

Nine Probation Officer Competencies

Alberta Justice & Solicitor General

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Probation Officer Competency	Definition	Examples of Behaviour in Role
1. Managing Information & People	The ability to interact with others to access, retrieve, input analyze, apply, interpret and process information for investigative and case work purposes.	<p>Information Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify available resources and then obtain, locate and retrieve information. • Work across systems and programs while understanding the perspectives and limitations of other individuals and systems. • Validate information and remain objective. • Use information effectively and ethically. • Document information in a clear, concise, accurate manner within established systems (e.g. ORCA, physical files). • Comply with policy requirements to manage files (e.g. case reviews). • Compile correspondence and investigative reports (e.g. letters, presentence reports) to support effective case management. • Interpret and apply relevant legislation, regulations; policies and procedures. <p>Process Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate effective case management strategies. • Relate effectively with all levels of administration inside and outside the organization. • Apply effective services, interventions and supervision approaches to case management. • Facilitate the mutual exchange of information with agencies, individuals and stakeholders (e.g. facilitate a case conference). • Perform routine reassessment of client status and progress toward case plan goals and adjust case plans as needed.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate currently accepted, evidenced-based practices to maximize client outcomes.• Engage the offender in the case management process. <p>Attributes: <i>Positive, empathic, respectful, accurate, innovative, role model, flexible, persuasive, influential.</i></p>
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2. Organizational Skills	The ability to prioritize competing workload pressures in an effective manner and contribute to the organization's goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and align work to achieve organizational values and goals (e.g. departmental business plan). • Establish well-defined, realistic goals for one's self and clients. • Determine necessary sequence of activities needed to achieve goals. • Plan, and organize work and set priorities independently. • Anticipate unplanned events and outcomes (e.g. contingency planning) and adapt work to achieve goals. • Create and utilize systems to monitor numerous deadlines and action items. • Identify when to engage the assistance and expertise of others. • Understand and effectively apply time management theories and techniques. • Develop, recognize and demonstrate personal and professional limits and boundaries. • Demonstrate flexibility. <p>Attributes: <i>Flexible, focused, goal-orientated, adaptive, assertive.</i></p>

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3. Team Development	The ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively with a variety of teams within the workplace, community, and other government ministries/agencies to meet client and ministry goals and objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider diverse, cross-cultural perspectives, professional situations and working styles. • Respect and support the unique abilities and practice styles of colleagues. • Contribute positively by sharing information and listening to others' points of view. • Accept and provide feedback in a constructive manner. • Lead, encourage, advise, coach and support co-workers. • Engage in collaborative problem solving with clients, colleagues, and collaterals including community agencies, other ministries and stakeholders. • Recognize the role of conflict where appropriate and demonstrate conflict resolution abilities within day-to day dealings with team members. • Demonstrate accountability to the team and its purpose and goals by following through on commitments. <p>Attributes: <i>Respectful, honest, ethical, supportive, flexible, confident, accountable, independent.</i></p>

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4. Investigation	<p>Gathering information from varied sources by engaging in a critical thinking process to gather, analyze and interpret information to formulate reports and make decisions related to case planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the type of report the investigation is designed for. • Establish the number and type of interviews to conduct. • Assess appropriate resources to contact. • Distinguish between relevant and extraneous information. • Gather appropriate information including criminal records, police reports and correctional history. • Analyze presenting information through the use of current databases (JOIN, ORCA). • Monitor compliance to conditions by confirming information with the offender and collateral sources. • Demonstrate accurate and incisive analysis, good judgement and common sense to analyze and interpret information. • Assess and analyze information and credibility of sources. • Consult with supervisor, co-workers and community representatives as applicable and incorporate case conferencing into casework practices. <p>Attributes: Analytical, ethical, discreet, accountable, persuasive, dynamic, confident, attentive to detail.</p>

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<p>5. Problem Solving</p>	<p>Understanding the problem situation and its step-by-step resolution, based on planning and reasoning using goal-orientated thinking and action in situations for which no one solution exists.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify issues and the causative factors of a problem and recognize interrelationships. • Recognize the need for information from multiple sources for effective decision making. • Analyze information (e.g. identify discrepancies and clarify as needed). • Compare information and input from various sources when making decisions. • Maintain objectivity and handle difficult issues, events, or decisions in a non-biased, non-judgemental manner. • Recognize when a decision is required. • Understand the limits of discretion and decision making authority. • Assess, weigh and manage risk in the face of uncertainty. • Apply legislation, policies and procedures when identifying problems and possible solutions. • Balance short and long term considerations. • Generate solutions and options and enable others to do the same. • Explain rationale for decisions as required. • Assess probable consequences of decisions. • Reframe situations in order to solve problems or create alternative solutions. • Take action based on sound decisions consistent with available information. • Focus on criminogenic needs to best target recidivism. • Understand the link between release conditions and offender risk/ needs. <p>Attributes: Analytical, logical, creative, confident, practical, reasonable, non-judgemental, open-minded, understanding, innovative, collaborative, flexible, persuasive, decisive, proactive.</p>

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6. Self-Management	The probation officer understands and is conscious of the implications of their interactions with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility and demonstrate resiliency and accountability for self. • Demonstrate honesty, integrity, and personal ethics. • Demonstrate a willingness to continuously learn and grow as a Probation Officer (e.g. set and pursue personal and educational goals). • Acknowledge stressful situations for self and others and develop and implement coping and preventative strategies. • Maintain professional presentation and composure in challenging situations. • Elicit and document information specific to caseworker safety concerns and integrate into practice. • Employ de-escalation techniques and crisis-management strategies in situations to reduce the potential harm to self or others. • Follow Working Alone and OH&S Policies. • Establish personal practices to facilitate work/ life balance. <p>Attributes: <i>Open, insightful, proactive, resilient, accountable, honest, flexible.</i></p>

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7. Purposeful Writing	Communicating ideas and information with appropriate professional and objective tone. Is able to write clearly and succinctly in a variety of communication settings and styles (e.g. case notes and court reports)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create documents that are clear, grammatically correct and support the readers' understanding of content. • Complete written work within assigned timelines. • Write to incorporate effective case management strategies. • Utilize the appropriate style and information for each document. <p>Attributes: Focused, confident, analytical, insightful</p>

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8. Interviewing	<p>Communicating with others using a broad range of communication styles including motivational interview techniques to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to convey information in a respectful tone and manner • gather relevant information • ensure compliance with supervision and case management • secure information for case management and reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct interviews including in-person contacts that are planned, purposeful and designed to elicit pertinent information. • Interact in a manner that is respectful, engaging and builds rapport. • Adjust language or terminology to meet the needs of the audience. • Solicit relevant and specific information. • Actively listen, pay attention to verbal cues and asks probative questions to confirm understanding of the issue or questions at hand. • Demonstrate knowledge of the stages of change. • Consistently apply MI theory. • Guide the process and direction of interviews while ensuring the opportunity for the interviewee to provide a full narrative. • Assist individuals working through a change process (e.g. identify their stage of change). <p><i>Attributes: non judgemental, empathetic, patient, focused, respectful, supportive, empowering</i></p>

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9. Interpersonal Skills	The set of abilities enabling a probation officer to interact positively and work effectively with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and acknowledge the needs and emotions of others, including those with diverse backgrounds and capabilities. • Identify and understand cultural and socio-economic differences. • Develop and maintain open and honest work relationships with a challenging and diverse range of individuals, interest groups, service providers community stakeholders and other partners in the criminal justice system. • Manage the dynamics of unmotivated clients who may be passively or aggressively hostile or critical. • Creatively advocate for clients by building and maintaining effective working relationships with a network of interdisciplinary systems and engaging service providers to achieve client goals and well being. <p><i>Attributes: Empathic, approachable, non-judgemental, flexible, confident, proactive, impartial.</i></p>

