

Counseling Professional Interview

You are expected to complete an interview with a professional currently working in a counseling field. The purpose of this assignment is to offer you the opportunity not only to learn more about the profession of counseling, but to also begin building a network within the counseling community.

Most of this may be common sense, but just to be sure, here are some general considerations for the interview. In selecting someone to interview, you may first try to utilize a budding network you already have in place. You also have access to Bay Path's Alum-Mentor Database – recent Bay Path graduates who were psychology majors, and have agreed to serve as mentors to our current students to share their experiences on careers and graduate school. However, do not feel afraid to reach out even to the yellow pages. Everyone was student at some point, and you should have hope that many in the field are empathetic to your position. Appreciate the fact that you are asking someone to do you a favor and give you some of their valuable time. Be prepared to be flexible around *their* schedule. You will be lucky to get an hour for the interview. Ideally you will be able to meet where they work, but you could also meet them at a neutral location such as a coffee shop. Realize you are representing the college and dress someone professionally (i.e. clean, neat, not in old sweats). In some cases, e-mail or phone may be the best way to get your information. Be sure to send them a thank you note after your meeting (whether in person or via email/phone). You never know, your paths may cross again in the future and this could help build your network.

Although you will obviously not be engaging your interviewee in counseling, you may want to use some of the skills you are learning in the counseling class. You may have some 'yes' or 'no' questions you are desperate to ask, but you are likely to get more information from open ended questions (how, what, where, why). However, you may or may not want to know so much about the person you are interviewing as the work in which they engage. You can come up with your own questions depending on your interest and the nature of the profession you are inquiring about. The following questions are suggestions, not mandates.

Education

Where did you get your degree?
Why did you select your highest degree over other similar degrees?
What was the most helpful part of the program?
What was the most useful thing you learned?
Where you get your training?
Would you do anything differently?

Previous Work Experience

How many years have you been working in the field?
What kind of positions have you held?
What was your first job in the field?

Current Work

What do you like best/least?
Describe a typical day from start to end.
What excites you about the population you work with?
Describe some of the work you are proud of –what makes it stand out?

Guidelines for the Paper

This paper should be 4-5 pages in length, APA style. Be sure to include the name of the person you are interviewing, their credentials, job title, and name of organization where they work. When writing the paper, focus on the overall picture that you came away with. We do not need a detailed account of every question and answer. However, you should back up your points with some examples. There may be some answers that stood out to you and so you may wish to focus more on a few questions.