

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker interview questions

careertips.com.au: common questions and what they're really testing

What to expect

Interviews for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker roles focus on cultural safety, practical clinical support and your ability to build trust with community. You will likely meet a panel that includes Aboriginal community members and clinical staff, so prepare to speak about your connection to community and your approach to care.

- **Cultural safety and community connection:** Questions about how you work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, families and communities, and how you embed cultural safety in daily practice.
- **Clinical and screening scenarios:** Scenarios that test your ability to conduct chronic disease screenings, monitor vital signs and respond to changes in a client's health.
- **Behavioural and client support:** Questions that ask you to reflect on past experience advocating for clients, supporting follow up care and working through barriers.
- **Process and documentation:** Questions about maintaining client records, using care plans and working with systems like Communicare, My Health Record and MedicalDirector.
- **Teamwork and communication:** Questions about liaising with doctors, nurses and external services, and how you communicate across cultural and clinical boundaries.

The interview is usually a panel discussion, often with a mix of clinical and community representatives. It may begin with a welcome and an acknowledgement of Country, followed by questions that move from your motivation and cultural knowledge to practical scenarios and behavioural examples. Some services use a yarning style, where the conversation is less formal and more relational. You may also be asked to complete a short practical task, such as explaining a care plan or demonstrating a screening step.

1. Walk me through how you would conduct a chronic disease screening for a new client.

Why they ask

This process question checks your clinical knowledge and your ability to make a screening culturally safe and comfortable.

How to structure your answer

Use a step by step walk through. Start with preparation and consent, then describe the clinical measurements, how you explain each step, and how you record and follow up.

Example answer

"When I meet a new client for a chronic disease screening, I start by finding a private and comfortable space. I introduce myself, explain my role and ask permission before we begin. I check if they would like a family member or support person present. Then I explain what the screening involves: blood pressure, blood sugar, weight, waist measurement and a few questions about lifestyle and family history. I go at their pace and check in regularly to make sure they are comfortable. After the clinical checks, I record everything in Communicare, flag any results that need urgent review, and book a follow up appointment with the GP or nurse. I also give them written information in plain language and ask if they have any questions."

2. Tell me about a time you advocated for a client who was not being heard by a health service.

Why they ask

This behavioural question explores your advocacy skills and your commitment to client rights.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Keep the result focused on what changed for the client, not on numbers.

Example answer

"I was supporting a client with a chronic condition who needed a specialist referral. The specialist's office kept losing the paperwork and the client was getting frustrated. I sat with the client and we called the office together. I explained the situation clearly to the receptionist, then asked to speak with the practice manager. I made sure the referral was processed and confirmed the appointment date. I followed up with the client a week later to check they had been seen. The client told me they felt respected and finally heard."

3. A client becomes distressed and wants to leave before seeing the doctor. What do you do?

Why they ask

This scenario tests your judgement under pressure and your ability to de-escalate with cultural sensitivity.

How to structure your answer

Describe your immediate response, how you assess the situation, what you say, and how you involve others if needed. Finish with how you follow up.

Example answer

"If a client becomes distressed and wants to leave, I would not block them. I would stay calm, lower my voice and give them space. I might say, 'I can see this is hard. You are in charge here. Would you like to sit for a moment or would you prefer to come back another day?' I would ask if they want a support person or if they would like to speak with an Aboriginal liaison officer. If they choose to leave, I would make sure they have a way to get home safely and give them a number to call if they change their mind. I would document the incident and let the clinical team know so we can follow up."

4. How do you ensure culturally safe care in your practice?

Why they ask

This question looks at your understanding of cultural safety as an ongoing practice, not a one off.

How to structure your answer

Talk about principles such as respect, shared decision making, and community protocols. Give a concrete example of how you apply them.

Example answer

"Culturally safe care for me means the client feels respected, understood and in control. I always ask how they want to be referred to and who they want involved in their care. I use plain language and check understanding by asking them to tell me what they will do next. I also respect community protocols, like not sharing certain information without permission. For example, when I run health education sessions, I yarn with community elders first to make sure the approach fits with local values. I see cultural safety as something I practice every day, not a box I tick."

5. What is your experience with Communicare, My Health Record, MedicalDirector, Best Practice or Pen CS CAT4?

Why they ask

This technical question checks your familiarity with the systems you will use daily.

How to structure your answer

Be honest about your proficiency. Describe how you use the system for recording, recalling clients, or generating reports. Show willingness to learn.

Example answer

"I have used Communicare daily in my current role for client records and recalls. I am comfortable entering screening results, updating care plans and generating lists for follow up. I have also used My Health Record to check a client's history when they move between services. I have had some exposure to MedicalDirector and Best Practice during placements, and I am confident I can pick up Pen CS CAT4 with training. I am always careful to record only what is needed and to keep information secure."

6. Describe a time you worked with a multidisciplinary team to coordinate care for a client.

Why they ask

This behavioural question assesses your teamwork and communication across clinical and community roles.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Highlight your role in the team, how you shared information, and the outcome for the client.

Example answer

"I worked with a client who had diabetes and mental health concerns. The GP, the diabetes educator and I met to plan their care. I was the main contact for the client, so I checked in weekly by phone and helped them attend appointments. I shared updates with the team through our case notes in Communicare. We adjusted the plan when the client said the diet advice did not fit their family's food practices. The client's blood sugar levels became more stable and they told me they felt supported. I learned that regular communication and flexibility make the biggest difference."