

Preparing for a Behavioural Interview at Norfolk County

Learn how to showcase your experience, skills, and accomplishments using the STAR method

What is a Behavioural Interview?

At Norfolk County, many of our interview questions are behavioural-based. These questions are designed to help us understand how you've handled real situations in the past and how you may approach similar situations in the future.

Rather than asking what you would do, we may ask you to describe what you have done. We use behavioural interviewing because past experiences can provide valuable insight into skills such as:

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Problem-solving
- Customer service
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Initiative
- Planning and organization
- Accountability

The STAR Method

One of the best ways to prepare is to organize your examples using the STAR method:

S | Situation

Briefly describe the situation, challenge, or opportunity you faced.

Ask yourself:

What was happening?

Who was involved?

Why was the situation important?

T | Task

Explain your role or responsibility.

Ask yourself:

What were you expected to accomplish?

What challenge needed to be addressed?

A | Action

Describe the specific actions you took.

Focus on:

Your individual contribution.

The decisions you made.

The steps you took to address the situation.

R | Result

Share the outcome.

Consider:

What was achieved?

What did you learn?

What impact did your actions have?

Can you quantify the results?

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Example of a STAR Response

Question: Tell us about a time you had to manage competing priorities.

S | Situation

During a busy period, I was responsible for coordinating several projects while also responding to urgent service requests.

T | Task

I needed to ensure all deadlines were met without compromising service quality.

A | Action

I reviewed all priorities, developed a project schedule, communicated timelines with stakeholders, and conducted regular progress check-ins.

R | Result

All projects were completed on time, service levels were maintained, and several stakeholders commented positively on the communication throughout the process.

How to Prepare

Before your interview, think about examples from:

- Previous employment
- Volunteer experiences
- School, co-op, or internship placements
- Community involvement
- Sports, clubs, or leadership activities
- Special projects or accomplishments

Choose examples that demonstrate the skills most relevant to the position you're applying for, and aim to prepare 5-8 examples you can reference. Strong candidates often have examples that demonstrate:

- Solving a difficult problem
- Working through conflict
- Adapting to change
- Taking initiative
- Delivering excellent customer service
- Collaborating with others
- Managing deadlines
- Learning from a mistake or setback

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Questions You May Be Asked

While every interview is different, examples of behavioural questions include:

Communication

- Tell us about a time you had to explain complex information to someone.
- Describe a situation where you had to communicate an important message to a variety of audiences.

Collaboration

- Tell us about a time you worked with others to achieve a common goal.
- Describe a situation where you helped resolve a disagreement within a team.

Customer Service

- Tell us about a time you went above and beyond to help someone.
- Describe a challenging customer interaction and how you handled it.

Problem Solving

- Tell us about a difficult problem you faced and how you approached it.
- Describe a time when you identified a better way of doing something.

Adaptability

- Share an example of a time when priorities changed unexpectedly.
- Tell us about a situation where you had to learn something new quickly.

Leadership

- Describe a time when you took the lead on a project or initiative.
- Tell us about a time when you influenced others to move a project forward.

Interview Tips

- ✓ Be specific. Use real examples rather than speaking in general terms.
- ✓ Focus on your role. Even if the example involved a team, explain what you contributed.
- ✓ Be concise. Share enough detail to provide context without getting lost in the story.
- ✓ Include outcomes. Let us know what happened and what you learned.
- ✓ It's okay to discuss challenges. We are interested in how you responded, grew, and adapted.

We Want to Hear Your Story!

At Norfolk County, we're interested in learning about your experiences, strengths, and potential. Authentic examples help us understand how you approach challenges, work with others, and contribute to your community and workplace.

Come prepared to share examples that highlight your skills, achievements, and growth. We look forward to getting to know you.