New York State
Department of Civil Service

Committed to Innovation, Quality, and Excellence

A Guide to the Written Test

for the

Caseworker Series

Opportunities at work.

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INTRODUCTION

The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this test guide to familiarize you with the written test for the Caseworker Series. This test guide provides a general description of the subject areas which will be tested and the different types of questions you may see on the tests in this series. The Examination Announcement will specify the exact subject areas to be included on the particular examination you will be taking.

The written test for the Caseworker Series has an overall time allowance of 3 hours.
The test questions will cover the following three subject areas:

1. ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE HELPING RELATIONSHIPS IN A SOCIAL CASEWORK SETTING: These questions test for an understanding of the factors which contribute to the development and maintenance of productive client-worker relationships. You will be provided with descriptions of specific client-worker interactions and be asked to select the best responses. The questions may cover such topics as confidentiality, time management, professional ethics, and referral techniques.

2. INTERVIEWING (CASEWORKER): These questions test for an understanding of the principles and techniques of interviewing and their application to specific client-worker situations. You will be provided with a series of concrete interviewing situations for which you will be required to select an appropriate course of action based on an analysis of the situation, the application of the information provided, and the ramifications of various interviewing principles and strategies. You will also be asked questions about the interviewing process and various interviewing techniques.

3. PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL: These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately and for the ability to organize paragraphs logically and comprehensibly. For some questions, you will be given information in two or three sentences, followed by four restatements of the information. You must then choose the best version. For other questions, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order, and then be asked to choose, from among four suggestions, the best order for the sentences.

The remainder of this test guide explains how you will be tested in each of the subject areas listed above. A **TEST TASK** is provided for each subject area. This is an explanation of how a question is presented and how to correctly answer it. Read each explanation carefully. This test guide also provides at least one **SAMPLE QUESTION** for each subject area. The sample question is similar to the type of questions that will be presented on the actual test. This test guide provides the **SOLUTION** and correct answer to each sample question. You should study each sample question and solution in order to understand how the correct answer was determined.

SUBJECT AREA 1

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE HELPING RELATIONSHIPS IN A SOCIAL CASEWORK SETTING: These questions test for an understanding of the factors which contribute to the development and maintenance of productive client-worker relationships. You will be provided with descriptions of specific client-worker interactions and be asked to select the best responses. The questions may cover such topics as confidentiality, time management, professional ethics, and referral techniques.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with questions that describe specific client-worker situations. Each question will be followed by four choices listing different ways to handle the situation. You must determine which of the four choices is the best or most appropriate. ***Note:*** *You may be able to think of a better approach than any of the choices provided, but you must pick the best of those provided.*

SAMPLE QUESTION:

A client has been unemployed for two years. She has tried to hold a job but has failed each time. She has come to you for help in securing employment. From your initial meetings with her, there are indications that she is not sincere about getting and keeping a job. Which one of the following is the best way to handle this situation?

A. Suggest a probable reason for the appropriate is that she really doesn't want to work.
B. Suggest job possibilities and referral to employment agencies
C. Ask her opinion on why she has been unable to keep a job.
D. Ask her to explain why she thinks she needs a job.

The best answer to this sample question is C.

SOLUTION:

To determine the best way to handle this siutaion, you must evaluate each choice provided.

Choice A *is negative and confrontational. The client may become defensive and hostile. She may not recognize the fact that her behavior causes a problem. This will not help to engage her in a constructive dialogue to help find a solution.*

Choice B *ignores the client's problem. She has been unable to keep a job, and merely discussing job possibilities and referring her to employment agencies without addressing this problem is unlikely to help her to obtain and keep a job.*

Choice C *is the best among the choices given. The client is asked for her opinion about why she has been unable to keep a job, rather than being told a probable reason as in choice A. This approach is much more likely to lead to an open and productive discussion in which the client can recognize that she has a problem, and in which you can be seen as an ally in helping her, rather than as an accuser. Such a discussion may also reveal some issues that you were not aware of and which may be contributing to the client's inability to keep a job.*

Choice D *asks the client why she thinks she needs a job. This question does not address the point of the interview -- the client's inabiity to keep a job.*

SUBJECT AREA 2

INTERVIEWING (CASEWORKER): These questions test for an understanding of the principles and techniques of interviewing and their application to specific client-worker situations. You will be provided with a series of concrete interviewing situations for which you will be required to select an appropriate course of action based on an analysis of the situation, the application of the information provided, and the ramifications of various interviewing principles and strategies. You will also be asked questions about the interviewing process and various interviewing techniques.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with questions that describe specific client-worker situations. Each question will be followed by four choices listing different ways to handle the situation. You must select the most appropriate course of action to take, based on an analysis of the situation, the application of the information provided, and the ramifications of various interviewing principles and strategies. ***Note:*** *You may be able to think of a better approach than any of the choices provided, but you must pick the best of those provided.*

SAMPLE QUESTION:

You have been interviewing a client and now have enough information to make the necessary decisions. However, the client just will not stop talking and is repeating, in slightly different words, the information that he has already given you. Which one of the following is the best way to deal with this situation?

A. Tell the client that the interview time is up and that if he has more to say, you can set up another appointment for the near future.
B. Thank the client for coming in. Tell him that his information has been very helpful and you will contact him if you need additional information.
C. Tell the client you would like to hear more, but that it will have to be postponed to some future date.
D. Thank the client for coming in, but explain that others are waiting so you must end the interview.

The best answer to this sample question is B.

SOLUTION:

To determine the best way to deal with this situation, you must evaluate each choice provided.

Choice A *gives the initiative to schedule another appointment to the client. This may lead to an unnecessary appointment. You already have enough information to make the necessary decisions, and there is no need for another appointment with the client in the near future.*

Choice B *is best. By thanking the client for coming in, you are being positive. By telling him how helpful his information has been, you continue in this positive direction. By telling him that you will contact him if you need additional information, you make it clear that you have the necessary data, and you maintain the initiative to schedule another appointment.*

Choice C*, like choice A, gives the initiative to schedule another appointment to the client and may result in an unnecessary appointment. Also, telling the client you would like to hear more, but postponing it to some future date, is contradictory and sends the client a mixed message.*

Choice D *begins well -- thanking the client for coming in is positive. However, explaining that others are waiting so you must end the interview leaves the client with the impression that you are rushing him out and that you are more concerned with the people who are waiting than you are with him.*

SUBJECT AREA 3

PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL: These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately and for the ability to organize paragraphs logically and comprehensibly.

TEST TASK: There are two separate test tasks in this subject area.

- For the first, **Information Presentation**, you will be given information in two or three sentences, followed by four restatements of the information. You must then choose the best version.

- For the second, **Paragraph Organization**, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order, and then be asked to choose, from among four suggestions, the best order for the sentences.

INFORMATION PRESENTATION SAMPLE QUESTION:

Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions. His failure to take proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.

Which one of the following best presents the information above?

A. Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions that caused a personal injury accident.
B. Proper precautions, which Martin Wilson failed to take, caused a personal injury accident.
C. Martin Wilson's failure to take proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.
D. Martin Wilson, who failed to take proper precautions, was in a personal injury accident.

The best answer to this sample question is C.

SOLUTION:

Choice A *conveys the incorrect impression that proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.*

Choice B *conveys the incorrect impression that proper precautions caused a personal injury accident.*

Choice C *best presents the original information: Martin Wilson failed to take proper precautions and this failure caused a personaly injury accident.*

Choice D *states that Martin Wilson was in a personal injury accident. The original information states that Martin Wilson caused a personal injury accident, but it does not state that Martin Wilson was in a personal injury accident.*

SUBJECT AREA 3 cont.

PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION SAMPLE QUESTION:

The following question is based upon a group of sentences. The sentences are shown out of sequence, but when correctly arranged, they form a connected, well-organized paragraph. Read the sentences, and then answer the question about the best arrangement of these sentences.

1. Eventually, they piece all of this information together and make a choice.

2. Before actually deciding upon a human services job, people usually think about several possibilities.

3. They imagine themselves in different situations, and in so doing, they probably think about their interests, goals, and abilities.
4. Choosing among occupations in the field of human services is an important decision to make.

Which one of the following is the best arrangement of these sentences?

A. 2-4-1-3
B. 2-3-4-1
C. 4-2-1-3
D. 4-2-3-1

The best answer to this sample question is D.

SOLUTION:

Choices A and C *present the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. In both* ***A*** *and* ***C****, sentence 1 comes before sentence 3. The key element in the organization of this paragraph is that sentence 3 contains the information to which sentence 1 refers; therefore, in logical sequence, sentence 3 should come before sentence 1.*

Choice B *also presents the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. Choice* ***B*** *places sentence 4 in between sentence 1 and sentence 3, thereby interrupting the logical sequence of the information in the paragraph.*

Choice D *presents the information in the paragraph in the best logical sequence. Sentence 4 introduces the main idea of the paragraph: "choosing an occupation in the field of human services." Sentences 2-3-1 then follow up on this idea by describing, in order, the steps involved in making such a choice. Choice* ***D*** *is the best answer to this sample question.*

TEST SECURITY

The test you will be taking is the property of the New York State Department of Civil Service. Candidates may not remove test material from the test site and may not reproduce, reconstruct, or discuss the test content with others. Unauthorized possession or disclosure of the test material is prohibited by law and punishable by imprisonment and/or a fine. Additionally, candidates may be disqualified from appointment to the positions for which the examination is being held and from being a candidate for any civil service examination for five years. After you take the test, other individuals may want to talk with you about the test. You should not discuss the questions and answers, even in general terms. You should be careful that you do not inadvertently violate test security and put yourself at risk.

CONCLUSION

Your attitude and approach to the test will influence how well you perform. A positive attitude will help you do your best.

Before the test ...

- Study and review this guide to become familiar with what the test will cover.
- Study and review the subject areas that will be covered on the test.

On the day of the test ...

- Arrive at the test site on time.
- Bring your Admission Notice, two No. 2 pencils, a photo ID containing your signature, a quiet lunch or snack, and any other **allowed** materials.
- Do **NOT** bring this test guide to the test site.

At the test site …

- Do **NOT** bring cell phones, beepers, headphones, or any electronic or other communication devices to the test site.
- The use of such devices anywhere on the grounds of the test site (this includes the test room, hallways, restrooms, building, grounds, and parking lots) could result in your disqualification.

During the test ...

- Read and follow all directions on your Admission Notice, test booklets, answer sheets, and Candidate Directions.
- Follow the Monitor's instructions.
- Keep track of the time.

After the test ...

- Do **NOT** remove any test materials from the test room.
- Do **NOT** paraphrase, reconstruct, or reproduce the test material in any way.
- Do **NOT** discuss the test material with others.

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