

## Scenarios to Role-Play with Prospective Employees

Because massage therapists are sometimes faced with challenging ethical issues, role-playing serves as a way to explore how a potential employee may react in complex ethical situations.

Role-play each of these scenarios with the applicant. Interviewers may also want to add additional questions related to circumstances specific to their particular spa. During role-play situations, keep the conversation going and argue a bit to see how the applicant responds.

After each scenario, we will give you an example of what a poor response would be and what a professional response might be.

### **Scenario #1**

Interviewer sets up the situation by saying: "A very nice client you have been working with for a few months asks you a question. I'm the client and I say to you, 'Would you like to go out to lunch sometime?'"

*Continue the conversation to see how the applicant responds when you push back.*

(For example, if the applicant responds to Scenario #1 by asking why the guest is extending the invitation, the interviewer can role-play by saying, "Just to get to know you better," and see how the applicant responds.)

Examples:

### **Scenario #1 (Poor Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** Would you like to go to lunch sometime?

**APPLICANT:** How come you'd like to go to lunch together?

**INTERVIEWER:** I'd just like to get to know you better.

**APPLICANT:** I don't usually do that with a client, but you've been seeing me for quite a while and I think that might be nice. When would you like to get together?

### **Scenario #1 (Professional Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** Would you like to go to lunch sometime?

**APPLICANT:** Thanks for the invitation. Our policy is that therapists keep the relationship with all clients strictly professional. So no, I can't have lunch with you.

Or

**APPLICANT:** Our experience in the profession is that when you mix personal and professional relationships and something goes wrong it often destroys the professional relationship as well, so as a policy, we don't socialize with clients.

### **Scenario #2**

Interviewer sets up the situation by saying: "I'm the client. Tell me how you would respond if I say: 'I would prefer not to be draped with the sheet because it feels heavy and claustrophobic.'"

*Continue the conversation and argue a bit to see how the applicant responds.*

Examples:

#### **Scenario #2 (Poor Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** I'd prefer not to be draped with the sheet and blanket because it feels heavy and claustrophobic.

**APPLICANT:** How about if I just used the sheet and no blanket?

**INTERVIEWER:** That would be a little better, but it would still make me claustrophobic.

**APPLICANT:** I'm sorry you feel that way. How about if I used a towel instead so it only covered half of your body?

**INTERVIEWER:** That would still not feel as good. You're comfortable with bodies, aren't you?

**APPLICANT:** I am comfortable with people's bodies, but the rules say you have to be covered.

**INTERVIEWER:** I'm the client and I'm telling you that I'm not comfortable with the sheet on me.

**APPLICANT:** OK, I'll just cover your pelvic region with a towel.

#### **Scenario #2 (Professional Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** I'd prefer not to be draped with the sheet and blanket because it feels heavy and claustrophobic.

**APPLICANT:** I can just drape you with a sheet and a towel. Does that work for you?

**INTERVIEWER:** No, not really.

**APPLICANT:** We have a professional draping policy here that I cannot deviate from. If you are not comfortable with that, I can talk to the manager about possibly refunding your money. Would you like me to do that?

### **Scenario #3**

Interviewer sets up the situation by saying: "I'm going to be the client. Let's role-play how you would respond to this comment: 'I was pretty nervous to come back today because of something that happened last time I was here. I've seen you before and trust you so I want to tell you about it. The last time I was here, the therapist uncovered my breasts and he massaged them. I was really upset and froze.'"

*Continue the conversation to see how the applicant responds.*

Examples:

**Scenario #3 (Poor Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** I was pretty nervous to come back today because of something that happened last time I was here. I've seen you before and trust you so I want to tell you about it. The last time I was here the therapist uncovered my breasts and he massaged them. I was really upset and froze.

**APPLICANT:** Really? I can't believe someone would do that.

**INTERVIEWER:** I wouldn't make something like that up.

**APPLICANT:** Well, since you didn't say anything, he probably thought it was OK.

**INTERVIEWER:** Well, it wasn't.

**APPLICANT:** Just don't make any more appointments with him.

**Scenario #3 (Professional Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** I was pretty nervous to come back today because of something that happened last time I was here. I've seen you before and trust you so I want to tell you about it. The last time I was here the therapist uncovered my breasts and he massaged them. I was really upset and froze.

**APPLICANT:** That sounds like a very upsetting experience. I'm glad you feel safe enough to tell me. I would like you to speak to the manager right after our session. Would you be willing to do that?

**Scenario #4**

Interviewer sets up the situation by saying: "I'm one of your fellow therapists and I say to you: 'One of my clients asked me to go to a party. What do you think I should do?'"

*Continue the conversation to see how the applicant responds.*

Examples:

**Scenario #4 (Poor Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** One of my clients asked me to go to a party. What do you think I should do?

**APPLICANT:** Do you like this client?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah, they're a really nice person.

**APPLICANT:** Do you want to go?

**INTERVIEWER:** I think so, but I'm not sure if I should.

**APPLICANT:** Life's too short. I'd go.

#### **Scenario #4 (Professional Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** One of my clients asked me to go to a party. What do you think I should do?

**APPLICANT:** What do you think you should do?

**INTERVIEWER:** I don't know, I'm conflicted about it. What do you think?

**APPLICANT:** I think you have to say no.

**INTERVIEWER:** What should I say?

**APPLICANT:** Say, "I like to keep my relationships with clients professional. The clinic has a policy of no socializing with clients."

#### **Scenario #5**

Interviewer sets up the situation by saying: "I am your client. How would you respond to this comment: 'Another therapist at the facility hurt me physically during my treatment and was then rude to me for saying something about it.'"

*Continue the conversation to see how the applicant responds.*

Examples

#### **Scenario #5 (Poor Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** Another therapist at the facility hurt me physically during my treatment and was then rude to me for saying something about it.

**APPLICANT:** Have you seen this therapist before?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes, a few times.

**APPLICANT:** Were those sessions similar?

**INTERVIEWER:** No, they were all OK.

**APPLICANT:** Maybe give the therapist another chance or just don't see them again.

**INTERVIEWER:** Should I report it to the management?

**APPLICANT:** Only if you want to.

#### **Scenario #5 (Professional Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** Another therapist at the facility hurt me physically during my treatment and was then rude to me for saying something about it.

**APPLICANT:** That sounds awful. Did you tell the management?

**INTERVIEWER:** No, I didn't want them to lose their job.

**APPLICANT:** We pride ourselves on treating our clients well. I'd like to ask you to talk to the manager. The therapist will get a warning and likely some training. I wouldn't want that to happen to any other client. Can you do that, or would you like me to report it for you?

### **Scenario #6**

Interviewer sets up the situation by saying: "I'm your male client lying supine on the table and I get an erection. How do you respond?"

*Continue the conversation to see how the applicant responds.*

Examples

#### **Scenario #6 (Poor Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** I'm the client and I get an erection during treatment. How would you respond?

**APPLICANT:** That's not OK. This session is over. Get dressed and leave.

**INTERVIEWER:** (Ask outside of role-play character) Do you have another option?

**APPLICANT:** I would work on his leg with a lot of pressure so that it hurt, and that would make it go away.

#### **Scenario #6 (Professional Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** I'm the client and I get an erection during treatment. How would you respond?

**APPLICANT:** I notice you are sexually aroused. Tell me what you're experiencing.

**INTERVIEWER:** I'm sorry. This has never happened before.

**APPLICANT:** When clients relax, there is sometimes this physiological reaction. It's OK. I want to clarify that this is a therapeutic massage and nothing of a sexual nature ever happens here.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you have another option?

**APPLICANT:** It is never my intent to create sexual arousal during a session, but if it happens and I'm clear that your intent isn't sexual either, then I am comfortable in continuing the session if you are.

### **Scenario #7**

Interviewer sets up the situation by saying: "I am your client. How do you respond to this comment: 'I'd like you to work on my breasts during my treatment.'"

*Continue the conversation to see how the applicant responds.*

Examples

#### **Scenario #7 (Poor Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** Would you massage my breasts?

**APPLICANT:** We don't usually do that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Charlie always does that for me. It can't be that difficult.

**APPLICANT:** OK, just this one time.

#### **Scenario #7 (Professional Response)**

**INTERVIEWER:** Would you massage my breasts?

**APPLICANT:** It's company policy that we don't massage the breasts or the abdomen.

**INTERVIEWER:** Charlie always does that for me. I won't tell your boss.

**APPLICANT:** I won't perform any services that are outside of our company policy. If you want to continue your massage within the scope of my practice, then we can do that. Would you like me to continue your service?