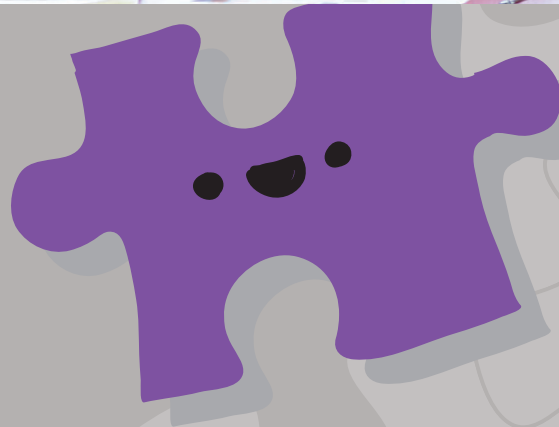


# VALUES BASED RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT

# VBRT

## MODULE 3

## USING A VALUES BASED APPROACH IN INTERVIEWS



## CONTACT INFORMATION

Caroline Alcorso  
National Manager (Workforce Development)  
National Disability Services  
Level 19, 66 Goulburn Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000  
Phone: 02 9256 3111  
Email: caroline.alcorso@nds.org.au

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## USING A VALUES BASED APPROACH IN INTERVIEWS

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## INTRODUCTION

Interviews are interactive processes that allow the employer and applicants the opportunity to meet and determine if there is a mutual fit. In the context of values based recruitment (VBR), this mutual fit is primarily centred on values – what is important to the organisation, people who use and access services, the applicant and whether these align.

Traditionally, interviews have focused on the skills, knowledge and attributes required for the position. In some organisations competency based frameworks are used to underpin the interview process. An example of an industry-wide framework is the NDS Disability Capability Framework.<sup>1</sup> Such frameworks offer a standard and structured approach to job roles. However, within a VBR process, it is important that the framework also includes values and observable behaviours.

The content of the interview in VBR is focused on how and why an individual is oriented towards making particular choices in the work environment. Questions about the way applicants behave in situations can be used to elicit information on what is important to them. Evaluations of an applicant's suitability can therefore be based on whether these drivers and underlying values are appropriate to the role and organisation. NDS has, in consultation with the disability services sector, defined five values that demonstrate a commitment to person-centred practice which can be used to seek information during an interview. For more information on these values and the relationship link between values, motivation and behaviour, see Module One, VBR Toolkit Introduction and Overview.

This Module of the Toolkit covers some types of interview and interview techniques that can be used in VBR including:

- **Structured interviewing** – Applicants provide information relating to values in a standardised manner. This is conducted using one or both of the following question types:
  - **Behavioural interview questions** – Applicants provide examples of previous behaviours to demonstrate consistency with values. This is useful for assessing people with previous work experience.
  - **Scenario-based interview questions** – Applicants respond to scenarios based on anticipated behaviour to demonstrate consistency with values. This is useful for assessing people without previous work experience.

Following are general guidelines and the rationale for using each of these approaches in the context of VBR. There is also a short discussion of telephone and Skype interviewing. The appendices contain more detail about constructing VBR interview questions and worked examples.

A Question Bank contains example interview questions for the five values that demonstrates a commitment to person-centred practice.



## GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR INTERVIEWS IN VBR

Irrespective of the type of interview used, it is important that interviews carried out are grounded on the following principles.<sup>2</sup>

### Inclusion

Direct involvement of people with lived experience in the recruitment process.

### Multiple assessors

More than one person is involved in evaluating applicants' interview responses to help reduce bias, as with the use of an interview panel. Assessors may occupy different positions in relation to the role, however, all must be sufficiently trained on how to conduct a VBR interview.

### Objectivity

Questions are clearly based on criteria relevant to the role such as through role analysis and consultation with stakeholders. In VBR, these criteria are aligned to the desired values. Assessors are sufficiently familiar with the significance of these criteria to the role to ensure that decisions be based on them.

### Sufficient time

Appropriate time is provided to allow applicants to respond and for assessors to probe with follow-up questions. This may mean that fewer questions are asked, however, a higher level of understanding can be reached.

### Standardisation

To ensure fairness, every applicant is offered the same opportunities to present themselves to the best of their ability, to demonstrate their suitability for the job and to ask questions. All applicants undergo the same assessment process and decisions are based on the same evaluation criteria. This includes using consistent scoring documentation to ease decision making later when comparing applicants.

### Accuracy

Information from the interview is combined with other recruitment and selection techniques to create a full picture of the applicant. This also promotes fairness to individuals who may lack good interview skills or are inexperienced in attending interviews.

### Freedom from bias

Assessors are aware of issues of bias when conducting interviews. They are trained in identifying a range of conscious and unconscious biases and managing them by basing evaluations on the objective criteria that has been set.

More information on bias training can be found in the Toolkit Modules, "Using a Values Based Approach in Assessment Centres" and "Using Simulation Exercises".



## STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Interview formats typically range from unstructured 'chats' to structured discussions. On one end of the scale, unstructured interviews are unplanned and questions may vary across applicants. While this approach provides flexibility, it runs the risk of applicants being assessed based on irrelevant content, and makes it difficult to evaluate applicants in a consistent manner.

Structured interviews are a more strategic approach that uses a scripted set of questions for all applicants. The rationale for structured interviews compared with unstructured interviews is that they provide:

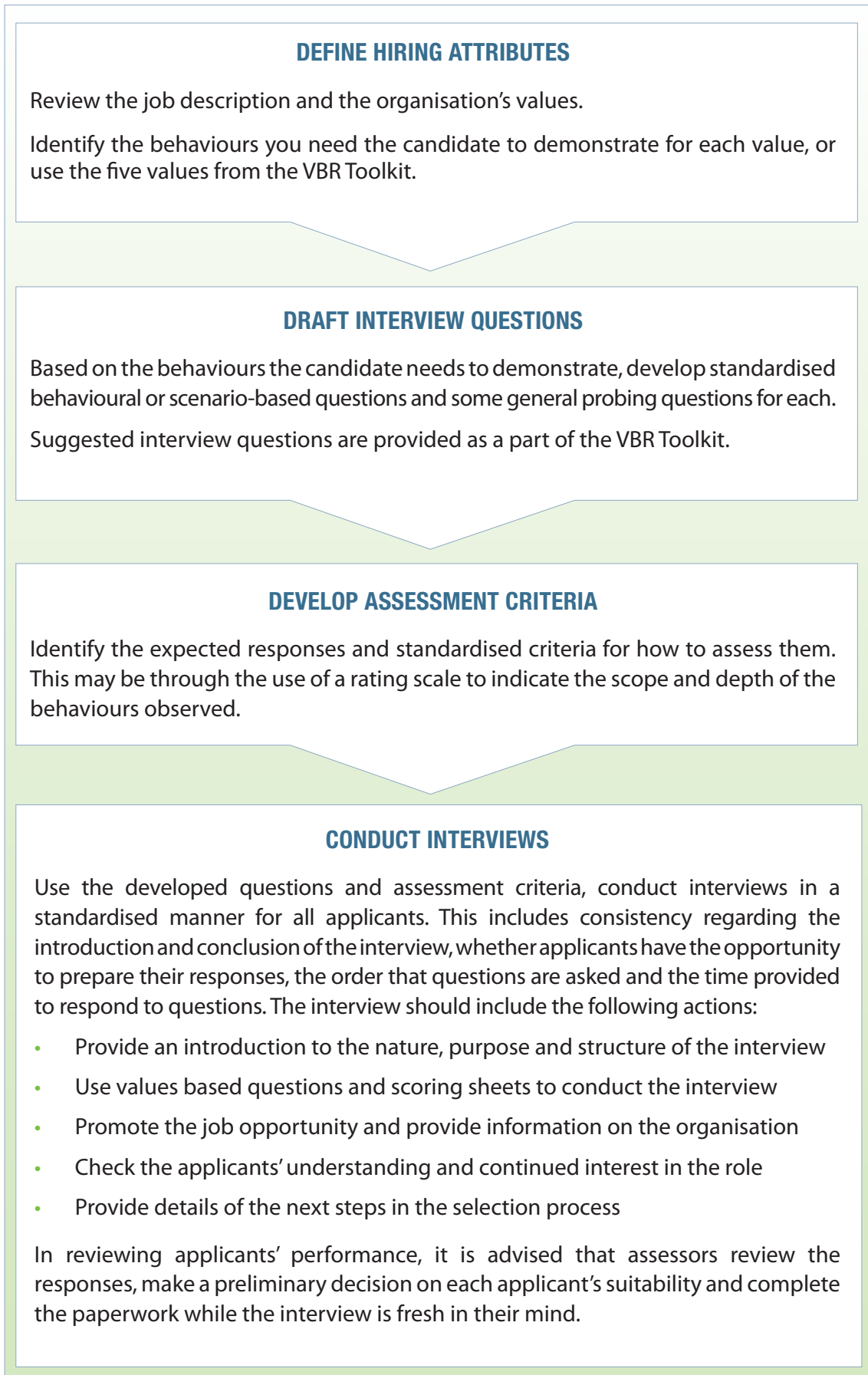
- Stronger objectivity in focusing on job-related criteria
- More consistency in the way applicants are assessed
- A higher degree accuracy
- A more defensible outcome

It is recommended that the '**STAR**' methodology is used to elicit responses in structured interviews. This method encourages responses in relation to the:

- **Situation** – the context for the story
- **Task** – what the candidate was required to do
- **Activity** – the actions the candidate took
- **Result** – the outcome of the story

Using a consistent methodology such as this will fairly encourage applicants to draw on behaviours that demonstrate their suitability for the role. It also provides a guide as to what information interviewers should seek from applicants.

The flow chart in Figure 1 outlines the steps that can be taken to create and conduct a structured interview.

**Figure 1: Flow chart of the interview process**

**TOOLKIT  
RESOURCE**

**TOOLKIT  
RESOURCE**



The types of structured interview questions used in VBR can be separated into two main groups: behavioural and scenario-based.

**Behavioural interview questions** are developed on the premise that the best way to predict future job performance is to understand a candidate's past behaviour in job-related situations.<sup>3</sup> While this interview type was originally developed to assess competencies, the same techniques can be used for values.

Behavioural interviewing asks applicants to draw on examples of previous behaviour that are congruent with values relevant to the role. In designing behavioural interview questions, consider starting questions with:

“Tell me about a time when you...” or,

“Describe a past situation when you...”

For example, in assessing a value such as respectfulness, an applicant may be asked how they have demonstrated their respect towards customers or clients by the question,

“Tell me about a time when you supported someone else to speak up or act for themselves? What did you personally do and what was the outcome?”

Crucially, in the current disability sector context, behavioural interviews allow applicants with limited job experience to compete on equal terms with more experienced applicants. Applicants may draw on experiences in different work contexts to demonstrate value alignment.

**Scenario-based interview questions** (also known as situational questioning) are similar to behavioural interview questions in that the focus on behaviours reflect a person's value orientation. The difference is that instead of focusing on past behaviour, the questions are future-oriented. Scenario-based interview questions are hypothetical and are related to dilemmas that job holders might encounter. They are based on the assumption that intentions predict behaviour. These types of questions allow applicants with little experience to provide a hypothetical response even if they have not worked in the field. While some dissenters have concerns that applicants may not actually behave in the real world in the same way that they say they will in the interview, there is research to support the predictability of these questions.

Scenario-based interviews present applicants with job-related scenarios and ask what actions they would take. For example, in assessing respectfulness an applicant may be asked,

“Imagine a situation where you need to support someone to speak up or act for themselves. How would you go about this?”

Following the applicant's response, probing questions could be used to link actions back to values, such as by asking,

“Why would that approach be important to you?”



## TELEPHONE AND ONLINE INTERVIEWS

Interviews can be successfully conducted using the telephone or online video technologies, such as Skype. There are several benefits to this approach.

- People with disability may give advice using text or voice to text
- It can save time and expense to use this as a short-listing method before conducting more detailed interviews
- It provides an opportunity to begin to assess the candidate's skills in using telephone and online technologies, which might be relevant to the role
- It can be more cost-effective than a face to face interview, especially if applicants live outside the area

In rural areas, service providers are increasingly looking to technology to assist in their recruitment process. When using such technologies, the content and general format of interviews are the same as the approaches outlined in sections above. There can be some challenges in terms of access and connectivity, which can be disruptive or unstable. To ensure smooth running of the interview, the following considerations are recommended.

- Provide applicants with the time, duration and content of the call, before the interview
- Ask the applicant to find a quiet location, where they won't be interrupted or distracted during the call
- Conduct the interview from a quiet and appropriate space, without any distractions behind you
- Make a plan with the candidate in case the connection fails, for example, if the call fails, we will call you back on your mobile phone
- Ensure all panel members have clear access to the microphone, and check with the candidate that they can hear everyone clearly
- Conduct the interview as if the applicant was in the same room
- Allow a short pause after the candidate has finished speaking to ensure that buffering does not result in a loss of understanding of an applicant's response

## SUMMARY

Interviews are a valuable component to the selection process. They provide the opportunity to gain greater insight into a candidate's suitability for the role. Interviews should be well structured, using questions based on values linked to the sector, the organisation and clients. People with a lived experience of disability should be included in the development of interview questions and the process of conducting interviews. Applicants should be interviewed using standardised processes and assessed based on objective criteria that align to the selected values.

## APPENDIX 1: DEVELOPING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND SCORE SHEETS

Suggested interview questions for each of the VBR Toolkit values are provided in the Question Bank<sup>5</sup>.



You might however decide to develop your own questions based on your own organisational values.

Questions should be designed to elicit responses using the STAR methodology (discussed on page 4). This method asks applicants to provide information on the situation, task, action and result. Follow these steps to develop your own behavioural or scenario-based questions and score sheet.

- 1 Identify the value to be evaluated
- 2 Decide whether you want a behavioural or scenario-based question
- 3 Think of situations where the relevant value is likely to be demonstrated
- 4 Identify the sort of actions that reflect the value
- 5 Identify actions that indicate the value is not held by the candidate
- 6 Develop a main question and probing questions
- 7 Develop the score sheet

### Behavioural questions

Behavioural questions are designed to ask about previous behaviours. They often start with phrases like:

- “Describe a time when ...”
- “Think about a situation where you had to ...”
- “Give me an example of ...”
- “How have you responded when ...”

## Scenario-based questions

Scenario-based questions are future-focused. They often start with a phrase like:

“What would be your response to ...?”

“Who would you contact if ...?”

“Imagine if ...”

“How would you handle ...?”

It is possible to turn behavioural questions into scenario-based questions by changing the tense of the question into the future. For example, the behavioural question, “Tell me about a time when you went the extra mile to meet the needs of a customer” could be changed to, “How would you go the extra mile to meet the needs of a customer in this situation?”

## Follow-up or probing questions

Questions can be followed up with further probing questions to delve further than the initial responses. The following are probes that can help establish if the applicant learned from the experience:

“Tell me more about ...”

“What did you do about it?”

“What was the result?”

“If you encountered the situation again, what would you do differently?”

The following pages provide two worked example. These step through the process of designing interview questions using both scenario and behavioural approaches.

## BEHAVIOURAL QUESTION AND SCORE SHEET: Worked example for a support worker position

1. Identify the value to be evaluated  
**Example:** Collaboration
2. Decide whether you want a behavioural or scenario-based question  
**Example:** Behavioural
3. Think of situations where the relevant value is likely to be demonstrated  
**Example:** Collaboration could be demonstrated in a scenario where a team is required to achieve an outcome.
4. Identify the sort of actions that reflect the value  
**Example:** In a team environment, collaboration is reflected if the candidate discusses how they:
  - Shared ideas with others
  - Listened to the ideas of others
  - Worked together to achieve an outcome
  - Celebrated and reflected on completion together
5. Identify actions that indicate the value is not held by the candidate  
**Example:** Someone who does not value collaboration might not listen to other people's ideas, and might prefer to work independently. They might say that working independently gave the best outcome.
6. Develop a main question and probing questions  
**Example:** Main question "Tell me about a time when a team you worked with had to achieve a particular outcome?"  
Probing questions:
  - What is the background to the situation?
  - What was your role; what did you have to achieve?
  - How did you go about doing this?
  - What was the outcome of this activity?
7. Develop the score sheet  
**Example:** Notice how the information from the previous questions helps create the score sheet.

<b>VALUE ASSESSED: COLLABORATION (BEHAVIOURAL)</b>					
Tell me about a time when a team you worked with had to achieve a particular outcome?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the nature of the team, and what did they have to achieve?</li> <li>• What was your role; what were you responsible for?</li> <li>• How did you go about achieving this?</li> <li>• What was the outcome of this activity?</li> </ul>					
	<b>MEETS EXPECTATIONS</b>			<b>DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS</b>	
<b>CRITERIA</b>	Shared ideas with others			Didn't share ideas with others	
	Listened to the ideas of others			Didn't listen to the ideas of others	
	Worked together to achieve the outcomes			Preferred to work independently	
	Celebrated and reflected with team			Felt outcome was achieved individually	
<b>RATING</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>RATING SCALE: 5 = Outstanding; 4 = Good; 3 = Acceptable; 2 = Marginal; 1 = Poor</b>					

## SCENARIO-BASED QUESTION AND SCORE SHEET: Worked example for a support worker position

1. Identify the value to be evaluated

**Example:** Respectfulness

2. Decide whether you want a behavioural or scenario-based question

**Example:** Scenario-based

3. Think of situations where the relevant value is likely to be demonstrated

**Example:** Respectfulness must be demonstrated while providing personal supports for a person with disability.

4. Identify the sort of actions that reflect the value

**Example:** If a disability support worker delivers personal supports respectfully, they would:

- Recognise their role in maintaining dignity and respect
- Actively listen to the person's comments, concerns and/or cues
- Encourage the person to be as self-sufficient as is possible, while offering support, to make them feel as empowered as possible

5. Identify actions that indicate the value is not held by the candidate

**Example:** The candidate would not listen to the person, they would carry out the tasks for the person – acting on their behalf

6. Develop a main question and probing questions

**Example:** "Disability Support Workers need to provide personal supports for service users. How can you maintain the dignity and respect of the person you support while doing so?"

Probing questions:

- What do you think are your requirements as a support worker?
- What actions might you take (and why)?
- What results do you think these actions might have?

7. Develop the score sheet

**Example:** Notice how the information from the previous questions helps create the score sheet.

<b>VALUE ASSESSED: RESPECTFULNESS (SCENARIO-BASED)</b>					
<p>If you were delivering personal care support to someone, how would you maintain their dignity and respect?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think are your requirements as a support worker?</li> <li>• What actions might you take (and why)?</li> <li>• What results do you think these actions might have?</li> </ul>					
	<b>MEETS EXPECTATIONS</b>		<b>DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS</b>		
<b>CRITERIA</b>	Recognises their role in promoting dignity/respect		Does not recognise their role in promoting dignity/respect		
	Actively listens to person's comments, concerns and cues		Does not listen to comments, concerns or cues		
	Enables the person to speak and act for themselves		Acts on behalf of person		
<b>RATING</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>RATING SCALE: 5 = Outstanding; 4 = Good; 3 = Acceptable; 2 = Marginal; 1 = Poor</b>					

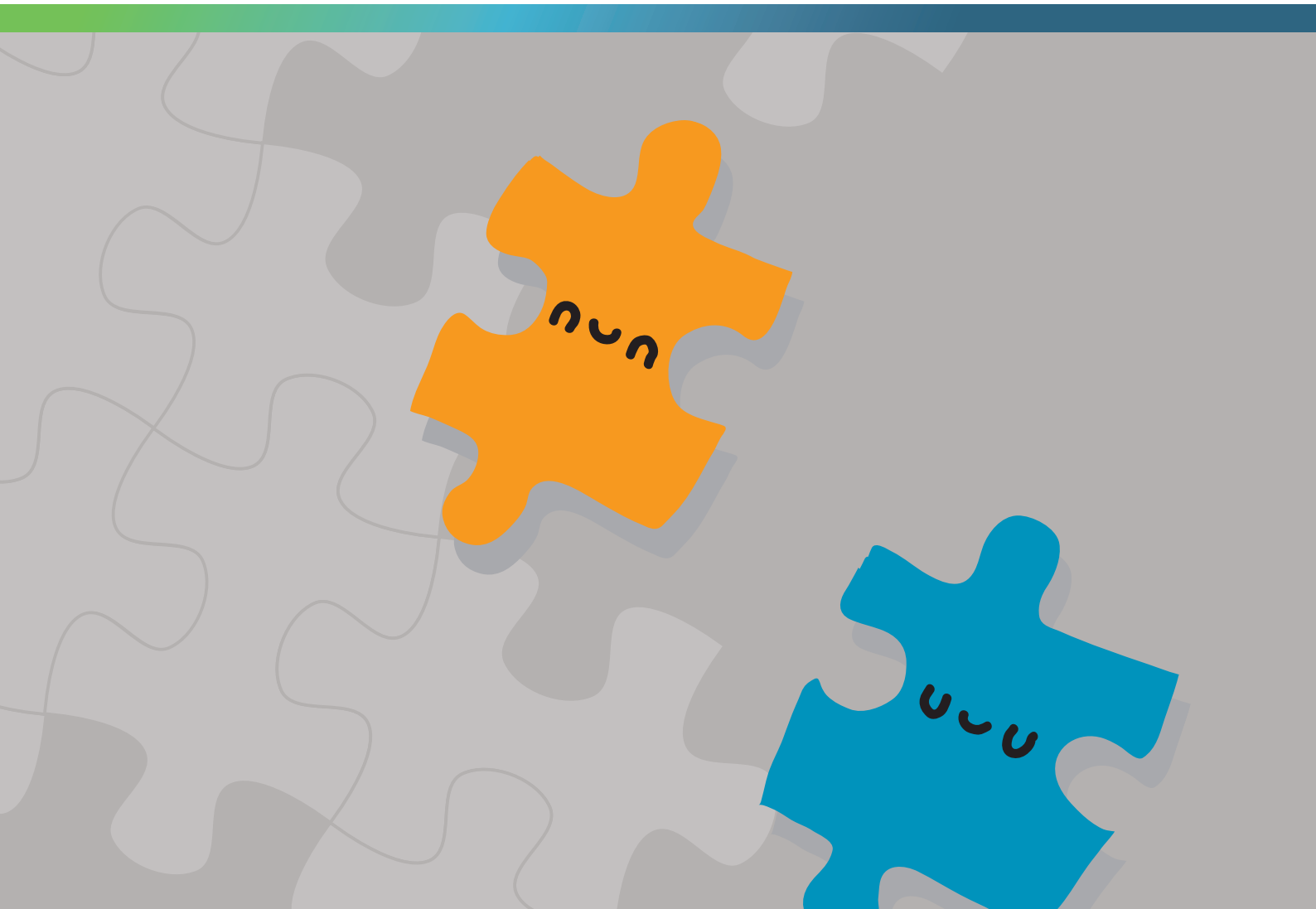


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## END NOTES

1. The NDS Disability Capability Framework (2015) defines the skills, knowledge and capabilities required for all major job roles across the sector, which are grouped into 10 job families. The Framework and related guidelines and tools can be freely downloaded at [www.carecareers.com.au/page/workforce-capability-framework-resources](http://www.carecareers.com.au/page/workforce-capability-framework-resources)
2. Bohnet, I. (2016). "How to Take the Bias Out of Interviews". Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2016/04/how-to-take-the-bias-out-of-interviews>
3. Barclay, J. M. (2001). "Improving selection interviews with structure: organisations' use of 'behavioural' interviews". Personnel Review, 30(1), 81-101. <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/00483480110380154>
4. Oostrom, J., Melchers, K., Ingold, P., & Kleinmann, M. (2015). "Why do situational interviews predict performance? Is it saying how you would behave or knowing how you should behave?" Journal of Business and Psychology, 31(2), pp 279-291. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10869-015-9410-0>
5. You can download the Question Bank from the VBR Toolkit website from [www.nds.org.au](http://www.nds.org.au)





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