

Psychologist interview checklist

Most employers run an HR screen, then a clinical interview with a senior psychologist or psychiatrist that includes case vignettes, and some ask for a mock session or a sample assessment report.

10 QUESTIONS TO PRACTISE OUT LOUD

1. How do you structure a first session with a new client?

What it checks: Whether you cover informed consent, confidentiality and its limits, a structured history, risk screening and a shared plan in the first meeting.

2. Tell me about a difficult ethical situation you faced and how you handled it.

What it checks: Whether you reason through ethical dilemmas carefully, consult your supervisor or peers, and document your decisions and the reasons behind them.

3. Are you registered with the Rehabilitation Council of India?

What it checks: Whether you meet the legal requirement to practise as a clinical psychologist and understand your scope if you are not yet registered.

4. How do you assess suicide risk?

What it checks: Whether you ask directly, assess thoughts, plans, means and protective factors, make a safety plan and escalate according to protocol.

5. Tell me about a client crisis you managed.

What it checks: Whether you stay calm under pressure, follow protocol, involve the right people and look after follow-up.

6. Why do you want to work with our organisation?

What it checks: Whether you understand the organisation's client group and model of care and can show a real fit.

7. When would you break a client's confidentiality?

What it checks: Whether you know the legal and ethical limits of confidentiality and handle disclosures carefully and transparently.

8. Tell me about a time a client was angry with you.

What it checks: Whether you can stay non-defensive, repair ruptures in the therapeutic relationship and use them constructively.

9. What are your expectations about salary and working hours?

What it checks: Whether your expectations are realistic for your qualification and setting, and whether you understand session-based pay models.

10. How do you choose a therapeutic approach for a client?

What it checks: Whether your choice is based on formulation, evidence for the presenting problem and the client's preferences, not just your favourite model.

TIPS FOR THIS INTERVIEW

- Prepare two or three anonymised case examples covering assessment, a risk situation and a therapy outcome, and remove every identifying detail before you describe them.

- Revise suicide risk assessment, limits of confidentiality and child safeguarding, since panels almost always test these with a case vignette.
- Be ready to explain your therapy approach in simple language, as some panels ask you to describe it as you would to a new client.
- Carry your RCI registration, degree certificates and a sample assessment report with all client details removed if the role involves testing.

THE DAY BEFORE

- ☐ Confirm the time, venue or video link and the interviewer's name
- ☐ Plan your route and leave time for traffic, or test your camera, microphone and internet
- ☐ Keep copies of your resume, ID proof, certificates and photographs in a folder
- ☐ Iron your clothes and charge your phone and laptop
- ☐ Do one final run-through of your introduction, then stop and rest

ON THE DAY

- ☐ Arrive 15 minutes early, or log in 5-10 minutes early for a video call
- ☐ Greet everyone politely, including the receptionist or coordinator
- ☐ Listen to the full question, pause, then answer in a clear structure
- ☐ Take brief notes of names and key points
- ☐ Ask your prepared questions and confirm the next steps before you leave