcinc.org/employment.html)
14. 4 Kids: [http://www.4kidsoffl.org/4KIDSemploymentapp](http://www.4kidsoffl.org/4KIDSemploymentapp)

In addition to going to these specific sites, you can also go to some job aggregation sites. Some of the better ones I have found are:

1. AOL (you don’t have to be an AOL member to use this): [http://jobs.aol.com/?ncid=AOLCOMMjobsFlCcaolc0002](http://jobs.aol.com/?ncid=AOLCOMMjobsFlCcaolc0002)
2. [www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com) and
3. [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)

4. For each of these, in the Search box, put in the following words, **one at a time** (i.e., get all the jobs using the word “counsel*” then go back and get all the jobs under “mental” that weren’t already captured with your “counsel” search, then do a third search with “psychology*”), and a fourth search with “social”
   
   a. **Counsel** (this will search for counseling, counselors, counsel)
   b. **Mental**
   c. **Psycholog**
   d. **Social** (for social work: some social work jobs are actually for social workers or counselors)
   e. Click on Advanced Search
   f. Put in zip code 33416 (center of WPB) (or the zip code wherever you are living)
   g. Put in the distance from your home that you are willing to travel. I use “Within 50 miles” since this covers the area our students come from, but your distance could be shorter since you know exactly where you live
   h. Use “created within the last 15 days” if that option is available or within the last 7 days if 14 days isn’t available.
   i. If this option is available, put checkmarks in Regular, Contract, Intern, Temporary, Full time and Part time, depending on which kinds of jobs you are interested in looking at
   j. Specify long job descriptions if they give you the choice between short and long descriptions
   k. If the search engine gives you this option, exclude the following keywords: legal, financial, sales, debt, and occupational [otherwise you get lawyer listings (lawyers are also called counselors), debt counselors, occupational therapists, etc.]
   l. Click “Search”
   m. There will usually be many jobs to scan, of which a small number will be appropriate for you.
   n. If you’re not familiar with the agency, you can click on “Learn more about the company”
o. When done with the jobs for one keyword, change the keyword and press enter to get the next category of jobs
p. Sometimes you will find discrepancies in the information, which you can usually resolve by studying the ad for a bit, e.g.
   i. Sometimes they will put in the wrong job category, such as Accounting for a counseling job.
   ii. Sometimes at one place in the ad they will say there is no e-mail contact, and then another place will give an e-mail address.
   iii. Sometimes they will say no education required, whereas later in the ad it will say bachelors or Master’s degree required.
   iv. If the title of the ad says social workers, continue to read on. Many ads that use the title social work are open to counselors as well.
q. Case managers in hospitals are usually nurses, and aren’t really counseling positions, so don’t pursue them. Case managers in other settings are often relevant positions to consider, so read the job description.

Basic Networking: 1 – 2 – 3

Networking is one of the best ways to find the job you want. Some of the best positions are not publicly advertised, so the only way to find out about them is through other people. Networking should be viewed as building relationships with your contacts – be careful of ‘schmoozing’ them or ignoring them after you have what you want. You will ‘burn bridges’ and end up with a bad reputation in the field.

The basic purpose of networking is to ensure that the relationship you have with your contact means that you will be the first person they think of when an opportunity in the field emerges.

Step 1: Who Do You Know?
Make a list of potential contacts. Most can be grouped into four categories: family, friends, alumni, colleagues and faculty. Build your network using a professional profile on Linkedin, and join groups and discussions. Many recruiters search for candidates through Linkedin as it is the #1 social media site for professionals.

Step 2: Practice Your Pitch
The first contact with the people in your network is the most important. It is often called an ‘elevator pitch’ because you should be able to describe who you are and what you are looking for within 1-2 minutes (or the length of an elevator ride). A sample pitch might sound like this:
   ❖ I am __________, and I am looking for a job in _______. Do you have a few minutes to talk to me about your experiences in that field?
   ❖ I am trying to find a job in _______. Do you know anyone in that field whom I may be able to contact?
   ❖ I (have just/am about to) graduate(d) with my degree in __________. Do you have any advice for me as I enter the professional world?
Step 3: Follow Through

Continue to follow up with your contact while you are looking and even after you have a job. Ask them how they are doing and update them on your job search. Consider building a chart to keep track of your conversations with contacts so you do not repeat yourself and so you can maintain consistent contact with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
<th>Last Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Smith</td>
<td>PBA Alumni</td>
<td>561-123-4567</td>
<td><a href="mailto:John_Smith@pba.edu">John_Smith@pba.edu</a></td>
<td>2/12 – given his name by business professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2/27 – left message at work number and sent e-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3/3 – received e-mail reply, busy during tax season but set lunch appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3/15 – met for lunch to talk about working as an accountant – gave me phone number of hiring manager at his firm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 4: Thank Them

A handwritten thank you note for someone’s time, connection or advice not only keeps you in his/her good graces, but also shows you are genuine about the relationship. It may seem old school
The Interview Process

Before the Interview

Do your research!
- Find out as much as you can about the organization/agency and the people you will interview with. Ask current employees who you know, go to the library, research online. Used Linkedin to learn more about them.
- Before you go to your interview you should know the services, the history and current hot topics of the organization and the field.

Don’t get lost!
- Map it out ahead of time and plan timing accordingly.
- If possible, drive by the interview site the day before to time how long it will take you to get there. Take traffic patterns into account.

Don’t be late!
- Arrive at the interview at least 5 – 15 minutes early and check in with the secretary or administrative assistant.

Be prepared!
- Bring copies of your resume, your portfolio, and a notepad and pen (or digital tablet) to your interview.
- Use the notepad to prepare notes to ask the interviewer and to take notes during the interview.

Cell phone/Electronics
- TURN IT OFF [or better yet leave it in the car] WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE INTERVIEW!!

During The Interview

Posture. Always face the interviewer. If it there is a panel of people interviewing you, look primarily at the person asking you each question, but also make brief eye contact with the other people at the table during your answer. Do not cross your arms, this presents a closed body stance and implies that you are not ‘open’ to the interview conversation.

Stay positive. Your attitude and answers should remain positive throughout the interview. Even if you are referencing a position you did not enjoy or one you left under bad terms, you still learned something positive to which you can speak.

Know your stuff.
- Review. Make sure you review your resume and portfolio and are prepared to discuss and answer questions about them with the interviewer.
✓ Truth. Be honest in all your answers. “Little white lies” are easy to detect by interviewers.
✓ Yes or No. Never answer a question with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Provide explanations and examples. If you need a second to think – take it. A short pause is much better than a poorly planned answer.
✓ Huh? If you do not understand the question, ask for clarification. It is better to ask than to answer the wrong question. You will tend to speak quickly when you are nervous – remember to speak slowly and enunciate.

Be prepared. Think about your answers to typical interviewing questions and prepare questions to ask your interviewer (see the interviewing questions at the end of this packet).

Consider this.

Types of Interviews
This alphabetical list of interview types is not a comprehensive list. Also most interviews will fit into more than one category. If possible, ask the potential employer what type of interview to expect but be prepared for anything!!

Behavior-based Interviews
✓ This type of interview is designed to elicit actual information from candidates that will demonstrate their effectiveness as long-term employees, and facilitate the matching of organizational and applicant needs. The goal of behavioral questions is to have the candidate recall and describe situations where critical thinking and success factors were demonstrated. A sample behavioral question might be: "Describe the situation which best demonstrates your ability to get things done through others".
Through the behavioral questions, the interviewer is seeking **REAL ANSWERS**, that is:

- Relevant information, **Experience**, **Action taken**, **Leadership demonstrated**

**Group Interviews- with other candidates**

- Employers bringing several candidates together in a group situation to solve a problem are testing your ability to work in a team environment. They want to know how you will present information to other people, offer suggestions, relate to other ideas, and work to solve a problem. In short, they are testing your interpersonal skills. It is difficult to prepare for this type of interview except to remember what is being testing and to use the skills you have to be the best team player and/or leader you can be.
- Some employers will take you to meet the staff who would be your co-workers if hired. This is a very casual type of interview, but leaving a positive and friendly impression is no less critical.

**Non-directed Interview**

- Typically employs open-ended type questions such as "Tell me about yourself." This allows the applicant to express himself/herself in his/her own unique way—offers greater exposure to an applicant's personality and attitudes. Many campus interviews will at least appear to follow this format.

**Panel Interviews**

- Similar to a one to one, but with more people; similar questions to the one to one (structured) but the questions are likely to be spread between the group, with the person most competent in a particular area, asking you the relevant questions. The important thing to remember here is to give your answer to the person that asked the question but during this process make brief eye contact with the other panel members to ensure that they feel included.
- Match your tone and volume to the person asking the question, being sure not to yell.
- Include those who seem to not ask many questions, including them makes them feel valued, and his/her opinion of you could carry weight.

**Performance or Situational Interviews**

- A company might want to test your performance on aspects of work which are important to the job but which are difficult to assess in other ways. Examples of such tests include: meeting performance, sales performance, role plays for client service, and logistic and management exercises. Job imitation tests may also be used to evaluate skills directly related to a position. For example, you could be given tests for proofreading and spelling, computing tasks, shorthand, driving, and mathematical or statistical ability. You might even be invited to lunch, dinner or a social occasion so that the employer can evaluate your personal and professional behavior.

**Phone Interviews**

- There are generally 3 instances where you may encounter a telephone interview:
  1. As an initial screening method - brief and containing questions based on the selection criteria, it is often used as a pre-cursor to a face-to-face interview.
2. Substitute for a panel or one to one interview - due to difficulties in either panel members or interviewees attending the interview. If possible, avoid these interviews, as face-to-face communication is very important to the employer.

3. When you are speaking with employees, recruiters, supervisors or other company employees about the position. Be prepared, as applicants are often surprised when a simple telephone enquiry to the company suddenly turns into an impromptu screening interview.

✓ Confirm with organization both the time and time zone for phone interview.
✓ Confirm whom will be calling whom.
✓ Dress up and smile—it will help you to be in a professional interviewing frame of mind.
✓ Confine yourself to a place that will be quiet and uninterrupted.
✓ If being interviewed by multiple people, write down their names and keep track of who you are addressing.

Stress Interview
✓ The purpose of this method is to measure the applicant’s ability to handle stressful situations. Stress interviews may be used to weed out individuals who react defensively or who are easily injured. Stress interviews are seldom used on-campus. However, stress questions and/or techniques are often utilized in various interviews.

Series Interviews
✓ Employers invite those applicants they are seriously considering as an employee following a screening or initial interview. These interviews are generally conducted by middle or senior management, together or separately. Applicants can expect more in-depth questions, and the employer will be expecting a greater level of preparation on the part of the candidate. Applicants should continue to research the employer following the first interview, and be prepared to use any information gained through the previous interview to their advantage.
✓ Consist of individual interviews with three or more people in the organization, all in one day. The participants are possibly the same people as the panel interview but you will meet one at a time rather than as a group.

The End of the Interview
Ask.
✓ Ask the questions you have prepared.
✓ Ask about the next step and when you will hear from them.
✓ Ask about salary and benefits and time to think about it ONLY if you are offered the job on the spot.

Be sure.
✓ Make a short, concise summary of your qualification and stress your interest in the position.
✓ Confirm the interviewer knows the best way to contact you in case they have any more questions. This also expresses your continued interest in the position.
✓ You have the correct spelling for each person who interviewed you – so you can write them a thank you note!

Manners.
✓ Thank the interviewer for his or her time and continued interest in you as a candidate.
✓ Shake hands firmly on the way out.

The Follow-up
Thank you.
✓ Send the interviewer(s) a handwritten thank-you note as soon as possible after the interview.
✓ Consider preparing the basics of the thank you before the interview, and fill in the details at the conclusion of the interview. To ensure prompt delivery, consider either handing the note to the front desk person of the organization or mailing the note on your way home.

Be patient.
✓ Depending on the field and type of job, the interview process may be long and you might experience an unexpected wait.
✓ If the interviewer has given you a time estimate of when you should hear from them, do not call before then.

Call.
✓ If you have not heard anything in the designated time (a week or more), call the organization to find out if they have made a decision.
✓ If they have not, ask them when they expect to have a decision.
✓ Consider if you are not offered the position to ask for feedback for how to improve.

Interview Questions
Caution: When applying for jobs, do not mention the word “Internship.” In the past many internships were non-paid, and some universities still require students to do their internships in non-paid settings. Thus if you mention the word “internship” in your interview the interviewer may immediately think of you as free labor, and when you later indicate you want to be paid, may be unwilling to make the shift. **Always say that you are applying for a job in the counseling field, not an internship (unless you are in fact willing to do an unpaid internship).** If you are working for a site and doing a good job they are likely to want to keep you when it comes time for you to start internship, and the only thing we request from them at internship that they would not ordinarily be doing is complete a 10 minute questionnaire at mid-semester and a second one at the end of the semester.
Asking by Employer:

1. Basic Interview Questions
   - Tell me about yourself.
   - What are your strengths and weaknesses? (or What are three positive things your last boss would say about you? What negative thing would your last boss say about you?)
   - Why do you want this job/internship?
   - What's your ideal company?
   - What attracted you to this company?
   - Why should we hire you?
   - What did you like least about your last job?
   - When were you most satisfied in your job?
   - What can you do for us that other candidates can't?
   - What were the responsibilities of your last position?
   - Why are you leaving your present job?
   - What do you know about this industry?
   - What do you know about our company?
   - Why are you interested in the field of counseling?

2. Behavioral Interview Questions (tell me about a time when…):
   - Give me an example of a time that you felt you went above and beyond the call of duty at work.
   - Can you describe a time when your work was criticized and how did you handle it?
   - Have you ever been on a team where someone was not pulling their own weight? How did you handle it?
   - Tell me about a time when you had to give someone difficult feedback. How did you handle it?
   - What is your greatest failure, and what did you learn from it?
   - What irritates you about other people, and how do you deal with it?
   - If I were your supervisor and asked you to do something that you disagreed with, what would you do?
   - What was the most difficult period in your life, and how did you deal with it?
   - Give me an example of a time you did something wrong. How did you handle it?
   - Tell me about a time where you had to deal with conflict on the job.
   - What's the most difficult decision you've made in the last two years and how did you come to that decision?
   - Describe how you would handle a situation if you were required to finish multiple tasks by the end of the day, and there was no conceivable way that you could finish them.

3. Career Development Questions:
   - What are you looking for in terms of career development?
   - Where would you like to be in your career five years from now?
   - How do you want to improve yourself in the next year?
   - What kind of goals would you have in mind if you got this job?

4. More About You:
• How would you describe your work style?
• What would be your ideal working situation?
• What techniques and tools do you use to keep yourself organized?
• If you had to choose one, would you consider yourself a big-picture person or a detail-oriented person?
• Tell me about your proudest achievement.
• What kind of personality do you work best with and why?
• What is your personal mission statement?
• What three character traits would your friends use to describe you?
• If you were interviewing someone for this position, what traits would you look for?
• List five words that describe your character.
• Who has impacted you most in your career and how?
• What is your personal mission statement?
• What three character traits would your friends use to describe you?
• If you were interviewing someone for this position, what traits would you look for?
• List five words that describe your character.
• What is your greatest fear?
• What is your biggest regret and why?
• What's the most important thing you learned in school?
• Why did you choose your major?
• What is your greatest achievement outside of work?
• What are the qualities of a good leader/therapist? A bad leader/therapist?
• There's no right or wrong answer, but if you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would you be?
• What's the last book you read?
• What would you do if you won the lottery?
• Who are your heroes?
• What do you do in your spare time?
• What is your favorite memory from childhood?

5. **Brainteaser Questions** *(typically no right answer - looking for creativity, how you think and how quickly you think)*:

• How would you weigh a plane without scales?
• Tell me 10 ways to use a pencil other than writing.
• Sell me this pencil.
• If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?
• If you could choose one superhero power, what would it be and why?
• If you could get rid of any one of the US states, which one would you get rid of and why?
• With your eyes closed, tell me step-by-step how to tie my shoes.

6. **Questions for Therapy/Counseling Positions**

• What do you think would be your greatest strength as a therapist?
• What about clinical work do you enjoy most/least?
• What is your theoretical orientation? What do you think of _____ approach?
• What are the challenges you expect to face as a therapist?
• What is your experience with individual/couples/family/group/inpatient/etc. treatment?
• What are your clinical interest areas?
• Are you an active listener? Are you able to engage clients?
• How do you describe your personal boundaries? What kinds of things go into a psychological assessment?
• Do you believe in short term or long-term treatment?
• How do you handle termination?
• Think of a client you have liked/disliked and tell me how you dealt with the counter transference issues.

7. Based on Position Type:
• Do you feel you can be objective in counseling a teen about abortion?
• What do you think of the welfare system?
• What do you think of the recent welfare changes?
• What are your thoughts on managed care?
• What techniques do you use in crisis intervention work?
• How would you handle a psychotic outburst in the clinic waiting room?
• In terms of family therapy, what is your theoretical orientation?
• Are you prepared to make home visits?
• What are the risk assessment/signs of abuse/neglect?
• What is the most creative and innovative counseling technique you have used?

8. Potential Questions for Guidance Counselor Positions
• What is the role of the school counselor in relation to teachers, parents, administrators and other counselors?
• What do you see as the main role of a school counselor?
• What influenced you to be a school counselor?
• What is the counseling theory or approach that you most closely follow?
• What innovative and new ideas would you like to employ as a school counselor?
• How would you divide your time between meeting the immediate needs of the students and keeping up with the paperwork?
• How are school personnel affected by working in a rural county vs. urban city (where there are more or less resources)? Describe your personal experience?
• How will you evaluate your programs to meet (a) current state standards; (b) standards of best practice for a comprehensive guidance and counseling program; and (c) the ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs?
• How would you handle an irate parent?
• How would you handle a passive (perhaps irresponsible) parent?
• How would you handle a large group of students having attendance problems?
• How do you see yourself fitting in with counselors who have many years experience as veteran teachers?
• What do you see as the role of a counselor in a school this large?
• What do you know about our school that you would consider a strength? a weakness?
• What is it that you like about working with (grade level) school students?
• What is something new you could bring to our program?
• Are you opposed to working above and beyond school hours to get the job done?
• Are you opposed to working at night for functions such as college night, senior night, etc.?
• What is your experience with 504 accommodation plans?
• What experiences have you had with transition plans?
• How would you deal with cultural differences in a school setting?
• What do you think the role of the counselor is in preventing school violence?
• What practical experiences have you had that make you feel capable of being a counselor?
- What experiences have you had in working with special education students?
- What can you provide that is different from a social worker, school psychologist, or mental health counselor?
- When considering ethical standards and school policies, how would you handle a conflict between the two?
- What do the most recent state standardized test results indicate about this school district and this school; and what is your role regarding standardized testing?
- How does a school counselor assist with the implementation of ESL (English as Second Language) in-building programming?
- Describe how you would implement small group counseling/guidance lessons?
- Because time is a scarce resource in schools today, and because of a strong push for improved standardized test scores, best educational practices suggest that in-class guidance lessons not take away from classroom instructional minutes. How will you address this issue as a school counselor?
- What has your experience been in working with students of color & GLBT students?
- What is the difference between a therapist and a school counselor?
- What is your view on collaborative consultation in the schools?
- Tell us about a successful (satisfying) case that you have handled? And, one that was not so successful; what would you have done differently?
- Describe past interactions with parents in home visits.
- How do you feel about writing letters of recommendation (HS)?
- Can we ask you a question in Spanish, and can you respond likewise?
- Would you be interested in heading any extracurricular activities (i.e., club advisor)?
- Are there some things or information that should not be shared with others, like students, parents or administrators? What skills do you currently possess that would help you be successful right away as a high school counselor?
Questions You Should Ask

Do not ask any of these questions if the information appears on their website or in printed information! Do not ask these questions if the employer provided the answer during the interview!

- Please describe the typical career path of a ____________ in this organization.
- What will be my opportunities for advancement?
- How and by whom will my performance be reviewed? Are there specific criteria upon which I would be evaluated? And how frequently is formal and informal review given to new employees?
- Can you describe an ideal employee?
- Do you have any questions or concerns about my qualifications I might answer for you?
- What do you like about this company? What keeps you here?
- What do you most enjoy about your work with this organization / company / agency?
- How does your company/organization encourage further education? What is the company’s policy on providing seminars, workshops, and training so employees can keep up their skills or acquire new ones?
- What can you tell me about the culture and the environment?
- What issues or concerns are facing this department/organization?
- What are the goals and/or objectives for this department/organization for the upcoming year?
- What new projects has this department/organization undertaken recently?
- What makes this company/organization different from its competitors? What are the organization’s/company’s strengths and weaknesses compared to its competition?
- What is the organization’s plan for the next five years, and how does this department fit in?
- What are the various ways employees communicate with one another to carry out their work?
- Who would my co-workers be, and what are their functions?
- What sort of communication style works best with this team?
- What are the main challenges associated with the team?
- Could you explain your organizational structure? Where will this job fit into the organizational structure?
- Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
- What's our next step? (Take the lead and set a plan for follow-up)

Expectations regarding feedback

In the past it was customary for Human Resources to send some sort of acknowledgment upon receiving your resume. This is no longer the case, so do not be disappointed if you do not receive any communication back after submitting a resume or completing an application.

So, what can you do?
- Call and confirm they received your application/resume
- Follow up again within a reasonable time frame to inquire about the status of your application and if they have come to a decision regarding the position
- If not offered the position, consider asking for feedback as to how to improve when applying for other positions