

CAREGIVER ASSESSMENT GUIDE

A set of tools to assist employers in assessing the suitability of candidates for direct caregiver positions in long-term care facilities.

Materials included:

- A job application form
- A guide for assessing applications and conducting interviews
- Organizing/prioritizing skills tests for experienced and inexperienced candidates
- A basic skills assessment test
- Job skills/problem-solving abilities tests for experienced and inexperienced candidates
- A chart for assessing inexperienced candidates based on their performance on the tests

Additional materials needed:

- A pencil and eraser
- A dictionary

APPLICATION

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

DATE: _____ REFERRED BY: _____

NAME: _____
Last First Middle

ADDRESS: _____ APT. # _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE: _____

(Please specify if this is a beeper or a relative's phone number)

CHECK ALL HOURS AVAILABLE TO WORK: EARLY MORNINGS _____ LATE AFTERNOONS _____
MID-MORNINGS _____ EARLY EVENINGS _____
EARLY AFTERNOONS _____ LATE EVENINGS _____
OVERNIGHTS _____

Are you a U.S. citizen or otherwise authorized to work in the U.S.? Yes ___ No ___

Social Security Number: _____

REFERENCES: Please list names and contact information for three people we may call as references.

1) _____
Name Phone

_____ Address City State Zip Code

2) _____
Name Phone

_____ Address City State Zip

3) _____
Name Phone

_____ Address City State Zip Code

EDUCATION/ TRAINING

LEVEL	NAME OF SCHOOL	HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED	COURSE OF STUDY
HIGH SCHOOL			
COLLEGE			
OTHER TRAINING			

WORK EXPERIENCE *Please list your current or most recent job first*

Employer		Position	
Dates of Employment	From: To:	Salary	
Supervisor		Reasons for Leaving:	
Address			
Phone			

Employer		Position	
Dates of Employment	From: To:	Salary	
Supervisor		Reasons for Leaving:	
Address			
Phone			

Employer		Position	
Dates of Employment	From: To:	Salary	
Supervisor		Reasons for Leaving:	
Address			
Phone			

CONVICTION RECORD: Have you ever been convicted of an offense against the law, or are you now under charges for an offense against the law? (Omit non-moving traffic violations or any offense finally adjudicated in a Juvenile Court or under a Youthful Offender law): Yes __ No __
Please note: A conviction will not necessarily bar you from employment.

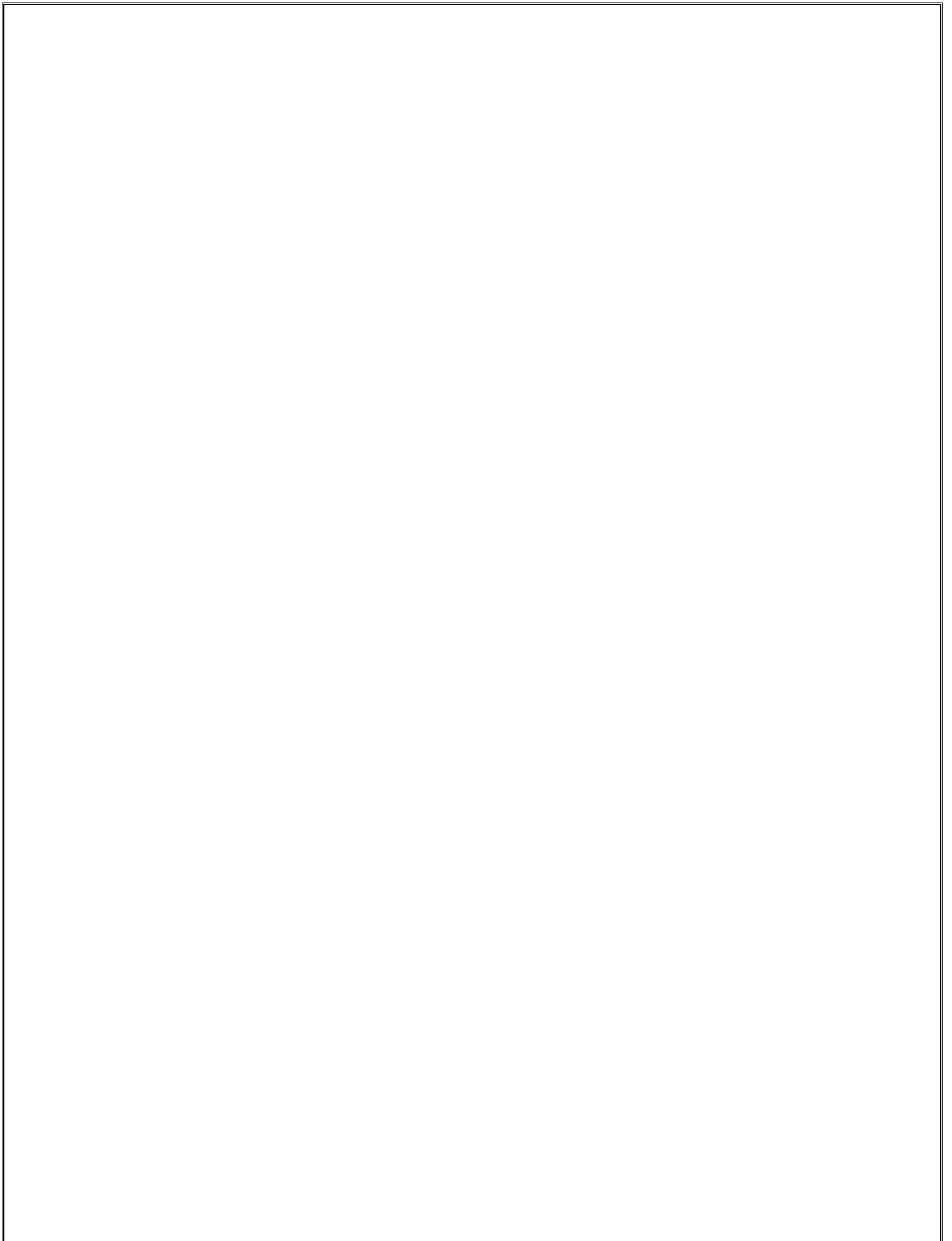
If "yes," please explain in the space below.

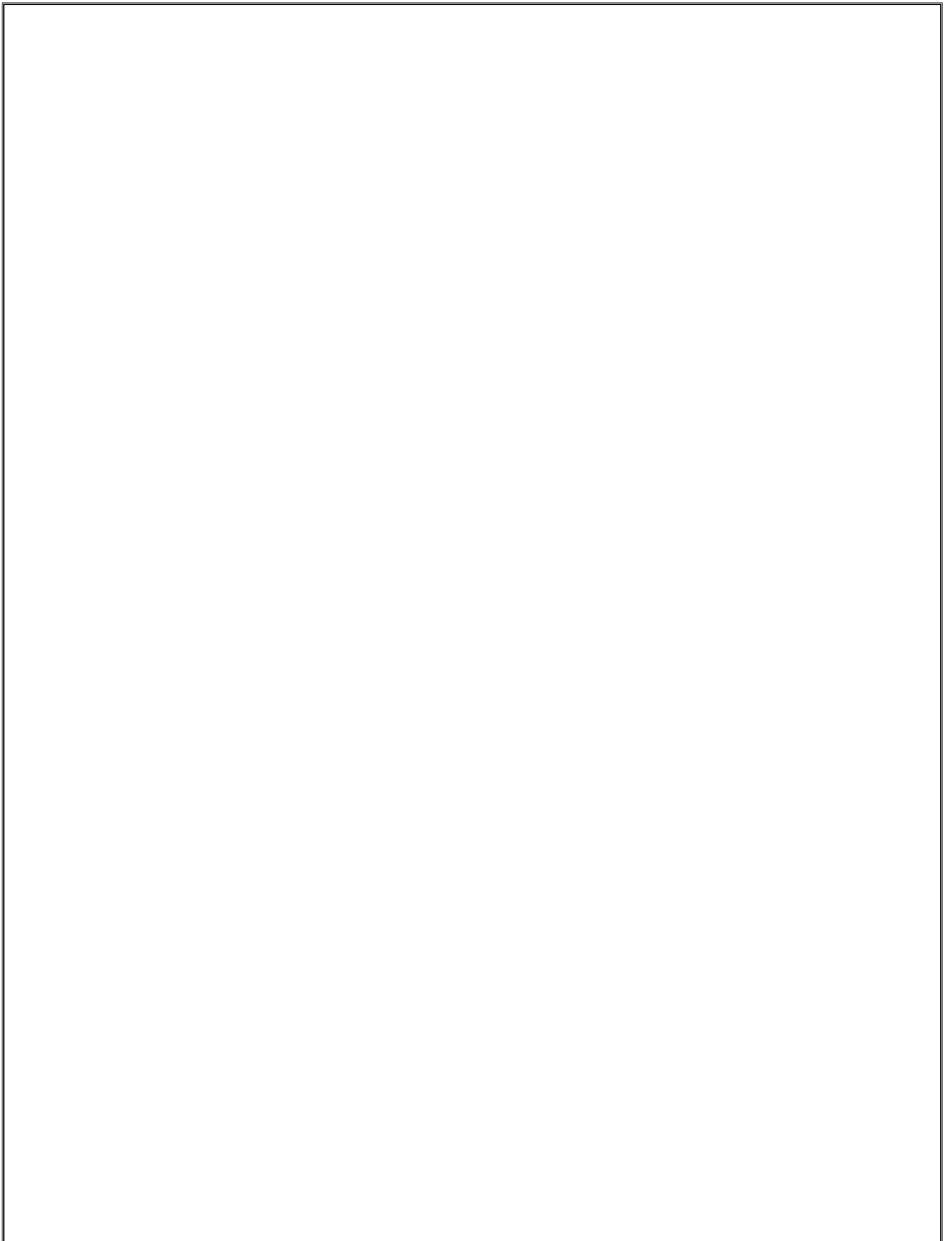
PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING:

I certify that the information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge and understanding and that falsification of this information is grounds for dismissal. I authorize references listed above to give you any and all information concerning my personal background/employment, and release all parties from liability for damages that may result from furnishing same to you.

Signature

Date





CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT

I. APPLICATION REVIEW

1. Review each part of the application carefully. In order to assess a candidate's availability, you may want to ask the following questions:

- ✓ Do you have flexibility in your schedule?
- ✓ What prevents you from working at different times?
- ✓ Are you available on weekends?

2. Many paraprofessional caregivers have young children. In order to assess a person's reliability and commitment, you may find it helpful to find out if a candidate has children and what her childcare arrangements are. In our experience, formal arrangements are more stable and family care is best saved for emergencies; different solutions work for each individual.

Here are questions you can ask the candidate to gain a better picture:

- ✓ Do you have young children?
- ✓ While you are working, who will look after your children?
- ✓ If the applicant mentioned her family, ask: How do you feel about formal caregiving situations?

3. Review the candidate's prior formal work history, using his or her application responses as a guide. For candidates with minimal formal work history, explore their informal work histories as well. The following questions should help you achieve a better understanding:

- ✓ Is there anything you haven't listed that may be pertinent to this position?
- ✓ Did any of your prior jobs have a caregiving aspect to it?
- ✓ How do you think your prior jobs prepared you for this role?
- ✓ Have you done any volunteer work?

4. For people who are not currently employed, you may want to ask about current sources of income. Remember that such questions may put the interviewee on the defensive; do your best to make the individual comfortable.

These questions are assessing the interviewee's (NOTE: you will be assessing communication skills throughout the interview):

Reliability

Facility fit

Reliability

Communication Skills

Problem Solving and organization

Facility fit

Caring Attitude

Experience (If this person seems experienced, you may want to administer Job Skills/ Problem Solving II)

Facility fit

II. ATTITUDES REGARDING CAREGIVING WORK

You need to assess a person's willingness to commit to a position; the comfort level with which the candidate works with someone who is disabled, ill and/or elderly; and the person's readiness to enter into a formal caregiving situation. Below are a series of questions that will help you make those assessments.

1. Have you ever cared for anyone who was very ill, living with a disability, or elderly? (Remind the individual to omit names for confidentiality reasons.)

- ✓ Who? (Family, friend, neighbor, formal situation, etc...)
- ✓ For how long? (Years, months, days?)
- ✓ What was his/her illness/ disability/ limitation?
- ✓ What were some of the things you did while caring for this person?

Promising candidates may:

- *Discuss experiences in a caring manner, both verbally and non-verbally*
- *Show understanding and awareness of specific health problems*
- *Share experiences performing personal care tasks*
- *Show awareness and responsiveness to illness-related mood changes*
- *Acknowledge that caregiving can be physically and emotionally difficult*
- *Show awareness of time management skills*

2. If the candidate has any caregiving experience, skip to question 3. If not, ask the following to assess readiness for the skills required and suitability in terms of attitude:

- ✓ What brought you to caregiving?
- ✓ What are you looking forward to if hired here?
- ✓ What do you think will be some of the harder parts of this position?
- ✓ What are your feelings about working with people different from you?
- ✓ What do you think is a caregiver's most important role?

Promising candidates may:

- *Discuss experiences in a caring manner, both verbally and non-verbally*
- *Show understanding and awareness of specific health problems*
- *Share experiences performing personal care tasks*
- *Show awareness and responsiveness to illness-related mood changes*
- *Acknowledge that caregiving can be physically and emotionally difficult*
- *Show awareness of time management skills*

3. Ask only experienced candidates the following:

- ✓ What do you enjoy about this type of work?
- ✓ What are some of the harder parts of the experience?
- ✓ Of all the tasks you've performed in a caregiver position, which was the most challenging and why?

These questions and scenarios are assessing the interviewee's:

Caring attitude
Problem solving and organization
Communication skills
Experience

Caring Attitude
Communication
Facility Fit

Caring Attitude
Communication
Facility Fit

- ✓ In your opinion, what is the most important role a caregiver plays in a person's life?

Promising candidates may:

- *Discuss experiences in a caring manner, both verbally and non-verbally*
- *Show understanding and awareness of specific health problems*
- *Share experiences performing personal care tasks*
- *Show awareness and responsiveness to illness-related mood changes*
- *Acknowledge that the job of a caregiver can be physically and emotionally difficult*
- *Show awareness of time management skill*

II. BASIC SKILLS AND PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITY

1. Ask the candidate to answer the questions in the Job Skills/Problem-Solving section below. There are two versions of this section: one for experienced caregivers and one for inexperienced or less experienced candidates.

2. Next, ask the candidate to fill out the Organizing/Prioritizing skills exercise. Offer to answer questions if there is something she does not understand. When she has completed the exercise, review it with her asking her reasoning for each answer, as time permits. There are two versions of this section: one for experienced caregivers and one for inexperienced or less experienced candidates.

Correct order for I: 5, 2, 1, 4, 3, 6 (*It is also acceptable to list hand washing first.*)

Correct order for II: 3, 6, 5, 2, 1, 4

4. Give the candidate a copy of the Basic Skills Assessment, along with a pencil and eraser. This exam will allow you to assess basic math skills as well as reading ability and the ability to understand and follow directions. No specific knowledge of respirations, calorie content, or weight is required. Allow as much time as needed for completion and have a dictionary on hand in case it is requested. Encourage candidates to ask questions for clarification purposes. During the assessment, be attentive but not intrusive. If it appears that the candidate is struggling, offer assistance, guidance and clarification -- especially if the interview has gone well thus far and you feel that the candidate would be a good caregiver.

Correct answers:

- 1) 175.8 pounds
- 2) 42 breaths
- 3) 25% or $\frac{1}{4}$; 50% or $\frac{1}{2}$; 75% or $\frac{3}{4}$
- 4) Yes
- 5) 102.4 degrees
- 6) $\frac{1}{2}$ inch is the small dark bruise; 1 inch is the lighter round bruise
- 7) $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches is the scar

5. Fill out an Assessment Scale evaluation of the candidate, awarding them a percentage of the total points allotted to each category based on your assessment of how they performed in that area. Depending on the importance of each of these areas to your organization, you may change the total number of points possible in each category, keeping the sum of all totals at 100.

Caring Attitude
Communication
Facility Fit

Caring Attitude
Communication
Facility Fit

III. Job Skills/Problem-Solving

For Candidates with No Experience

The following scenarios are meant to assess a person's problem-solving skills and give you insight into this person's experience, clinical and relational skills. Explain to the candidate that you are going to read the scenario and then ask a question. Tell the candidate that there are no wrong answers and there are no time limits. Following each scenario are a few potential positive responses. Again, this is an assessment, not a test. If a response is not clear, ask the candidate to expand on her response. (We suggest that you use a minimum of three of the following scenarios to get an understanding of the candidate's qualities.)

1. You are assigned to work with a new resident on the floor. You've heard from other staff members that she is sometimes combative with her caregivers during her weekly shower. You go in to see her; she has a foul odor and grime in every possible place visible to you. You introduce yourself and tell her that you are going to get her cleaned up. She yells- "you're not touching me!" What would your next step be?

Promising candidates may offer to:

- ◆ *Calmly and gently acknowledge this person's wishes*
- ◆ *Try talking with this person before doing anything else*
- ◆ *Offer alternative solutions to this problem (ask her if she would like to bathe herself if safety isn't a fact, offer other alternatives such as a towel bath or bed bath, show her the shower room, ask her what time she normally bathes and try to accommodate that etc...)*
- ◆ *Ask the person if there is anything wrong*
- ◆ *Ask other staff if this is a pattern/ask for assistance- but do not bathe her this time if she is increasingly combative*

2. A resident has started complaining excessively about the laundry system at the facility. "The clothes, if they come back, are being ruined by that harsh detergent! I don't have the money to replace them? What am I going to do? I can't do the laundry myself and I don't have any family to help me do it. Can you do the laundry for me?" she asks you. The facility has a laundry machine for resident use not too far from the resident's room and laundry detergent is free. You know that the resident cannot possibly do it herself, as she does not have functioning in her arms. You have also noticed that her clothing has become disheveled and the amount of clothing she owns has significantly decreased. But it's not on the list of duties you have to check off in by the nursing station. What would you do?

Promising candidates may offer to:

- *Do the laundry once a week in the resident laundry area*
- *Speak with your primary supervisor to inform her that you may need a few extra minutes with this person*
- *Ask their supervisor about the policy on this*

These questions and scenarios are assessing the interviewee's:

Communication skills

Problem solving and organization

Caring attitude

Caring attitude

Problem solving and organization

Facility fit

Communication Skills

Problem solving skills

Caring attitude

3. A resident you had been happily working with for 5 months has lost 6 pounds this past month. You always knew she was a picky eater, but you hadn't noticed any difference in her eating patterns since she first came in. She also looks sad and she hasn't been going to arts and crafts class like she usually does. She speaks a different language from you, but it hasn't really mattered before because she is cooperative and pleasant during care in the mornings. What would you do?

Promising candidates may say they would:

- *Tell the nurse/supervisor about their observations*
- *Get an translator to ask her if she is ok emotionally/physically*
- *Continue to observe her*
- *Confer with CNAs on the other shifts to see if they are noticing any changes*

4. You are working on the Alzheimer's unit in the nursing home and your resident has just taken three blankets from the pile in the hallway and put it in a drawer in the community room. You know you are going to give her one when you make her bed later. You also know that there are an abundance of blankets for use by any resident in the clean linen room. What should you do?

Promising candidates may indicate they would:

- *Calmly approach the resident and ask her if she is cold (now or at night)*
- *Do nothing different in particular, this is a relatively harmless activity for the resident to be doing*
- *Consider that this behavior is related to the residents dementia*

5. You arrive for work and find that someone on your shift has called out sick and the nurse has assigned you two additional residents which brings you to a total of ten to care for. You are not feeling well as it is. What would you do?

Promising candidates may indicate they would:

- *Ask the nurse if there is any way you can have extra help*
- *Make a list and prioritize the workload and do what is absolutely needed first*
- *Try to see if there are things that can be skipped without harming the resident*
- *Team up with other CNAs*
- *Work hard, doing what they can*

5. It is 10 p.m. The evening shift nurse told you she was going to her car for a minute and would be back soon. Mr. White has rung his call bell. When you enter his room, he tells you he is having chest pain and is short of breath. What would you do first?

Promising candidates would indicate that they would call the paramedics, EMT, or 911. (This is an emergency, and waiting for the nurse is not an option.)

Caring attitude
Problem solving and organization
Experience with resident with dementia

Problem solving-time management

Facility fit

Communication skills

Problem solving and organization

NOTE TO THE INTERVIEWER: The above scenarios and the following prioritizing exercise are designed for assessment of an entry-level applicant with little or no formal caregiving experience. Use Job Skills/Problem-Solving II and Organizing/Prioritizing Skills II for experienced candidates.

ORGANIZING/ PRIORITIZING SKILLS I

Please read the following situation and place a number next to the task in the order you would do it (number 1 through 6). Be prepared to discuss your answers with the interviewer.

Mr. Dawson is a 56-year-old man who has a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis and cannot move his legs and arms. When entering his room in the morning, you find him lying on pads that are covered in feces and urine. He is unable to help himself and requires “total care.” In what order would you do the following six tasks.

_____ Change his bed linens

_____ Wash your hands

_____ Gather what you will need in terms of clothing, linen and supplies

_____ Take him to the shower room and give him a shower

_____ Put on gloves

_____ Make his bed

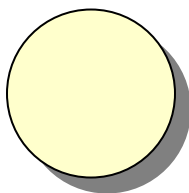
BASIC SKILLS

These questions are designed to help us assess some of your basic math and reading skills. Please answer the following questions as best as you can. You can use any white space on this page for figuring out an answer.

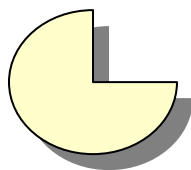
If you do not understand a question, please ask the interviewer for help.

1. The nurse asks you to weigh Mr. Jones. He is unable to walk or stand, so you will need to use the wheelchair accessible scale. His chair weighs 13.4 lbs. and the scale when you wheel him on reads 189.2 lbs. What is his actual weight?
2. After knocking, you walk into Mrs. Smith's room and notice her breathing seems faster than usual so you decide to count her "respirations" (*i.e., how many times a person breathes per minute*). She has taken 21 breaths in 30 seconds. How many breaths will she take in *one full minute*?
3. Sometimes a resident may be put on a "calorie count" because she or he is losing or gaining weight, and the nurse may ask you to monitor his or her "input" (*how much food he or she eats*).

Imagine that this is a plate of eggs:



Approximately what percentage of the eggs did the resident eat on the following days (e.g. $\frac{1}{4}$ or 25 percent)



Monday:

_____ %



Tuesday:

_____ %



Wednesday:

_____ %

4. Below is a picture of a thermometer:



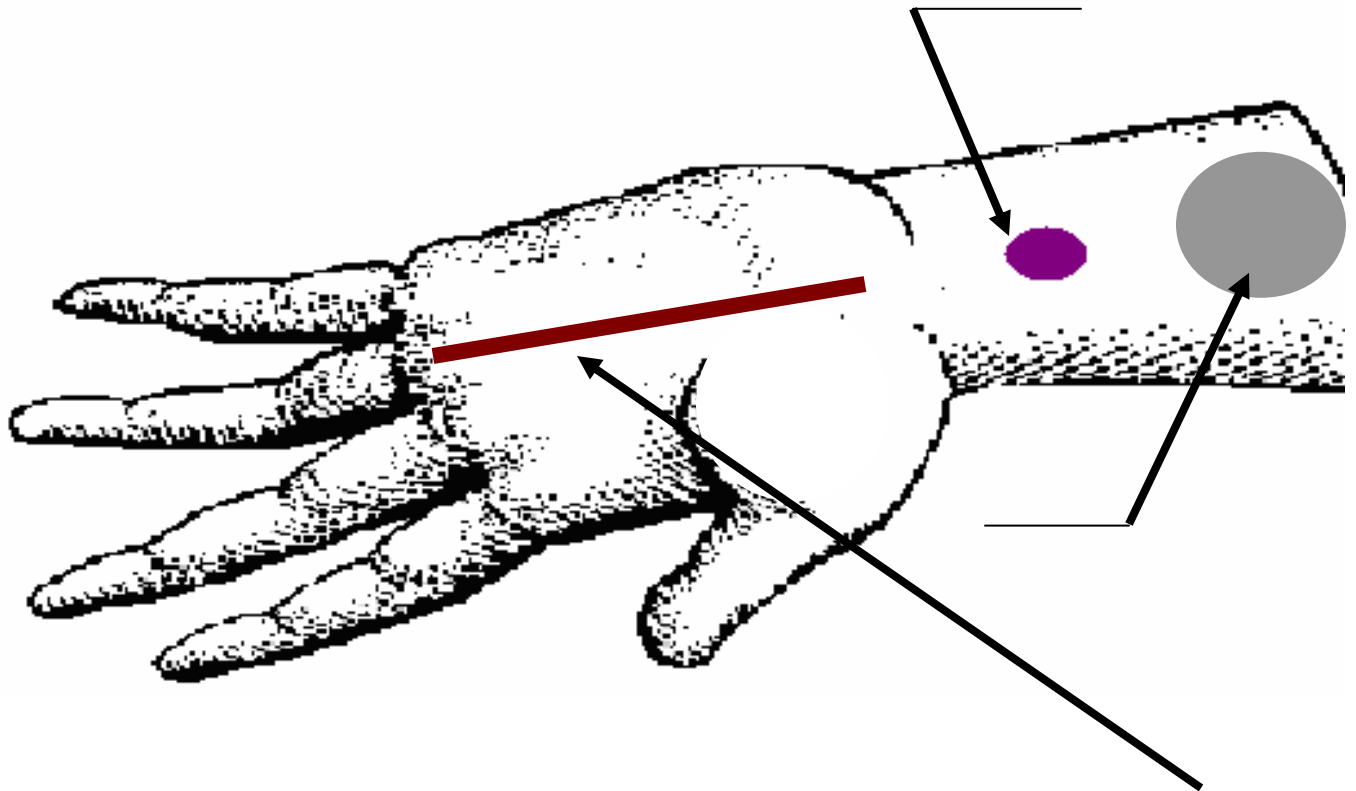
Is the area marked by the black line a normal temperature range? (Circle one) YES or NO

4. Look at the thermometer below.



What is this person's approximate temperature? _____

5. This is a picture of a hand with injuries on it. For each bruise label its approximate size (measured across in inches, e.g. $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, 3 inches etc.) on the lines provided.



7. On the same hand, approximately how long (in inches) is the cut on this person's palm? _____

ASSESSMENT SCALE

Applicant's Name: _____ Date: _____

QUALITY	Value	Score	Comments
CARING ATTITUDE IN CNA WORK -Sincere interest in caring for people -Empathizes and is compassionate -Willing to give the extra effort -Able to work with diverse cultures -Brings formal or informal experience as caregiver -Sincere interest in a career as a CNA	30		
RELIABILITY -Demonstrates stable work history -Sincere commitment to work -Shows thought regarding transition to work -Demonstrates follow-through/completion/punctuality	10		
PROBLEM SOLVING & ORGANIZATION -Reasons through problems -Sees alternate solutions -Can react in an emergency -Organizes tasks/daily activities -Mature, can handle difficult situations -Follows directions -Asks questions -Asks for help when needed	20		
COMMUNICATION SKILLS -Good listening skills -Well-spoken and respectful of others -Well presented, appropriate appearance -Demonstrates confidence -Asks questions -Recognizes and addresses language barriers	20		
BASIC SKILLS -Reading and writing -Math -General cognition -Learning	10		
FACILITY FIT -Positive attitude toward work and others -Team player -Flexible with regard to time - Other _____	10		

TOTAL	100		
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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____ ACCEPTED _____ NOT ACCEPTED

Job Skills/Problem-Solving II

For candidates with caregiving experience

1. You are assigned to work with a new resident on the floor. Your supervisor tells you that she may be combative. You go in to see her, detect a foul odor, and note grime in every spot visible to you. You also notice that she looks scared. You introduce yourself and tell her that you are going to help her to clean up. She yells- “you’re not touching me!” What would your next step be?

Promising candidates may offer to:

- Attempt to talk with her
- Spend time with her before giving care
- Explain who they are
- Ask her if she has any questions
- Validate her feelings
- Assess her cognitive status
- Explore her background and preferences, as she is a new resident
- Offer alternative solutions (assist in bathing instead of putting her on a shower bed/chair, show her the shower room and possibly a tour of the floor, offer to come at a different time, offer clean towels and soap so she can bathe herself if her gait is steady, etc.)

2. Clara is an 82-year-old woman with late stage Alzheimer’s disease. You walk into her room and notice she has her coat on and is holding her purse. You ask her what she is doing and she tells you she is waiting for the bus. How do you respond?

Promising candidates may offer to:

- Use validation therapy with her
- Ask her where she is going, what she will do there, and so on
- Show knowledge of dementia/Alzheimer’s disease
- Otherwise indicate that they will not attempt to reorient her to reality

3. Edith is an 80-year-old woman who is keeping to herself lately. You have been her primary aide for about 5 months and know her well. Her family still visits and the rest of her friends are always coming in to talk with her. After weighing her, you notice that she has lost six pounds this month. She says she is just a picky eater. You remember that she has been eating less and hasn’t been coming to the dining room to eat with the other residents. What would you do with this situation?

Promising candidates may offer to:

- Talk with her
- Ask her if she has been feeling sad or depressed lately

These questions and scenarios are assessing the interviewee’s:

Experience
Caring attitude

Basic Knowledge/ skills

Experience

Problem Solving and organization

Caring attitude

Experience

- Share observations and indicate concern
- Share concerns with the nurse
- Give other responses showing knowledge regarding depression

ORGANIZING/ PRIORITIZING SKILLS II

Please read the following exercise and place a number next to the task in the order you would do it (number 1 through 6). Be prepared to discuss your answers with the interviewer.

SITUATION

Mr. Dawson is a 74-year-old, recently widowed, man who is bedbound and isolated. You just finished taking care of your fifth resident this morning and it is almost time for you to serve lunch. Mr. Dawson rings his call bell and you go in to see what he needs. He is crying, soiled, and has spilled his water jug on the floor near the bed. In what order would you perform the following tasks?

- _____ Change Mr. Dawson's incontinence pads and linens
- _____ Go help serve lunch
- _____ Ask Mr. Dawson if he wants his lunch now
- _____ Call housekeeping to clean the water off the floor (for safety reasons)
- _____ Ask Mr. Dawson if he is okay and find out why he is crying
- _____ Reposition Mr. Dawson in his bed so he is more comfortable

