

Hiring Coaching-Inclined People

Building and strengthening a coaching culture requires coaching practices and principles that are integrated throughout the organization—from program design, people management, fundraising, to evaluating and measuring impact. In collaboration with four nonprofits in Washington State and Oregon, we developed the Coaching Accelerator program to design and test several tools that measure, fund, and maintain a coaching culture.

This tool, Hiring Coaching-Inclined People, provides sample job description, a list of suggested qualities to hire for, sample questions, and a scoring system to measure your observations during an interview. Use these as inspiration to complement your organizations' hiring process.

Sample Job Description

We use a coaching approach at *[insert name of organization]* because we believe it best recognizes and responds to the complexity of people's lives. We also continually strive to understand the impacts of institutional racism, the implicit bias within organizations and systems, and how those factors influence our work to develop and deliver services.

We begin by valuing humility—asking questions before assuming we know what's right for someone else. Flexibility and the ability to respond to changing conditions with questions and curiosity are similarly key to how we coach and build trusted relationships with participants and each other. We respect each individual and work with them to advance their own defined goals—not what we think is best.

A coaching culture builds on individuals' strengths. We focus on what is working well and build from there together. We seek to create collaborative, transparent relationships with everyone in our community. We recognize that our own individual experiences may be very different from others and we approach each person with that respect. Embracing a coaching culture in our organization enables us to be more effective, create a larger impact, and facilitate long-term positive outcomes for the families and communities we serve.

Candidate Qualities, Interview Questions, and Scoring System

As candidates answer interview questions, listen for these coaching qualities, rate each candidate using this scoring system, and then tally the score at the end.

1. Listening and Empathy
2. Collaborative and Transparent Relationships
3. Respect and Humility
4. Flexibility and Adaptability
5. Recognizes How Deeply Held Beliefs and Assumptions Impact Our Work at the Individual, Organizational, and Institutional Level



1. Listening and Empathy

Evidence to consider:

- ▶ When faced with a challenging situation, the individual listens or asks questions about others' feelings, thoughts, or needs
- ▶ Communicates understanding of how complex some decisions are that people face
- ▶ Asks insightful questions
- ▶ Demonstrates active listening by acknowledging what is said (head nodding, eye contact, engagement with speaker, paraphrasing)

Rating:

This individual practices active-listening and finds ways to build empathy.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Notes:

Sample Interview Questions:

- Tell me about a time you worked with coworkers to solve a problem.
- Tell me about a time you had conflict or disagreement with a coworker and the steps you took to resolve it?
- Tell me about a time when you didn't agree with a decision a coworker, participant, or client, was making and how you responded.



2. Collaborative and Transparent Relationships

Evidence to consider:

- ▶ Appreciates and recognizes the contributions of coworkers and clients and communicates a willingness to adapt based on the situation
- ▶ Seeks opportunities to continue to learn and develop in formal settings (conferences, research, etc.) and informal settings (with coworkers, clients, etc.)
- ▶ Demonstrates willingness to share successes and challenges with coworkers to improve the quality of their work

Rating:

This individual focuses on building collaborative and transparent relationships at work.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Notes:

Sample Interview Questions:

- Tell me about a time you supported a coworker through a difficult time or experience at work.
- How do you and your coworkers work together?
- How would you describe your workstyle?
- How do you approach sharing information with coworkers?
- What role does trust play at work?



3. Respect and Humility

Evidence to consider:

- ▶ Recognizes the power and self-efficacy of individuals to lead the change and drive the solutions in their own lives.
- ▶ Listens and respects an individual's lived experiences as a source of knowledge and insight.
- ▶ Demonstrates a willingness to change their mind and adjust their point of view. Doesn't try to convince anyone, instead offers ideas with the recognition that they require testing to learn more.

Rating:

This individual practices respect and humility in their work.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Notes:

Sample Interview Questions:

- Tell me about a time when you changed your mind.
- Describe an experience where your first instinct or idea was wrong and what happened next.
- What would you do if leadership made a decision you didn't agree with?



4. Flexibility and Adaptability

Evidence to consider:

- ▶ Recognizes that managing change is complex and requires a nuanced approach
- ▶ Recognizes that each person is different and a fluidity in approach is needed to solve problems and support individuals
- ▶ Provides concrete examples of responding to change positively and productively

Rating:

This individual responds and adapts well to changes at work.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Notes:

Sample Interview Questions:

- Tell me about a time when things didn't go according to plan and how you responded to that.
- Describe a time change happened on your team, in a work policy, or a process at work and how you responded to that. What was challenging? What was interesting?
- Describe a time you were asked to do something you weren't trained to do. How did you respond to that?



5. Recognizes how deeply held beliefs and assumptions impact our work at the individual, organizational, and institutional level

Evidence to consider:

- ▶ Demonstrates non-judgmental attitude towards clients and coworkers
- ▶ Offers examples of times they have examined their beliefs, biases, and understanding of the complexities within a system
- ▶ Demonstrates critical thinking and awareness of how power and privilege shape individual and organizational service delivery

Rating:

This individual demonstrates nonjudgment and an awareness of how systems impact an individual's life.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Notes:

Sample Interview Questions:

- Why do you think some people are living in poverty?
- Why do you think people need the services we provide?
- What might need to change to support people getting out of poverty?
- Can you describe your experience working with individuals who have different life experiences than you?



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A Coaching Accelerator Tool for Teams and Organizations.

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