



**New York State  
Department of Civil Service**

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*A Guide to the Written Test*

**for**

**Mental Health Program Specialist 2 (DOCCS)  
Exam No. 25-533**

Test Date: February 9, 2013

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*Governor*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this test guide to familiarize you with the Mental Health Program Specialist 2 (DOCCS) written test. This test guide provides a general description of the subject areas to be tested and an explanation of the different types of questions that will be presented.

The Mental Health Program Specialist 2 (DOCCS) written test has a time allowance of 4 hours. The test will cover the following subject areas:

1. **Ensuring effective inter/intra agency communications** – These questions will test candidates' understanding of techniques for interacting effectively with individuals and agencies, to educate and inform them about topics of concern, to clarify agency programs or policies, to negotiate conflicts or resolve complaints, and to represent one's agency or program in a manner in keeping with good public relations practices. Questions may also cover interacting with the staff of one's own agency and/or that of other agencies in cooperative efforts of public outreach or service.
2. **Concepts and trends in correctional mental health** – These questions test for knowledge of current services, initiatives, programs, and trends in the correctional mental health field. Questions will focus on broad concepts rather than specific clinical details associated with diagnosis and treatment. Questions may include such topics as adult, youth, and forensic services; residential alternatives; psychiatric rehabilitation; consumer involvement; and correctional mental health programs and services.
3. **Preparing written material** – These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately, and 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. You must then choose, from four suggestions, the best order for the sentences.
4. **Program planning and evaluation** – These questions test for a knowledge of basic concepts and techniques in such areas as the planning function, factors involved in implementing new procedures or programs, and evaluating their results and effectiveness. The questions are conceptual in approach and fundamental in level; they do not involve the manipulation of data nor the application of quantitative methods.

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 will be presented and how to correctly answer it. Read each explanation carefully. This test guide provides at least one **SAMPLE QUESTION** for each multiple-choice subject area. The sample questions will be similar to what will be presented on the actual test. This test guide provides the **SOLUTION** and correct answer(s) to the samples presented. You should study these in order to understand how the correct or best answers were determined.

## **SUBJECT AREA 1**

**ENSURING EFFECTIVE INTER/INTRA AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS:** These questions will test candidates' understanding of techniques for interacting effectively with individuals and agencies, to educate and inform them about topics of concern, to clarify agency programs or policies, to negotiate conflicts or resolve complaints, and to represent one's agency or program in a manner in keeping with good public relations practices. Questions may also cover interacting with the staff of one's own agency and/or that of other agencies in cooperative efforts of public outreach or service.

**TEST TASK:** You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of how best to interact with agency staff and the public.

### **SAMPLE QUESTION:**

A staff member comes to your office, expressing anger about a decision you recently made. Which one of the following should be your **first** response to this staff member?

- A. Interrupt to say you cannot discuss the situation until the staff member calms down.
- B. Say you are sorry that your decision has negatively affected the staff member.
- C. Listen and express understanding that your decision upset the staff member.
- D. Explain the reasons for your decision to the staff member.

### **SOLUTION:**

**Choice A** is not correct. It would be inappropriate to interrupt the staff member. In addition, saying that you cannot discuss the situation until the staff member calms down will likely aggravate the staff member further.

**Choice B** is not correct. Acknowledging that your decision has negatively affected the staff member weakens your position and your decision.

**Choice C** is the correct answer to this question. By listening and expressing understanding that your decision upset the staff member, you demonstrate that you have heard and understand the staff member's feelings and point of view.

**Choice D** is not correct. While an explanation of the reasons for your decision may be appropriate at a later time, at this moment, the staff member is angry and would not be receptive to such an explanation.

*The correct answer to this sample question is C.*

## **SUBJECT AREA 2**

**CONCEPTS AND TRENDS IN CORRECTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH:** These questions test for knowledge of current services, initiatives, programs, and trends in the correctional mental health field. Questions will focus on broad concepts rather than specific clinical details associated with diagnosis and treatment. Questions may include such topics as adult, youth, and forensic services; residential alternatives; psychiatric rehabilitation; consumer involvement; and correctional mental health programs and services.

**TEST TASK:** You will be presented with questions in which you must apply knowledge of current issues, initiatives, programs, and trends in the correctional mental health field.

### **SAMPLE QUESTION:**

The INITIAL focus of **most** family psychoeducation programs is to assist families of mentally-ill individuals to do which one of the following?

- A. acknowledge their responsibility for causing the illness
- B. reach an agreement with the patient on the cause of the illness
- C. understand the dynamics of the specific illness
- D. learn to treat the illness at home

### **SOLUTION:**

**Choice A** is not correct. You would not imply that the families were the cause of the mental illness or have them take responsibility. The focus should be on understanding the illness and trying to help the mentally-ill individual, not placing blame on others.

**Choice B** is not correct. The initial focus would not be to reach an agreement with the patient on the cause of the illness. The patient may not understand the cause of the mental illness or may not be functioning in the capacity to make any decisions or agreements.

**Choice C** is the correct answer to this question. The initial focus of a family psychoeducation program is to assist families of mentally-ill individuals understand the dynamics of the specific illness. By understanding the dynamics of the illness, the family would be more equipped to help the mentally-ill individual. It would be difficult for the family to help a mentally-ill individual when they do not understand what is happening to the individual.

**Choice D** is not correct. You would have to understand the dynamics of the illness first. The individual may not be able to be treated at home. If the individual can be treated at home, that would be determined after the initial focus of understanding the dynamics of the specific illness.

The correct answer to this sample question is C.

## **SUBJECT AREA 3**

**PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL:** These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately, and 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. You must then choose, from four suggestions, the best order for the sentences.

**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:** Read the information given; then select the choice which presents the information most clearly and accurately.

Frank was discussing the project with Bill. Bill received a call on his cell phone. Because of this, Frank left the room.

Which one of the following best presents the information given above?

- A. Frank was discussing the project with Bill, but he left the room because Bill received a call on his cell phone.
- B. Frank was discussing the project with Bill, but he left the room because he received a call on his cell phone.
- C. Frank was discussing the project with Bill, but Bill received a call on his cell phone, so he left the room.
- D. Bill received a call on his cell phone when Frank was discussing the project with him, so he left the room.

**Explanation:** Choice B sounds as if it was FRANK who received the call. Choices C and D sound as if it was Bill who left the room. Choice A makes it clear that BILL received a call and that FRANK left the room. Choice A is the BEST ANSWER because it is the only choice that is clear and accurate.

### **SUBJECT AREA 3 (continued)**

**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 the information together and make a choice.
2. Before actually deciding upon a 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 an occupation is an important decision to make.

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

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

**Explanation:** The best arrangement of the sentences is 4-2-3-1. Sentence 4 introduces the main idea of the paragraph: "choosing an occupation." 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 the question.

## **SUBJECT AREA 4**

**PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION:** These questions test for a knowledge of basic concepts and techniques in such areas as the planning function, factors involved in implementing new procedures or programs, and evaluating their results and effectiveness. The questions are conceptual in approach and fundamental in level; they do not involve the manipulation of data nor the application of quantitative methods.

**TEST TASK:** You will be provided with multiple-choice questions and be required to select the best alternative.

### **SAMPLE QUESTION:**

“Given a set of goals and possibly some broad program parameters, the process of converting goals into objectives, defining relevant target populations and formulating specific interventions, or designing a system, for successful implementation, the purpose of which is to obtain the goals and objectives” BEST defines which one of the following functions?

- A. execution
- B. monitoring
- C. program planning
- D. outcome evaluation

**SOLUTION:** *To answer this question, evaluate all the answers.*

**Choice A:** *Execution, or implementation, is the process of carrying out a program plan. By executing or implementing the program plan it is expected that the goals and objectives will be obtained. This choice is NOT the best one.*

**Choice B:** *Monitoring is the process of determining whether the program is being implemented as planned. If the plan is not being carried out as intended, we will not be certain that the outcomes, whether successful or unsuccessful, can be attributed to the program. This choice is NOT the best one.*

**Choice C:** *Goals and objectives describe the intended outcomes of a program. Defining relevant target populations and formulating specific interventions, or designing a system for successful implementation, are elements of a plan. The purpose of a program plan is to obtain its goals and objectives. This is the BEST choice.*

**Choice D:** *Outcome evaluation is the process of measuring the results of a program in order to determine whether the goals and objectives have been obtained. It results in an objective statement regarding the degree of success or failure of a program. This choice is NOT the best one.*

*The correct answer to this sample question is C.*

## **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 familiarize yourself with what the test will cover.
- Study and review the subject areas to 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.

It is the policy of the New York State Department of Civil Service to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure effective communication of information to individuals with disabilities. If you need an auxiliary aid or service to make the information in this test guide available to you, please contact the New York State Department of Civil Service Public Information Office at (518) 457-9375.

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