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Interview Guide – Dental Hygienist

Position: Dental Hygienist

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 Dental Hygienist with [ACCHS Name]. Today's conversation will help us understand your experience in preventative oral health care, patient education, cultural safety, clinical skills, teamwork, and your contribution to improving community oral health outcomes.

We'll ask questions about your approach to periodontal care, health promotion, patient engagement, infection control, documentation, teamwork, 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 dental hygiene and preventative oral health work?

- *Prompt:* What values guide your approach to working with patients?
- *Indicators:* Motivation for oral health, patient-centred care, cultural humility, focus on prevention.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. What does culturally safe oral health care mean to you?

- *Prompt:* How do you adapt your communication or approach when working with Aboriginal clients or communities?
- *Indicators:* Cultural safety, community respect, clear communication, reducing fear and barriers to care.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3. Can you describe your clinical approach to periodontal assessment and non-surgical periodontal therapy?

- *Prompt:* How do you explain periodontal conditions to patients in a way they understand?
- *Indicators:* Clinical knowledge, patient education skills, prevention focus, patient-centred communication.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

4. Tell us about how you manage infection control and instrument sterilisation within your scope of practice.

- *Prompt:* What steps do you take to ensure a safe and compliant dental environment?
- *Indicators:* Adherence to standards, infection control mindset, safety awareness.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

5. Please share an example of how you supported a patient who was anxious, experiencing pain, or unsure about their treatment.

- *Prompt:* What strategies worked well to build trust?
- *Indicators:* Empathy, patient rapport, trauma-informed care, communication.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

6. Oral health promotion is a large part of a hygienist's role. What approaches do you use to educate patients and encourage behaviour change?

- *Prompt:* How do you adapt education for different ages or literacy levels?
- *Indicators:* Health promotion skills, motivational interviewing, culturally appropriate education.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

7. Tell us about a time you worked collaboratively with dentists, oral health therapists, or other clinical staff.

- *Prompt:* What helped make the care coordinated and holistic?
- *Indicators:* Teamwork, communication, shared care planning.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

8. How do you approach documentation, including charting, periodontal records, and patient treatment notes?

- *Prompt:* Why is accurate and timely documentation important?
- *Indicators:* Record-keeping accuracy, attention to detail, legal and clinical compliance.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

9. Hygienists often play a role in community outreach or school-based oral health programs. What experience do you have in this area?

- *Prompt:* How do you make oral health messages engaging and culturally relevant?
- *Indicators:* Community engagement, oral health promotion, adaptability.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

10. Dental work can be fast-paced and physically demanding. How do you manage your wellbeing and ensure you stay organised and resilient?

- *Prompt:* What helps you stay organised, calm, and reflective in your practice?
- *Indicators:* Self-care, time management, coping strategies, reflective practice.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

11. Why do you want to work with us?

12. What aspects of being a Dental Hygienist bring you the most satisfaction?

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

5. Optional Scenario Questions

Scenario 1 – Periodontal Disease Follow-Up

A patient presents with advanced periodontal disease but is reluctant to return for follow-up appointments.

How would you approach this situation and support their engagement?

Scenario 2 – Cultural Safety in Care

A patient becomes withdrawn and uncomfortable during the appointment, possibly due to past negative healthcare experiences.

What steps would you take to ensure they feel culturally safe and respected?

Scenario 3 – High Workload & Clinical Workflow

You are running behind schedule, but the next patient has already arrived.

How do you prioritise your tasks while ensuring quality care and patient comfort?

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	

4. Scoring

/ 50

Comments and Interview Reflection

5. Panel Summary and Recommendation

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