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Interview Guide – Counsellor

Position: Counsellor

Organisation: [Insert ACCHS Name]

Panel Chair: [Name]

Panel Members: [Names]

Date: [Insert date]

Applicant: [Name]

1. Introduction (for the Interview Panel to read aloud)

Thank you for coming in today. Before we start, we would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

This interview is for the position of Counsellor with [ACCHS Name]. Today's conversation will help us understand your approach to therapeutic care, cultural safety, trauma-informed practice, and how you work collaboratively to support the social and emotional wellbeing of our community.

We'll ask questions about your therapeutic practice, cultural safety, case management, teamwork, documentation, crisis response, and reflective practice. Please take your time when responding, we may take notes during your answers.

Do you have any questions before we start?

2. Interview Panel Instructions

- Ensure at least one Aboriginal panel member is present.
- Use yarning-style, conversational questioning where appropriate.
- Avoid interrupting or rushing responses — allow silence and reflection.
- Focus on strength-based assessment (what they bring, not just what's missing).
- Note examples and assess responses using the rating scale.

3. Rating Scale (Example)

Score	Description
5 – Excellent	Exceeds expectations, provides strong, relevant examples.
4 – Very Good	Meets expectations, gives clear and thoughtful responses.
3 – Satisfactory	Adequate response, limited examples but some understanding.
2 – Limited	Superficial or incomplete understanding.
1 – Unsatisfactory	No relevant experience or understanding shown.

4. Core Interview Questions

1. Can you tell us about yourself and what led you into counselling and wellbeing work?

- *Prompt:* What personal or professional values guide your therapeutic practice?
- Indicators: Compassion, cultural humility, reflective practice, person-centred values.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. What does culturally safe counselling mean to you?

- *Prompt:* How do you adapt your therapeutic approach to honour Aboriginal worldviews?
- Indicators: Cultural safety, respect for community structures, awareness of intergenerational trauma, collaboration with Aboriginal Health Workers.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3. Please describe your counselling style or therapeutic approach.

- *Prompt:* How do you decide which tools or modalities to use with a client?
- Indicators: Trauma-informed practice, flexible modalities, strengths-based approach, holistic assessment.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

4. Can you share an example of how you supported someone experiencing grief, trauma, or emotional distress?

- *Prompt:* What made your approach effective in that moment?
- Indicators: Counselling skills, empathy, culturally grounded healing, boundaries, safety.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

5. This role involves developing wellbeing plans. Can you talk us through your process of setting goals with a client?

- *Prompt:* How do you ensure goals align with the client's values and cultural context?
- Indicators: Collaborative planning, client-led goals, cultural integration, strengths and resilience focus.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

6. Tell us about a time you worked collaboratively with a multidisciplinary team.

- *Prompt:* What helped ensure the care was holistic and coordinated?
- *Indicators:* Communication, teamwork, shared care planning, working with Aboriginal Health Workers or clinicians.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

7. How do you approach record-keeping, confidentiality, and clinical documentation?

- *Prompt:* Why is high-quality documentation important in counselling?
- *Indicators:* Clear clinical notes, privacy legislation, accurate referrals, risk documentation.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

8. Counsellors often support people in crisis. Can you describe your approach to assessing and responding to a crisis situation?

- *Prompt:* How do you balance calm presence with immediate action?
- *Indicators:* Basic risk assessment, triage, crisis intervention, safety planning, escalation.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

9. Outreach and community education are part of the role. What experience do you have engaging community in early help-seeking or wellbeing activities?

- *Prompt:* How do you make mental health support more approachable and less stigmatised?
- *Indicators:* Community engagement, education, culturally grounded communication.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

10. Counselling can be emotionally demanding. What does self-care and professional reflection look like for you?

- *Prompt:* How do you use supervision in your practice?
- *Indicators:* Boundaries, resilience, reflective practice, commitment to growth.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

11. Why do you want to work with us?

12. What aspects of counselling give you the most satisfaction?

13. Where do you see yourself professionally in the next few years?

5. Optional Scenario Questions

Scenario 1 – Trauma Disclosure

A client becomes visibly upset during a session and discloses trauma for the first time.

How would you support them while ensuring safety and not overwhelming them?

Scenario 2 – Working With Families

A client would benefit from involving family in their healing, but they are unsure.

How would you explore this collaboratively and respectfully?

Scenario 3 – Complex Presentation

A client attends regularly but isn't engaging with their wellbeing plan or strategies.

How would you approach this and adjust your support?

Do you have any questions for us?

HR POST-INTERVIEW CHECKS

Item	Notes
References (x2)	
Working with Children Check	
National Police Check	
Start Date Availability	
Confirmation of Role (Fulltime, part time etc)	
Disclose of any health conditions that may affect duties	

5. Scoring

/ 50

Comments and Interview Reflection

6. Panel Summary and Recommendation

Strengths	Development Areas	Recommendation
		[Appoint / Consider / Not Suitable]