

Empathy Pre-Screening for Hiring Motivational Interviewers

Tell the Candidate: The purpose of both interviews is for you to demonstrate your skill in accurate empathy as first described by Carl Rogers and his colleagues, and also sometimes described as accurate understanding, reflective listening, or active listening.

Task #1: A natural conversation (typically occurs with co-worker or staff member as the speaker)

Speaker instructions:

Speak about yourself; do not play a role or fabricate information
Say as much or as little as seems natural to you in this conversation
Expect to converse for about 10 minutes with the interviewer
Choose one of the following topics:

What it was like growing up in my home

Or

How I came to work in this profession

Candidate instructions:

Begin with an open question related to the speaker's topic
There is no need to fix or change anything
Listen empathically, relying as much as possible on reflection
and periodic open questions
After 10 minutes, bring the interview to an end and offer summary

Task #2: The first ten minutes of a clinical interview for a person seeking help with a substance abuse problem (typically occurs with an actor)

Speaker instructions:

Use the information provided to form your character
Do not approach this in a predetermined fashion--your character
should respond according to what the interviewer does
Say as much or as little as would be natural for your character
given what is happening in the interview; nothing is prescribed

Candidate Instructions:

This client has finished pretreatment assessment and is assigned to
you for treatment
Your task is to learn about this person's situation with regard to
alcohol or drugs, and what led up to treatment
Using mainly reflections and open questions, show how you would
conduct the first counseling session
After 10 minutes, bring the session to an end and offer a summary