

# Behavioral–Based Interview Questions

## Adaptability

- Sometimes we have to comply with decisions that are made that we may not agree with. Tell me about the last time you disagreed with a policy or decision that was instituted by your boss/Administration that you didn't agree with. How did you respond?
- Unexpected absences can disrupt the work setting and completion of tasks/patient care. Tell me about a time when this happened, and what you did?
- Tell me about the most challenging person/department/physician you ever faced. What did you do to make the interaction successful? What was the result?
- Tell me about the hardest change you've faced at work. What did you do to deal with the change and how did that work?
- Healthcare is a rapidly changing environment. Tell me about something new that you've been asked to do or a change that you've had to make at work. How did you respond to the request for the change in how you worked/performed a task? What was the outcome?
- Not all hospital policies/procedures are explained or communicated. What have you done when you've found out about an unexpected change or when unaware of what the procedure was for a specific task?
- Sometimes we have to comply with a team decision, even if we have personal reservations. Describe a time when this happened to you.
- Give me an example of a time when the rules or structure of a project was changed last minute. How did you adapt to this environment?
- Give me an example of a time when you had two important projects competing for your time. How did you prioritize your work?
- Give me an example of a time when you had to change your negotiating position midway in order to achieve an objective,
- Tell of a situation in which you had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you?
- Describe a time when you had to deal with a person who made you angry.

## Analysis

- What steps do you follow to study a problem before making a decision? Can you tell me about a time when you have used these steps?
- We can sometimes identify a small problem and fix it before it becomes a major problem. Give an example(s) of how you have done this.
- Describe a situation in which you had to collect information by asking many questions of several people.
- Recall a time when your leader assigned you what you considered a complex project. Specifically, what steps did you take to prepare for and finish the project? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you made an important decision with a limited amount of information.

## Building Customer Loyalty

- Describe a time when you took steps to make sure a patient or physician was satisfied. What did you do?
- What have you learned about keeping patients/families/physicians/other hospital departments satisfied? How did you learn that? Give me an example that illustrates how you've used that knowledge.
- Tell me about a time you effectively handled a customer's complaint (internal or external).
- Tell me about your most difficult customer/patient. Describe a specific interaction you had with this customer.
- Tell me about the most difficult patient service experience that you have ever had to handle-perhaps an angry or upset patient. Be specific and tell what you did and what the outcome was.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to think on your feet to ensure that the patient got the best service possible.
- Tell me about a situation with a patient where you were able to meet the patient's expectations.
- Describe an organization where you worked that placed a high degree of emphasis on patient needs and satisfaction.
- Tell me about a time when your patience and diligence with a patient or family helped achieve a positive outcome.

### **Care Management**

- Tell me about a time when you recognized that a patient needed immediate attention (either medical or nursing). What did you do?
- Tell me about a patient that needed input from several different disciplines to ensure all their needs were met. How did you interact with the other disciplines/coordinate the care?
- How do you remain knowledgeable about nursing? Give me an example of something new you have learned and when you've applied this knowledge.
- Tell me about a time when you've had more than one patient care priority occurring at the same time. How did you ensure both patients' needs were met? What was the clinical outcome? How satisfied were the patients/families involved?
- Can you tell me about a time when you were the leader and had to deliver difficult information to the patient?

### **Communication**

- Tell me about a situation in which you had to speak up (be assertive) in order (oral and written) to get a point across that was important to you.
- Describe the most significant written document, report or presentation you have completed. Tell me how you did it.
- Give me an example of a time when you communicated successfully with another person, even when that individual may not have personally liked you.
- Have you had to "sell" an idea to your coworkers, classmates or group? How did you do it? Did they "buy" it?
- Tell me about a time when you received feedback on either your written or verbal communication style.
- Tell me about a time when you had a miscommunication with a team member or patient.

### **Exercising Good Judgment, Critical Thinking Skills**

- Give me an example of a time when you had to keep from speaking or making decision because you did not have enough information.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision.
- Describe a recent, unpopular decision you made and the result of your decision.
- Tell me about a time when you turned down a good job.
- What was your most difficult decision in the last six months? What made it difficult?
- Tell me about a time when you had to solve a problem with very little guidance or direction?
- Can you tell me about a time when a slow, deliberate and methodical approach made a difference in your response to a problem?
- Please describe a situation that required you to complete a number of things at the same time. How did you decide what was most important? What was the result?
- Sometimes we are asked to do something that we don't think is right. Tell me about a time when this happened to you. What did you do? What happened?

### **Initiative**

- Tell me about a time you had to take responsibility/control of an assignment/task in order to ensure that it would be completed.
- Give me an example of a time you felt out of control of a situation at work. How did you handle it?
- Have you ever taken steps to make your job easier, more efficient, or more productive? Tell me about it.
- Tell me about a time when you did more than what was required for your job.
- Describe a project or idea (not necessarily your own) that was implemented, or carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts.
- Tell me about a time when you found ways to make a job easier or more rewarding.
- Give me an example when you had to go beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Give me an example of a project/task you started on your own.
- Give some instances in which you anticipated problems and were able to influence a new direction.
- Give me an example of any new ideas that you suggested to your manager recently.

### **Leadership**

- Give me an example of a time you have placed yourself in a leadership position. How might you have improved your role?
- Give an example of your ability to build motivation in your co-workers, classmates or a volunteer committee.
- Give me an example of a time when a group you were leading failed/did not meet expectations.
- Give me an example of a time when you felt you were able to motivate a group.
- What is the toughest group from which you have had to get cooperation? Describe how you handled it. What was the outcome?

### **Managing Work (includes time management, planning, organizing)**

- What procedures have you used to prevent or to control a backlog in your work? Describe a specific instance when you needed to use these skills.
- We've all been in situations in which we couldn't complete everything we needed to on time. Tell me about a time when this happened to you.
- How do you organize the information you use in your work? Tell me about a time when the procedure worked.
- Are you able to complete your assigned work on time in your current job? What specific tools have you put in place to help you do this? Give me an example.
- Describe a recent situation when you were feeling overwhelmed.
- Describe a time in which you were in a stressful situation that you think you handled very well.
- To better serve customers, we sometimes may promise more than we can deliver. Tell me about a time when you over-committed yourself.
- What tricks or techniques have you learned to make a job easier, or to make yourself more effective? How did you learn that?
- Tell me about a time when the details of something you were doing were especially important. How did you keep track of them?
- When working on repetitive tasks, it's easy to lose concentration and miss important details that might cause problems later. Give me an example of a time when this happened to you.
- Give an example of what you did when your time schedule or project plan changed because of unforeseen circumstances.
- How do you schedule your time, set priorities? How do you handle multiple priorities at once? Can you give me a specific example of a time when you did this?
- What have you done to be effective with your organization and planning?
- Describe how you develop a project team's goals and project plan.
- How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time? Can you tell me about a time when you had to prioritize several key deliverables?
- Describe a time when you had many projects or assignments due at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done?

### **Patient Education/Health Promotion**

- How do you know if a patient is ready to learn information about their disease or a procedure they will be undertaking? Describe a time when you used this knowledge, and the steps you used to teach a patient.
- Can you describe a time when you had to coach another nurse on a task/procedure?

### **Safety Interventions/Awareness**

- Tell me about a time when you recognized an unsafe situation on a piece of equipment. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you were really busy and under a lot of pressure to finish an assignment at work. What actions did you take to make sure that safety wasn't compromised?
- Have you ever been involved with the preparation for a JCAHO survey? What was your involvement/what did you do?
- Sometimes a situation occurs which could have been avoided if a risk had been identified before the event (e.g. patient fall, nosocomial infection). Tell me about a time when this happened to you.

### **Teamwork**

- Tell me about a time when you encouraged a team member who wasn't involved (whether because they were quiet, felt overlooked or didn't appear to care).

- What are some specific tasks that you've completed that directly contributed to your team's success?
- Tell me about a time when your nursing team was not functioning effectively. What was the problem? What did you do?
- To accomplish goals/complete the jobs assigned, a unit must often obtain resources from other areas.
- Tell me about a time that you had to do this? What did you do? How did you know if your actions benefited the team?
- Tell me about a project that was delegated to you; what the project was, and how you dealt with it.
- What did you do in your last job/internship to contribute toward a teamwork environment?
- Tell me about a time when a willingness to share your knowledge significantly enhanced an outcome or decision.
- Describe a situation in which your teammates on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
- Tell of a time when you worked with a colleague who was not completing his or her share of the work. How did you work through it?
- Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to a compromise.
- Tell me about a time when you put the needs of a group before your own when completing a task.
- Tell me about a time when you persuaded team members to do things your way.
- Tell me about a time that you had to work closely with others in order to complete the work assigned to you. What were the relationships and how did they develop? How satisfied were you in this work group?

### **Work Standards**

- Give me an example of a time when your work was above the standard.
- Give me an example of a time when your work was below the standard.
- Tell me about a time when your evaluation of your performance differed from your manager's evaluation of your performance.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
- Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish failed.
- Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).
- Describe a time when you were not very satisfied or pleased with your performance. What did you do about it?
- Tell me about a job you held in the past where continuous learning was necessary and important.
- Give me an example of how you knew that your last manager valued continuous learning.
- Describe a time in the recent past when you had to convince a manager/leader that you needed additional training/education.
- Tell me about one of the most difficult and demanding tasks you've ever completed. How satisfied were you with the assignment and your work?
- When were you most dissatisfied in your work? What do you think the reason for this was? What would have made it better?
- Has there been a time that you felt that job advancement opportunities were limited? How did you feel about that situation?
- Tell me what makes you love coming to work? When do you not like to work?
- Tell me about a time when your achievements were not recognized, either formally or informally. How did you feel about that?