



# ChiefMotivatingOfficers

Improving the world at work, one behavior change agent at a time.

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ChiefMotivatingOfficers

# Behavioral Interviewing:

Strategies for Successful Hiring in  
ABA Organizations

Instructor: Shannon Biagi, MS, BCBA (she/her)

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## About Me



# Shannon Biagi

BCBA with a focus on Organizational Behavior Management (OBM)

CEO, Chief Motivating Officers

Director of Operations, OBM Network

Adjunct Professor, University of West Florida

Specializing in small/mid sized human service organizations, but have clients in many different industries and in many different countries worldwide.

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# SOME CONSIDERATIONS

KEEP IN MIND DURING THIS PRESENTATION THAT...

**This presentation  
is tool-based and  
applied, while  
remaining  
conceptually  
systematic**

Please do not directly  
replicate or  
copy/paste the  
content

Every organization's  
requirements and  
positions are different

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ALWAYS consult with  
an HR professional or  
employment lawyer!

Laws and  
regulations vary

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- The concept of this talk originated when one of my supervisees (Thank you, Stacey!) become interested in how to determine **best practices in interviewing from a behavior-analytic lens**
- We discovered there was **little published** in our flagship journals
- Not shocking – behavior analysts focus on measurable and observable behavior
- **Traditional interviews** – include lots of self-report
- Some studies explore how to teach interviewing behaviors (Stocco, Thompson, Hart and Soriano, 2017), and we felt like we were onto something – if these are the behaviors being trained, they should be the most important behaviors to interview for, right?

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# TRENDS IN THE LITERATURE



Behaviors frequently researched are superficial



We're on our best behavior on interview day, right? Reactivity!



Don't maintain post-interview without intervention



What skills do we actually need from potential employees?



Where are our priorities?

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A blurred background image showing a group of people in a professional setting, possibly a meeting or conference. The focus is on the text overlay.

**Not all jobs are the  
same!**

**And stop focusing on  
things you can read on  
their resume...**



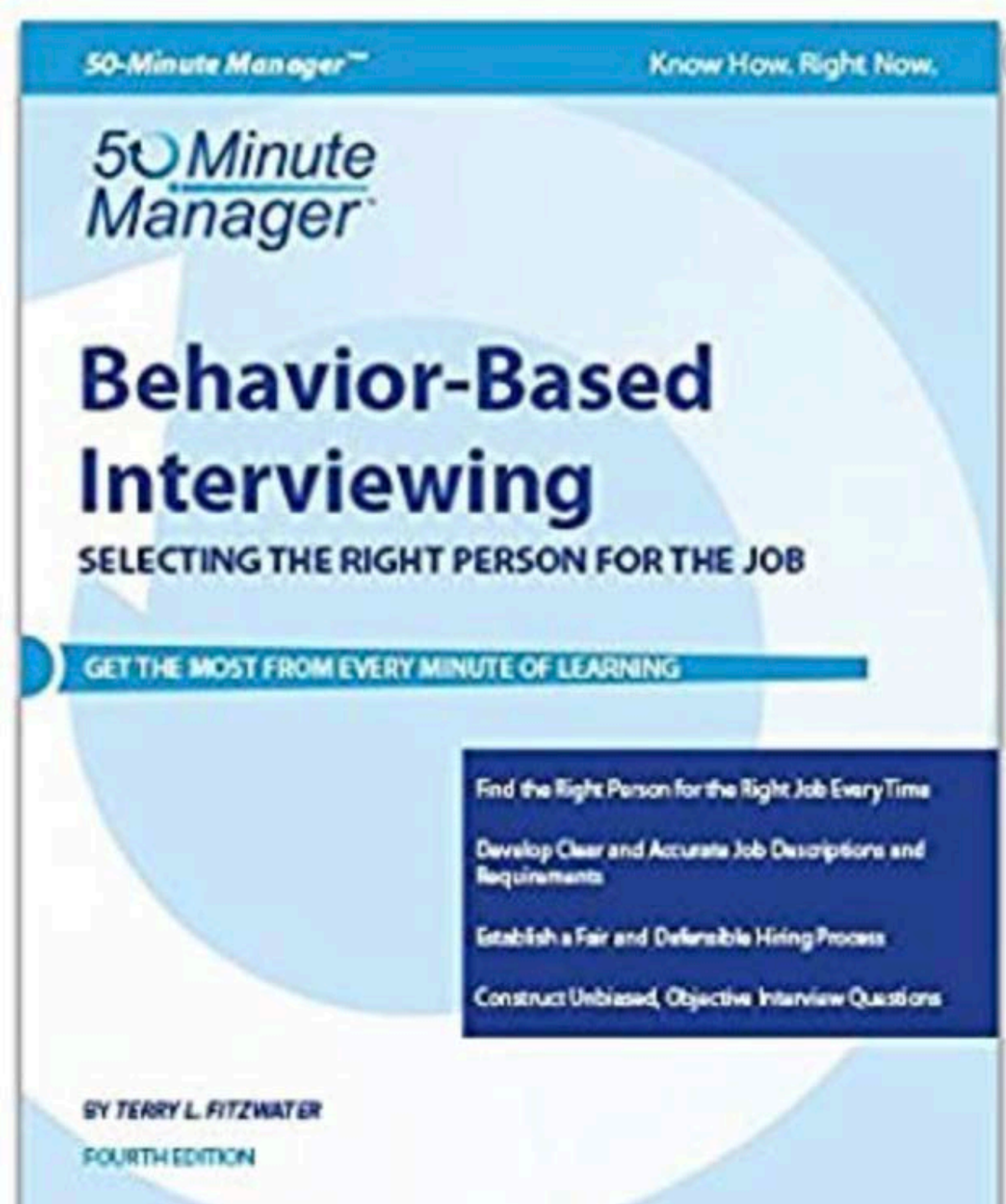


**THE IDEA... 60 DIFFERENT  
CLINICS IN 1.5 YEARS**



# BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING

Terry L. Fitzwater,  
4<sup>th</sup> edition



# BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING FROM SHRM

- Society of Human Resource Management
- Focusing on past behavior to predict future behavior
- Sounds pretty good!





A woman with blonde hair and blue eyes, wearing a dark blue blazer over a white shirt, is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. She is in the center of the frame. In the background, two other people are visible but out of focus: a woman with blonde hair on the left and a man on the right. The background appears to be an office or meeting room. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the text "It's all self-report." in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A solid blue diagonal shape is at the bottom left corner of the image.

**It's all self-report.**

# EXAMPLES OF “BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING” STRATEGIES

## From SHRM (2016)

Think of a time when you were unfamiliar with a business term or acronym. What did you do to learn its meaning?

Describe a time you were asked to prepare a report on metrics or trends. What actions did you take to complete the task?

Think of a time when you had to respond to stakeholder concerns via written, verbal, or electronic communication. What actions did you take?

## From SHRM (2016)

Tell me about a process you have dealt with in the past that required employee confidentiality.

Think of a time when you had to build credibility with stakeholders. What actions did you take?

Think about a time when you have encountered an ineffective process or transaction. What steps did you take following this discovery?

Describe how you have used data in the past to make a decision or to solve a problem. How did you use data as an aid in your decision making?


# IT'S NOT ALL BAD!

## BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

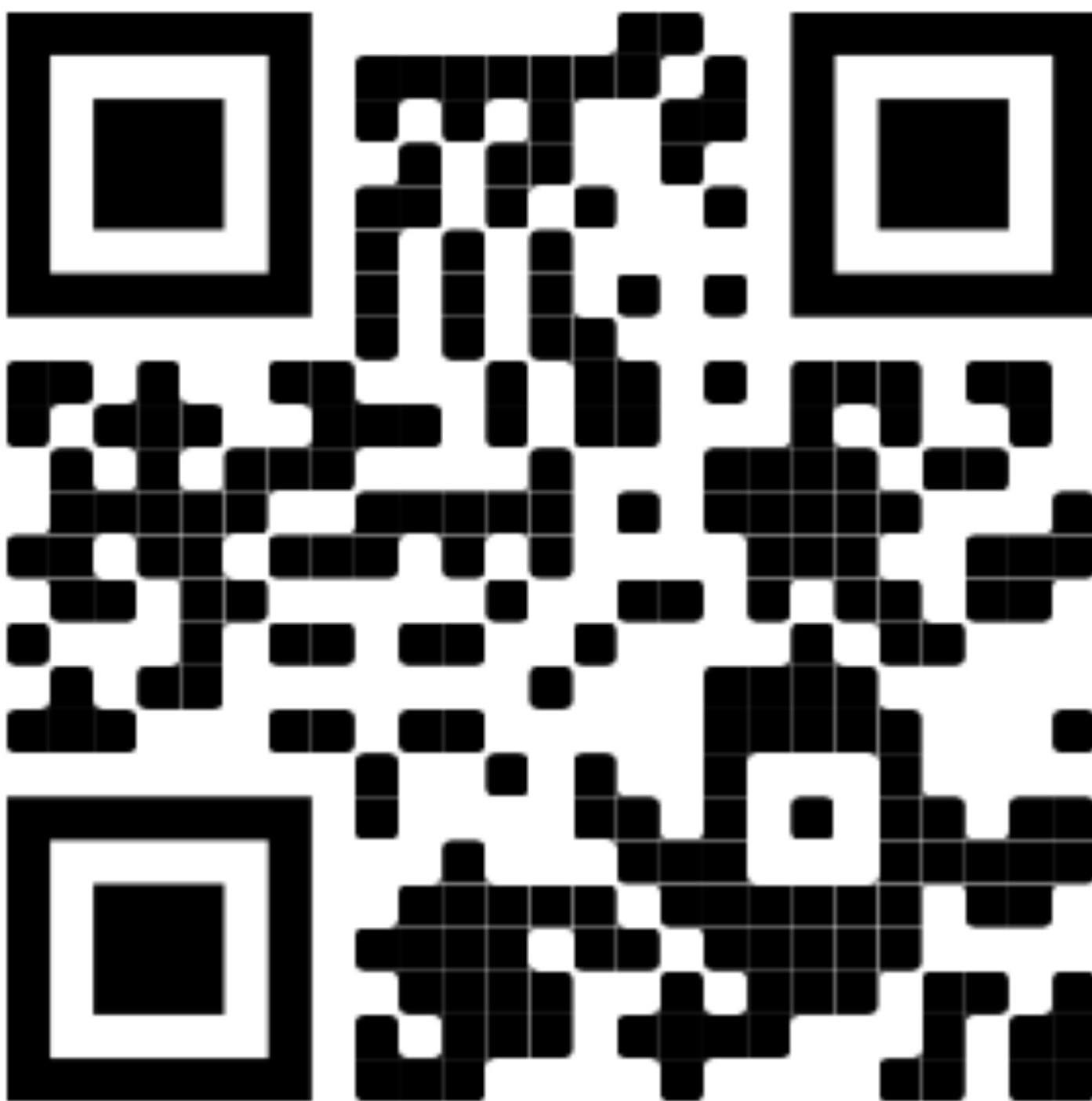
- Structured and consistent
- Concrete measures and criteria/expectations
- Less ambiguity in the system
- Less bias
- More legally safe
- More easily replicated





A woman with curly hair and glasses is sitting at a desk, looking down at a laptop. The desk has a coffee cup, an open book, and a cactus in a pot. The background is a bright window. A semi-transparent white box with blue text is overlaid on the image.

**We'll use the good  
stuff, and add more in  
this talk.**



**FREE INTERVIEW  
CREATION TOOL  
TEMPLATE:**

**[https://tinyurl.com/  
3mh3xaw5](https://tinyurl.com/3mh3xaw5)**



**STEP BEFORE STEP 1 – ID THE ROLE**



# WHO IS THE PERFORMER? BE SPECIFIC!



TECHNICIAN?



BCBA?



CLINICAL?



ADMIN?



IN HOME?



IN CENTER?



SUPERVISOR?



DIRECT CARE?



## STEP 1 – JOB ANALYSIS

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# **From Job Analysis to Performance Management: A Synergistic Rapprochement to Organizational Effectiveness**

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*Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA*

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*Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan, USA*



# CROWELL, HANTULA, AND MCARTHUR (2011)

## COMPONENTS OF A JOB ANALYSIS

- Directly observe current performers in the role
  - What are the essential, value-adding behaviors expected of someone in the role you've identified?
  - What does it look like when they perform well?
  - Observe all skill levels of performers to see what your exemplars do differently from others
  - Example: BCBA's and feedback

# CROWELL, HANTULA, AND MCARTHUR (2011)

## COMPONENTS OF A JOB ANALYSIS

- Interview people currently in the role
  - What do current employees in the role believe the essentials skills are?
  - Don't just use a survey – more detailed information and clarification is available in a conversation
  - Side note – this is a great unrestricted activity for individual pursuing certification

# CROWELL, HANTULA, AND MCARTHUR (2011)

## COMPONENTS OF A JOB ANALYSIS

- Conduct a task inventory
  - Process created by William Mechling in the 1970s
  - Create an itemized list of essential tasks, and use surveys to evaluate manager and performer statements related to tasks
  - Frequency, importance to role, how much training was provided
  - Focuses on Likert-style ratings, but can be paired with other strategies to increase the robustness and social validity of the analysis



# CROWELL, HANTULA, AND MCARTHUR (2011)

## COMPONENTS OF A JOB ANALYSIS

- Interview service recipients or those impacted by the performers
  - Clients, caregivers, supervisees
  - What do these folks find most valuable in the role that you're analyzing?
- Analyzing critical incidents
  - During times when something went wrong, what skills we're required (or missing) that impacted the situation?

# ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

## OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- BACB® task lists
  - Job descriptions
  - Mission/Values
- 
- After your job analysis, you should have some idea of what behaviors to start with in your behavior-based interview strategy
  - Yes, it takes time, and can make a huge difference in determining what to assess in your interview

# EXAMPLE: PART OF BCBA JOB ANALYSIS



## JOB ANALYSIS RESULTS

- Reviewing and assessing progress of clients and summarizing the information into decisions and program changes.
- Reviewing and assessing progress of staff and summarizing the information into decisions and program changes.
- Delivering performance feedback that identifies what was observed, why it is significant, and the future behavior change necessary.
- Training staff utilizing a behavioral skills training paradigm, with clear instructions, models, practice opportunities and performance feedback.
- Diagnosing barriers to staff performance and making environmental changes that enable them to close the gap between current and exemplary performance.
- Writing behavior plan components that meet criteria required by client needs and funder requirements.
- Identifying and suggesting changes to existing plans and programs.
- Conducting and reading existing behavioral assessments to influence recommendations.
- Creating novel strategies for teaching functional skills to clients, using stimuli found in the client's natural environments.





## STEP 2 – IDENTIFY SHORT-TERM OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS

# IDENTIFY SHORT-TERM OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS

## ASSESSING FOR COMPONENT SKILLS

- For the major components of the job that you've identified, break the skills down into component behaviors that you can observe in the short term, or (even better) determine the outputs that can be produced in a short amount of time
- Be aware that you'll provide training on organization-specific procedures – keep the skills broad, and do not expect 100% perfection



# OBSERVING BEHAVIOR

## GET CREATIVE!

- Techs need to collect frequency data?
  - Have them collect data on videos!
- BCBAs need to make data-based decisions?
  - Give them a graph to read and advise on!
- Gotta read assessments?
  - Have them describe a deidentified one!







# OBSERVING BEHAVIOR

GET CREATIVE!

## But... soft skills?

- Use scenarios and mock materials that require them to engage in those skills
- “Describe behavioral skills training to me as if I am a parent that is new to ABA.”
- “Review this behavior plan and provide me some feedback.”





## STEP 3 – CREATE SCENARIOS AND MATERIALS



# INTERVIEW KIT

## MATERIALS, SCENARIOS, AND QUESTIONS

- Create your standard interview for the position
  - All interviewees should receive the same tasks
- Create a task analysis/process for conducting the interview
- Gather stimuli and prompts, videos
- Assemble your interview kit and data sheets





# EXAMPLES OF DIRECT OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Instead of this... (SHRM, 2016)	Try this...
Tell me about a process you have dealt with in the past that required employee confidentiality.	According to what you know about HIPAA, which parts of this BIP should be blocked out before sending this via unsecured email?
Think of a time when you had to build credibility with stakeholders. What actions did you take?	I'm going to play the role of a caregiver that is new to ABA services. Let's have a conversation to build rapport.
Think about a time when you have encountered an ineffective process or transaction. What steps did you take following this discovery?	Here is our current assessment process – what improvements would you suggest?
Describe how you have used data in the past to make a decision or to solve a problem. How did you use data as an aid in your decision making?	This is a deidentified graph of one client's behaviors identified for decrease. What would your next steps be?

# EXAMPLES OF DIRECT OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Instead of this... (SHRM, 2016)	Try this...
Think of a time when you were unfamiliar with a business term or acronym. What did you do to learn its meaning?	We use the PDC-HS as our standard of performance improvement, are you familiar? No? I'll give you a moment to look it up while I grab us some water.
Describe a time you were asked to prepare a report on metrics or trends. What actions did you take to complete the task?	I have some raw client data here, could you create a graph of this for me?
Think of a time when you had to respond to stakeholder concerns via written, verbal, or electronic communication. What actions did you take?	Here is a hypothetical email from an upset parent, take few minutes to craft a potential response.

# EXAMPLE: PART OF BCBA INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT



EXPECTED ON-THE-JOB BEHAVIORS	INTERVIEW MATERIALS	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reviewing and assessing progress of clients, and summarizing the information into decisions and program changes.</li></ul>	Candidate is provided a graph of client performance.	Candidate is asked to provide a list of recommended actions and additional questions necessary to make decisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reviewing and assessing progress of staff, and summarizing the information into decisions and program changes.</li></ul>	Candidate is provided a graph of staff performance.	Candidate is asked to provide a list of recommended actions and additional questions necessary to make decisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering performance feedback that identifies what was observed, why it is significant, and the future behavior change necessary.</li></ul>	Candidate is provided a behavior plan that includes errors.	Candidate is asked to deliver feedback about the behavior plan as if the assessor is the author.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training staff utilizing a behavioral skills training paradigm, with clear instructions, models, practice opportunities and performance feedback.</li></ul>	Candidate is provided a skill to teach a staff member.	Candidate is asked to demonstrate how they would teach and assess the skill as if the assessor is an employee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diagnosing barriers to staff performance and making environmental changes that enable them to close the gap between current and exemplary performance.</li></ul>	Candidate is provided a scenario related to a staff performance issue.	Candidate is asked how they would proceed to assess and resolve the performance issue.





## STEP 4 – CREATE MEASUREMENT AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS

# ASSESSMENTS

## HOW DO WE COLLECT DATA AND EVALUATE PERFORMANCE?

- Data collection varies depending on the assessment strategy
- Must be objective, no interpretation!
- Test the tools for IOA and make changes as needed
  - Do two independent interviewers agree when they “see” it?



# EXAMPLE OF A BEHAVIORALLY-ANCHORED RATING SCALE (BARS)

	Assessment	5	4	3	2	1
Ethics	Present the candidate with an ethical dilemma and ask them to talk it through with you.	Identifies the perspective of all parties involved, asks clarifying questions, discusses pros and cons, brings up the BACB ethical code, presents potential compromises, and involvement of multiple other parties, including supervisor, when appropriate.	Primarily focuses on the needs of the client and the BACB requirement, discusses potential negative impacts, involves supervisor when appropriate. Did not ask clarifying questions. Action discussed is appropriate.	Focuses on the BACB code in discussion, action recommended is aligned with the BACB. Didn't discuss impact or seek to involve supervisor. Action discussed is appropriate.	Discusses for <30 seconds, comes to immediate conclusion, only provides justification after follow-up questions. Actions suggested may be questionable.	Doesn't discuss the BACB code, cannot justify decisions, or action suggested does not align with the BACB code.



# EXAMPLE OF A SIMPLE CHECKLIST

Receiving Feedback	Provide the candidate with constructive feedback on a portion of their resume or other aspect of the interview process.	CRITERIA	MET? (Y/N)
		Active listening behavior (nodding, body oriented towards speaker, verbal indicators)	
		Asks follow up questions	
		Writes notes	
		Identifies action steps moving forward	

# EXAMPLE: PART OF BCBA INTERVIEW MEASUREMENT



INTERVIEW MATERIALS	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY	SHORT-TERM OUTPUT	MEASUREMENT
Candidate is provided a graph of client performance.	Candidate is asked to provide a list of recommended actions and additional questions necessary to make decisions.	Recommendations list and questions	Number of recommendations/questions matched vs. omitted compared to scoring key
Candidate is provided a graph of staff performance.	Candidate is asked to provide a list of recommended actions and additional questions necessary to make decisions.	Recommendations list and questions	Number of recommendations/questions matched vs. omitted compared to scoring key
Candidate is provided a behavior plan that includes errors.	Candidate is asked to deliver feedback about the behavior plan as if the assessor is the author.	Effective feedback checklist, completed by assessor	Number of checklist criteria met
Candidate is provided a skill to teach a staff member.	Candidate is asked to demonstrate how they would teach and assess the skill as if the assessor is an employee.	Effective training checklist, completed by assessor	Number of checklist criteria met
Candidate is provided a scenario related to a staff performance issue.	Candidate is asked how they would proceed to assess and resolve the performance issue.	Effective performance analysis process checklist, completed by assessor	Number of checklist criteria met and number of recommendations matched vs. omitted compared to scoring key

# ASSESSMENTS

## HOW DO WE COLLECT DATA AND EVALUATE PERFORMANCE?

- Consider how you will determine the acceptable criteria
  - How do your exemplar performers do on the interview tasks?
  - Pilot and collect data before implementation to adjust your expectations and process
  - Perfection is improbable; remember that they will still be trained!







# FREE INTERVIEW TABLE TEMPLATE -

<https://tinyurl.com/3mh3xaw5>

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	<b>Role:</b>							
2	<i>Why are the outputs important?</i>	<i>What do they need to produce on the job?</i>	<i>How do they produce it?</i>	<b>Interview Process Components</b>				
3	<b>Ultimate Business Result</b>	<b>Long-Term Output</b>	<b>Behaviors</b>	<b>Interview Materials Required</b>	<b>Assessment Activity</b>	<b>Short-Term Output</b>	<b>Objective Measurement</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
4	<b>EXAMPLE:</b> Clinical Outcomes	Data-based Decisions, Program Changes	Reviewing and assessing progress of clients, and summarizing the information into decisions and program changes.	Candidate is provided a graph of client performance.	Candidate is asked to provide a list of recommended actions and additional questions necessary to make decisions based upon the graph.	Recommendations list and questions	Number of recommendations/questions matched vs. omitted compared to scoring key	80% or better match to scoring key
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								



## STEP 5 – CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW



# CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW

- Two or more interviewers
  - IOA and bias control
  - Multiple sources of feedback on the tools and process
- Train your interviewers!
  - Have job aids and scripts for the interviewers to ensure interview fidelity across candidates
  - Use BST to train them to prompt the activities and collect the data







## STEP 6 – COMPILE THE DATA

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# REVIEW THE DATA

- Consider an interview scorecard
- Include skills, plus other factors, like education and experience
- Weighting is key
  - Not all skills are equally important



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# ADVANTAGES OBSERVED

## PRELIMINARY CASE STUDY

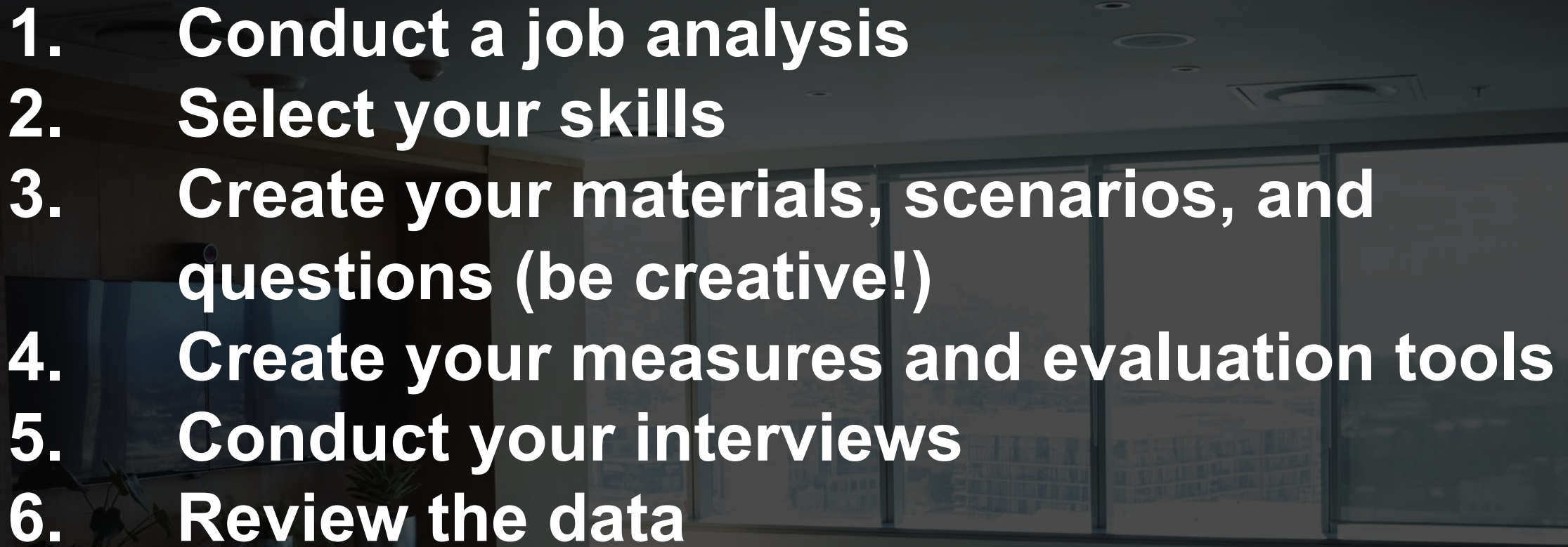
Small HS Org – between 30-40 staff

- Decreases in pre-90 day turnover
- Decreased onboarding training costs
- Greater staff satisfaction reports
- Monitoring for client outcome results – *too early to tell*



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- 
1. **Conduct a job analysis**
  2. **Select your skills**
  3. **Create your materials, scenarios, and questions (be creative!)**
  4. **Create your measures and evaluation tools**
  5. **Conduct your interviews**
  6. **Review the data**

# IN SUMMARY...

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**THANK YOU  
FOR WATCHING!**

**Find us on Facebook and/or contact me  
[shannon@chiefmotivatingofficers.com](mailto:shannon@chiefmotivatingofficers.com)**

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