



The SCAADAC Certification Commission

TO: Certification Candidates
FROM: Marie B. Queen, Certification Administrator
DATE: November 16, 2009
SUBJECT: Certification Oral Examination for CAC I and CAC II

Here is a sort of rough outline of what you can expect when you take the certification oral examination. Though the interviews aren't strictly standardized, the content of the interview really does not vary too much. The counseling core functions are the basic guide for the questions that the committee will ask.

1. At the beginning of the interview, you will be asked to make an oral presentation to the committee of the sample case file that you submitted with your certification application. You will be allowed ten minutes to make the presentation. The presentation should essentially follow the case file, i.e., it should describe what you did for the client through a continuum of services beginning with intake, moving through assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, counseling, and discharge planning. It may also describe referrals made and the basis for referral, etc.
2. Following the presentation of your case file, the committee will probably ask specific questions about how some or all of the counseling core functions (refer to the manual) apply to the case presented. For example, they may ask questions regarding what assessment methods were employed and to what end. They might ask how the diagnosis was arrived upon (it's a very good idea to be as well acquainted as possible with the DSM IV diagnostic criteria for abuse and dependence. The committee will most certainly ask questions related to the distinction between the diagnostic categories.) They might ask about various treatment goals, or they might look at a specific treatment goal and ask how the goal might be implemented for someone with a different diagnosis (such as for an abuse diagnosis if the individual was dependent, or vice versa.)
3. The committee will likely ask about theories of counseling and how they are applied to the various interventions or methods that were employed with the client. Often these are cited in the Philosophy of Treatment that the applicant submits with the application for certification. In any case, the committee will probably ask you to describe your own philosophy of treatment and how you apply that in your counseling work. Often they will also ask you to describe or discuss theories other than your own preferential theory in order to demonstrate a basic knowledge of a variety of counseling approaches or theories.
4. Be prepared to respond to a variety of questions regarding (for example) ways that you might manage a particular crisis situation, or how you might handle a particular situation that involves a breach of professional ethics, or of confidentiality, etc. You might be asked to role



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play in the interview with a member or members of the committee as a demonstration of how you might handle this or another type of situation.

5. Be prepared to describe in detail how you personally function in your role as a counselor. Remember that it is not your job description or what you do in your agency that is being examined; it is your own personal preparation as a counselor. The committee often will take an individual out of his or her own work setting and ask them to describe how he or she would handle various situations in a different setting (i.e., as a private practitioner instead of an agency staff member.)

6. In general, be very familiar with all of the counseling core functions. This is where the questions come from. Be prepared to describe in detail what you do in each of the core functions in your work with clients.

7. Finally, I really think that it's important to keep in mind throughout the interview process that the interview is peer review. Each member of the interviewing committee has been through the process at least once and often a number of times, depending upon his or her specialty. The committees are mindful of the fact that they are not there to impede the certification process for anyone. Most of the time, committee members will work very hard to assist individuals through difficult parts of the interview. I think that it's important (as strange as it may sound) to try to relax and enjoy the interview and accept it as a valuable learning process.

One other thing that is usually helpful is to go through a "rehearsal" interview with commission members who live or work in your geographical region. All the members of the commission are willing to do this when asked, and it can be a very helpful thing to go through in anticipation of the orals. It also helps cut down on some of the anxiety about having to go through the interview. It's good practice for the real thing.

I hope this is helpful. I know that there is no way to cover every part of the possible content of the interview, since they vary to some extent with the particular make-up of the committee. But these are the things that you can pretty well expect the committee to focus on regardless of the committee's make-up.

Please feel free to call if you have any questions after you have read through this.

Oral Interview Candidates should note the following...

- When presenting their case study, oral interview candidates may not read their presentation; however, reference cards may be utilized for reference only.
 - If a candidate is returning for a re-take of the oral interview, the candidate will be required to present their entire case study at each subsequent interview.
 - Case studies or case study revisions must be received by the SCAADAC Office prior to the oral interview.
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