



# Examination Preparation Booklet

Social Welfare Examiner Series  
for Counties, Municipalities and  
Non-Teaching School District Personnel

Booklet No. 3



CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, INC.  
LOCAL 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO  
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Booklet #3

# **Social Welfare Examiner Series for Counties, Municipalities and Non-Teaching School District Personnel**

The CSEA Examination Preparation Booklet Series is designed to help members prepare for New York State and local government civil service examinations. This booklet is designed for practice purposes only and its contents may not conform to that of any particular civil service examination

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## SOCIAL WELFARE EXAMINER SERIES

This booklet is designed to assist CSEA members working in counties and municipalities who are taking promotional exams in the Social Welfare Examiner series. Because these exams are decentralized, we can't know for sure which topics will be covered on the exam in your geographic area. It's important that you check your exam announcement carefully to determine which subjects are going to be included in the exam. This booklet contains review work in the areas most commonly tested:

Supervision and Administration Interviewing  
Understanding Social and Human Relations Problems

Sometimes exams in this series include sections on Preparing Written Material or understanding and Interpreting Written Material. If your exam includes one or both of these, you may want to refer to booklets of the same title available through CSEA, Inc. They contain practice questions in these areas with full explanations, and may be ordered from CSEA/LEAP (call 518-785-4669 for an order form).

It's best to spread your studying out over a fairly long period of time, if that's possible. Try to answer the questions in this booklet twice, leaving a few weeks in between each attempt. Reviewing the questions and answers carefully will help you understand why you've missed certain questions. On the following page is a checklist to help you analyze any patterns you may have that could lower your score.

Good luck!

DIAGNOSTIC WORKSHEET  
FOR THE SOCIAL WELFARE EXAMINER SERIES

For each question you answered incorrectly, go through the checklist below and place the number of the question missed next to each trait exhibited. This is designed to give you more insight into why you answered a problem incorrectly. By working to improve your abilities in these areas, you should notice an improvement in your scores.

<u>Question Number(s)</u>	<u>Trait Exhibited</u>
_____	1. I jumped to an incorrect conclusion.
_____	2. I misinterpreted what the question was asking.
_____	3. I had little confidence I could solve the problem.
_____	4. I didn't break the problem down into more easily understood parts.
_____	5. I knew I couldn't solve the problem, so I gave up and guessed.
_____	6. I made a careless error.
_____	7. I "followed a hunch" without checking it through.
_____	8. I didn't step back and evaluate the reasonableness of my solution.
_____	9. I worked mechanically because I knew it was hopeless.
_____	10. I didn't check my work.
_____	11. I became bored and frustrated, and I took a guess.
_____	12. I was inconsistent in my interpretation of parts of the question.
_____	13. I didn't try to visualize the problem.
_____	14. I misinterpreted part of the question.
_____	15. I tried to answer the question without realizing that my understanding of a section of the question was vague.

## SUPERVISION AND ADMINISTRATION

This is an area often tested on the Social Welfare Examiner Series. There are usually fifteen questions on this section. We've included twenty-five questions, some of them former exam questions, for you to practice with. An answer key and explanations are provided in the Self Study Guide at the back of the booklet. Before you begin, we suggest you read the following section on "Points to Keep in Mind When Answering Supervisory Exam Questions"

### POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN ANSWERING SUPERVISORY EXAM QUESTIONS

1. Avoid inconsistency
2. Always give employees a chance to explain their actions before taking disciplinary action. Don't allow too much time for a "cooling off" period before disciplining an employee
3. Be specific in your criticisms
4. Delegate responsibility wisely
5. Do not argue or lose your temper, and avoid being impatient
6. Promote mutual respect and be fair, impartial and open-minded
7. Keep in mind that asking for employees' advice and input can be helpful in decision making
8. If you make promises, keep them
9. Always keep the feelings, abilities, dignity and motives of your staff in mind
10. Remain loyal to your employees' interests
11. Never criticize employees in front of others
12. Admit mistakes. Don't place blame on your employees, or make excuses
13. Be reasonable in your expectations, give complete instructions, and establish well planned goals
14. Be knowledgeable about work details and procedures, but avoid becoming bogged down in detail
15. Avoid supervising too closely or too loosely. Employees should also view you as an approachable supervisor
16. Remember that employees' personal problems may affect job performance, but become involved only when appropriate
17. Work to develop workers, and to instill a feeling of cooperation while working toward mutual goals

18. Do not overpraise or underpraise, be properly appreciative
19. Never ask an employee to discipline someone for you
20. A complaint, even if unjustified, should be taken seriously

## SUPERVISION AND ADMINISTRATION

For each of the questions listed below, select the best of the four possible choices given.

1. Your unit is behind in its caseload. One of several new examiners complains to you that she cannot process cases quickly enough yet due to her inexperience. Of the following, your best course of action would be to:
  - a. reassign some of her cases temporarily
  - b. tell her you have confidence she'll be able to handle the caseload
  - c. have her attend the training again
  - d. try to determine what specific areas she is having trouble with
  
2. John, an employee you supervise, made an error in interpreting a regulation in a series of cases. To correct the error, several people must now redo a great deal of work. John continues to dwell on the error, and is depressed about it. The best action you could take would be to:
  - a. try and help John focus on what he can learn from the situation
  - b. ignore John's negative behavior
  - c. point out John's strengths often
  - d. tell John to stop thinking about the past
  
3. While supervising a new examiner, you stress that you are unhappy with her interviewing style. You ask her to start treating clients better. Your action was:
  - a. correct because treating a client with respect is an underlying value of the department
  - b. incorrect because the examiner is new and needs to develop her style
  - c. incorrect because your feedback was not specific enough
  - d. correct because you are responsible for the way clients are treated in your unit
  
4. You have assigned an ongoing task to a new examiner and have given him a set of instructions. To be sure he understands the instructions, it would be most advisable to:
  - a. ask him to explain the instructions to you
  - b. work with the examiner the first day
  - c. ask him if he understood the instructions
  - d. check very often on his progress

5. Which of the following is not considered good supervisory practice?
- to be accessible to the staff you supervise at all times
  - to be firm and positive when taking disciplinary action
  - to help workers set professional goals
  - all of the above choices are good supervisory practices
6. The chief welfare examiner comes to you with a complaint that one of the examiners you supervise, who is usually competent, has assigned a client to an incorrect category. You should first:
- have the examiner explain to your supervisor why he assigned the wrong category
  - find out why the wrong category was used, and then explain this to your supervisor
  - tell your supervisor you will see that the mistake is corrected
  - explain to your supervisor that your staff is very overworked and mistakes are inevitable
7. When planning the activities of his or her unit, a supervisor should:
- always work on the planning alone or with a supervisor
  - assign more difficult tasks to workers who have been in the unit longer
  - involve the employees in the planning as much as possible
  - decide in advance how instructions are to be given to the staff

Which of the following is correct?

- only choices I and III
  - only choice IV
  - only choices I, II and IV
  - only choices III and IV
8. You have been carefully observing one of the workers under your supervision. You notice she is losing weight and becoming increasingly irritable. She shows little interest in her job and has a difficult time concentrating after lunch. When given assignments she complains of being very tired. It is reasonable to assume that:
- the examiner is overwhelmed by her job
  - the examiner is having difficult emotional problems
  - the examiner is probably having problems with substance abuse
  - none of the above



9. Examiners must often deal with changing regulations. Which of the following will least minimize the stress to frontline workers caused by the changes?
- explaining that the people who designed the changes are highly experienced and trained
  - identifying the benefits to the agency, clients and themselves
  - carefully explaining the reasons for the changes
  - pointing out what procedures and regulations remain intact
10. During an examiner's performance evaluation, you should do all of the following except:
- examine his or her ability to manage time
  - set standards to evaluate the examiner by
  - observe how he or she responds to your authority as a supervisor
  - help the examiner set goals to be completed by the next evaluation
11. One of the examiners in your unit comes to you with a complaint about a form. You feel the complaint is inconsequential and petty. Of the following, you should:
- point out that the examiner is complaining about an insignificant matter
  - ask if the examiner would like a counseling session
  - tell the examiner to discuss the problem with your supervisor
  - take the complaint seriously
12. All of the following would be considered poor supervisory practice, except:
- never admitting mistakes in front of those you supervise
  - taking credit for the work of others
  - rarely praising employees
  - being consistent with those you supervise
13. During a private discussion with an examiner you stress that you are unhappy with her attitude. This action was:
- correct because some disciplinary measure needed to be taken
  - incorrect because you most likely have hurt her feelings
  - incorrect because you were not specific enough in your criticism
  - correct because the only way to solve problems is to confront them

14. Of the following, it is best to:
- assign unpleasant tasks to the new examiners
  - assign unpleasant tasks to those examiners who are least likely to complain
  - rotate assignments
  - assign unpleasant tasks to the younger workers
15. The administrator of your unit unnecessarily procrastinates on many items that need to be completed. The result is that the six examiners that you supervise are constantly flooded with a great deal of last minute work and very tight deadlines. Without consulting you, one of the examiners approaches the administrator and explains that the examiners are under a great deal of pressure because of these management methods.
- The action of the examiner was:
- correct because you weren't aware of the situation
  - incorrect because it would make the administrator angry
  - incorrect because the examiner should have first discussed the situation with you instead of ignoring the chain of command
  - correct because someone had to do something about the situation
16. A new examiner in your unit has a habit of whistling loudly under his breath. Four of the eight examiners in your unit have complained to you that his whistling disturbs their work. Of the following, the best action for you to take is:
- call a meeting and discuss how distracting nervous habits such as whistling under one's breath can be
  - wait a few weeks to see if the other examiners complain
  - ignore the complaints, since everyone has their own quirks
  - speak with the new examiner privately, and discuss the situation
17. Lax supervision has been blamed on the unwillingness of many supervisors to be critical of their employees when it is warranted. The main reason for this unwillingness is:
- ignorance of new management and supervisory techniques
  - the desire to avoid unpleasant situations and the wish to be liked by employees
  - incompetence on the job
  - inability of supervisors to catch mistakes that are made
18. You have just discovered that one of the examiners you supervise has not done an important task you asked him to complete two days ago. Of the following, it would be best to:
- ask the examiner why he never completed the task
  - ignore the matter so that he won't be embarrassed
  - make a note to rate him lower on his next performance appraisal
  - explain that while you don't wish to, you will have to bring charges against him

19. Of the following, the one that represents the best basis for planning the content of a successful staff development program is:
- the space available for the program
  - the primary social problems of the community
  - experimental programs conducted by other agencies
  - common needs of the staff as related to the situations they are dealing with
20. Which of the following would be considered a component of "Management By Objectives"?
- allowing employees to make the majority of important decisions affecting the work place
  - reviewing the specific goals of an employee when conducting a performance evaluation
  - using PERT and Gantt charts when managing
  - administering programs by utilizing "crisis management"
21. You are chairing a meeting attended by representatives of various not-for-profit agencies. After the meeting has been underway for a considerable period of time, you realize that one of the agency representatives has been quiet and has said nothing. Of the following, it would be best for you to:
- make no special effort to include him in the conversation
  - address the next question directly to him
  - ask him if he would like to say anything
  - ask the group a pertinent question that he would probably be best able to answer
22. A problem that confronts a new administrator in relationship to his or her employees and which requires the exercise of an unusual degree of skill and diplomacy is:
- the planning of the unit's work
  - the selection of competent personnel
  - delegating responsibility
  - changing established ideas
23. Some public agencies conduct exit interviews with employees who quit their jobs. Of the following, which would generally be considered the chief value of such an interview to an administrator in a public agency?
- the administrator may be able to ascertain the reasons the employee is leaving
  - there will be an opportunity to persuade the employee to reconsider leaving
  - there will be an extra opportunity to evaluate the employee's work performance
  - the employee will know the agency cares about his or her future

24. I. The practice of making budget estimates on the basis of the previous year's budget is generally undesirable because it does not anticipate economies and innovations.
- II. Consistency is less important in good administration than improving communication skills.
- III. It is considered good practice for an administrator to be able to admit when he or she has made a mistake.
- IV. Employee involvement programs are a return to the "Theory X" management style.

Which of the following is correct?

- a. only statements I and III are correct
- b. only statements I, III and IV are correct
- c. only statements II, III and IV are correct
- d. only statements I and IV are correct
25. Good administration allows for different treatment of different workers. Of the following, the chief implication of this statement is that:
- a. it would be unfair for the administrator not to treat all staff members alike
- b. fear of favoritism tends to undermine staff morale
- c. best results are obtained by individualization within the limits of fair treatment in handling employees
- d. difficult problems call for a different kind of approach

## INTERVIEWING

There are usually fifteen questions on this section of the examination. We've included twenty questions, some of them former exam questions, for you to practice with. Explanations are provided in the Self Study Guide at the back of the booklet.

For each of the twenty questions listed below, select the best of the four choices given.

1. During an interview, a client is making what you feel are distasteful remarks. The best approach would be to:
  - a. confront the client
  - b. question the client about the remarks
  - c. selectively ignore the remarks
  - d. ask the person to stop or leave the interview
  
2. When trying to help a client focus during an interview, it is best to:
  - a. use an open-ended question
  - b. try to lead the client through questions
  - c. ask the client to summarize the situation
  - d. use a close-ended question
  
3. While talking to clients or representatives of other agencies, it is necessary to pay close attention to non-verbal communication. This would include all of the following except:
  - a. analyze each behavior individually, as it arises
  - b. remain focused on what the person is saying
  - c. view the non-verbal messages as indicators, not determinants
  - d. note discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal messages
  
4. All of the following regarding non-verbal communication are true except:
  - a. non-verbal communication is easily controlled
  - b. much of the meaning of a message is transmitted through non-verbal messages
  - c. non-verbal behaviors can reveal hidden agendas
  - d. non-verbal signals can help the interviewer to see when the client is confused, but unwilling to admit it

5. You have suspected that one of your clients is a victim of domestic violence. During an interview she tells you that her husband has been battering her. She begins to cry and explains that she has fought back at times. Of the following, which would be the best response?
- “You must feel ashamed, but there is no need to feel that way.”
  - “Do you feel ashamed about fighting back?”
  - “When you mentioned fighting back, you seemed to get upset.”
  - either choice a or choice b
6. Which of the following behaviors would be the worst to display during an interview?
- being unfocused
  - displaying uncertainty of department regulations
  - being judgmental
  - acting like you are overloaded with work
7. While interviewing, it is important to:
- ignore your own values and past experiences
  - utilize your own values and past experiences in recording information
  - explain your own values to the clients
  - be aware of your own values and experiences and how they might influence the interview
- B. There are four stages during an interview: preparation, opening, conducting and closing. All but one of the following steps are included in the closing stages of an interview:
- verifying information
  - stating the continuing responsibilities of the client and the worker
  - summarizing
  - describing any additional steps that may need to be taken
9. Two important skills sometimes used during an interview are giving behavioral feedback and confronting. What is the key difference between the two?
- they are actually two different names for the same process
  - confronting is done aggressively while giving behavioral feedback is not
  - behavioral feedback merely describes action, while confronting evaluates the consequences of behavior
  - behavioral feedback requires equipment in order to test the response of the client

10. All of the following are examples of flight defenses except:
- rationalization
  - talking about problems excessively
  - using threatening language
  - withdrawing
11. Which of the following are effective techniques for handling difficult behaviors during an interview?
- focusing on non-defensive behaviors
  - respecting silence; letting yourself and the client get emotions under control
  - giving advice
  - avoiding upsetting issues
- Which of the following is true?
- only choices I, II and III
  - only choice III
  - only choices I and II
  - all of the choices
12. Of the following, the most important characteristic for an interviewer to have is:
- a probing intellect
  - sincerity
  - conversational skills
  - a sense of humor
13. The information sought in an interview is sometimes fixed in advance by a printed form or specific instructions from an interviewer's superior. Because of this it is important to:
- use your own judgement as to whether or not these questions should be used in the interview
  - have these questions in front of you so you can read them and not miss any important points when interviewing
  - make a copy of the form and give it to the client to complete
  - be thoroughly acquainted with the purpose behind each question and understand its significance
14. Congruence in effective communication refers to:
- the speaker and the listener having the same opinion
  - the speaker being able to express exactly how he or she feels inside
  - agreement between the communicator and the agency he or she works for
  - the listener's ability to understand what is being said

15. A client tells you that he is very upset by the treatment he received at the information desk. Which is the best way to handle this complaint during the interview?
- explain to the client that he probably misunderstood what took place at the information desk
  - let the client express his feelings and then proceed with the interview
  - tell the client that you are not concerned with the personnel at the information desk
  - escort the client to the information desk to try and find out what happened
16. During an interview, a client asks several questions about the interviewer's private life. Of the following, the best response would be to:
- refuse to answer such questions
  - answer the questions cordially
  - explain that the interviewer's primary concern is with the client's problems, and that discussion of the interviewer's personal life will not be helpful in meeting the client's needs
  - explain that it is the responsibility of the interviewer to ask questions and not to answer them
17. A client who is obviously under a great deal of stress talks continuously and rambles, making it difficult for you to determine the exact problem and his need. In order to make the interview more successful, it would be best for you to:
- interrupt the applicant and ask him specific questions in order to get the information you need
  - tell the applicant that his rambling may be a basic cause of his problem
  - let the applicant continue talking for as long as he wishes
  - ask the applicant to get to the point because other people are waiting for you
18. You have been talking with a client, and you have the feeling from the latest things the client has said that some of his answers to earlier questions were not totally correct. You guess that he might have been afraid or confused earlier but that your conversation has now put him in a more comfortable frame of mind. In order to test the reliability of information received from the earlier questions, the best thing for you to do now is to ask new questions that:
- allow the applicant to explain why he deliberately gave false information to you
  - ask for the same information, although worded differently from the original questions
  - put pressure on the applicant so that he personally wants to clear up the facts in his earlier answers
  - indicate to the applicant that you are aware of his deceptiveness



19. Of the following characteristics, the one which would be most valuable when helping an angry applicant understand why he has received less assistance than he believes he is entitled to would be the ability to:
- a. state the rules exactly as they apply to the applicant's problem
  - b. cite examples of other cases where the results have been similar
  - c. remain patient and understanding of the person's feelings
  - d. remain completely objective and uninvolved in individual personal problems
20. An interviewer encounters an uncooperative client. Of the following, the first thing the interviewer should do in such a situation is to:
- a. try various appeals to win the client over to a cooperative attitude
  - b. try to ascertain the reason for non-cooperation
  - c. promise the client that all data will be kept confidential
  - d. alter the interviewing technique

## UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL AND HUMAN RELATIONS PROBLEMS

There are usually fifteen questions on this section of the examination. We've included fifteen questions, some of them former exam questions, for you to practice with. Explanations are provided in the Self Study Guide that follows.

For each of the questions listed below, select the best of the four possible choices given.

1. Which of the following are problems most of the elderly face in our society?

- I. being socially isolated and lonely
- II. dealing with the misconceptions of others
- III. having a high number of auto accidents
- IV. possess an extremely high incidence of mental illness

Which of the following is correct?

- a. choices III and IV only
  - b. choices I, II and IV only
  - c. choice II only
  - d. choices I and II only
2. Which of the following is typically not present in the life of a person who is overly dependent upon alcohol?
- a. a need for control over his or her environment
  - b. a philosophical or spiritual belief system
  - C. unresolved dependency issues
  - d. strong family support
3. I. People who suffer from what is termed learned helplessness often have had a previous experience in which they were unable to control an event or an aspect of their lives.
- II. Physical abuse of a family member has a very low correlation with alcohol dependency of someone in the same family.
- III. Parents who abuse their children often make no distinction between the reactions of a child and the reactions of an adult.
- IV. Parents who abuse their children usually desire little emotional interaction with the child.

Which of the following is correct?

- a. only choices I, III and IV are true
  - b. only choices I and IV are true
  - c. only choices I and III are true
  - d. only choices I, II and III are true
4. Which of the following provides the best rationale for increased government involvement in solving current urban problems?
- a. the cities are not as badly off as they seem to be
  - b. additional research and experimentation is needed before any action should take place
  - c. our current urban problems have solutions, if we could only explore them and take action
  - d. the only thing that prevents us from solving urban problems is public opinion
5. When communicating with the hearing impaired, it's best to do all of the following except:
- a. make sure the person can see your lips
  - b. speak slowly and clearly
  - c. use gestures
  - d. shout
6. All of the following are true, except:
- a. accidents, reactions to drugs, fevers, and disease may each contribute to mental or emotional problems
  - b. how effectively an individual reacts to and manages stress contributes to his or her mental health
  - c. there is significant research that indicates that mental illness is caused primarily by genetic transmission
  - d. a person's upbringing, his or her relationships with family or friends, past experiences and present living conditions may all contribute to the status of his or her mental health
7. Foster home placement of children is often advocated in preference to institutionalization primarily because:
- a. institutions furnish a more expensive type of care
  - b. there aren't enough institutions to meet the existing need
  - c. children are not well treated in institutions
  - d. foster homes provide a more normal environment for children

8. Multi-problem families generally have a complex history of intervention by a variety of social agencies. Of the following phases involved in planning for their treatment, the one which is most important to consider first is the:
- joint decision to limit any help to be given
  - analysis of facts and definition of the problems involved
  - determination of treatment priorities
  - study of available community resources
9. All of the following are true, except:
- most people become mentally ill because they are unable to cope with or adapt to the stresses and problems of life
  - people with emotional problems can rarely be helped enough to live independently
  - most of the diseases and symptoms of the body which plague people have a large emotional component as their cause
  - environmental and familial factors are more important than genetic factors in mental illness
10. All of the following are true of mental retardation, except:
- the prevalence of mental retardation in the general total population is less than 3% of the population
  - approximately 89% of the mentally retarded population is mildly retarded
  - school-age children who are mildly retarded can usually acquire practical skills and useful reading and arithmetic skills
  - adults who are mildly retarded can not usually achieve social and vocational skills adequate for minimum self-support
11. It is generally agreed among psychologists that children need to have certain experiences in order to develop into healthy, well-integrated adults. Of the following, it is most important to the development of the pre-adolescent child that he:
- live in a good neighborhood
  - have a room of his own
  - have nice clothes
  - have the feeling that he is loved and wanted by his parents
12. Which of the following statements about the U.S. urban poor is accurate?
- the proportion of poor persons in central cities is the same as in the suburbs
  - the number of low-income households headed by women has declined from 1979 to 1984
  - the majority of poor persons are in households headed by men over the age of sixty-five
  - children are a large percentage of the urban poor

13. Agent Orange refers to:
- a. a common type of tranquilizer
  - b. a particularly dangerous form of heroin
  - c. a toxic defoliant used in Vietnam that is negatively affecting many of those exposed to it
  - d. a psychotropic drug now banned from use in institutions because of its highly toxic side effects
14. Which of the following is true of normalization?
- a. the goal of normalization is to allow one to do whatever one likes
  - b. normalization involves making a person become normal
  - c. normalization advocates that whenever possible, people's perceptions of developmentally disabled individuals must be enhanced or improved
  - d. normalization advocates encouraging the developmentally disabled to be just like everyone else
15. All of the following are false, except:
- a. there has been a reduction of the gap in incomes between the richest and poorest Americans since 1980
  - b. a sales tax would be considered a progressive tax
  - c. research has shown a correlation between rising unemployment and increases in mental illness, cancer, alcoholism and suicide
  - d. the mentally ill are permanently disabled

SELF-STUDY GUIDE  
FOR  
EXAMINER PROMOTIONAL SERIES

## SUPERVISION AND ADMINISTRATION

As you answered these questions, it's very likely that you noticed that the questions often had a "textbook style" that may not have related much to your actual experiences on the job. This is, for better or worse, the way the exams in this field are currently structured. By practicing with the questions, and reading the explanations thoroughly, you should be able to answer most of these questions correctly on the actual exam. If you find you are still having trouble, we suggest you consult basic college textbooks in the subject areas that will be covered on your exam. Fortunately, many of the questions also require primarily common sense and good interpersonal skills. We hope that you will be able to obtain from this booklet more of a sense of what they're looking for, and an improvement in your ability to approach and analyze exam questions.

1. The answer is d. It's important to remember when answering exam questions that often the answer you'd feel most comfortable with isn't going to be one of the choices. You are then forced to select the best of the four choices you are given, even if you don't like any of them. In this case, choice a is incorrect because it would mean that other workers would have to take up part of her workload until she is able to handle the job. You may have to end up doing this, but it's best to examine all of the other choices first. Choice b sounds very nice, but it's very possible that the examiner needs more than just positive affirmations. Choice C is unlikely to be correct because she says that it's the experience that she lacks, and the training won't give her the actual experience. It's best to first try to determine exactly what the problem is. This is what choice d, the correct answer, recommends. One of the reasons people have problems with exam questions is that by necessity they create an artificial environment. The best way to deal with this problem is to keep practicing until you become comfortable with the exam format.

2. The answer is a. Choice b is incorrect because the problem appears serious enough for you to take some sort of constructive action on. As John's supervisor, you may be able to help him stop focusing on the incident. Most people care what their supervisors think of their ability, and your support may help him overcome his depression. Choice c is incorrect because it is too supportive and artificial. It is likely to make John feel more uncomfortable, and hurt your own credibility. Choice d is incorrect because it is likely to make him feel even worse about the incident. Choice a, helping him focus on what he can learn from the incident, is the best of the choices given.

3. The answer is C. One of the most important tenets of supervision is to be as specific as possible when criticizing the work of an employee. In this case, asking her to "treat clients better" is not specific enough. An employee should be able to know exactly what behavior needs to be changed, and how to do that. This example would be similar to telling an employee that he or she had a "bad attitude". It's not specific enough.

4. The answer is a. Choice b is incorrect because it is too time consuming. Choice c is incorrect because there is no way to check and see if he really does understand the instructions. Choice d is incorrect because it is also too time consuming. It would be best to ask him to explain the instructions to you.
5. The answer is a. This is a tricky question. At first all three choices may look good. However, it's not considered good practice to be accessible to your staff at all times because this may result in a constant stream of people disrupting your work. The phrase "at all times" is too extreme to be the correct answer.
6. The answer is c. Choice a is incorrect because it is passing the blame along and also putting your examiner on the spot. Choice b is incorrect because the question is asking what you would do first, and of the choices this would not be an appropriate first action. Finding out why the incorrect category was used is also unlikely to be particularly helpful in resolving the situation. Choice d, while it may be a real life answer, is not a suitable exam answer here. Choice c, telling your supervisor that the mistake will be corrected, is the best of the four choices given.
7. The answer is d. Statement I is incorrect because it is considered good management practice to involve employees in planning whenever it is appropriate. Always working on the planning alone or with a supervisor would not allow this. Statement two is incorrect because assigning more difficult tasks to workers who have been in the unit longer would be punishing those workers. Statements three and four are both considered good practice for managers.
8. The answer is d. It's very important in supervision to assume nothing, no matter how obvious something may seem. This is an important point to remember when taking an exam.
9. The answer is a. It's very important when answering exam questions to watch out for phrases like "least minimize" or "least effective", because it's so easy to misinterpret what the question is asking for. In this case, you need to find which choice will least minimize the stress of the examiners you supervise. Explaining that the people who designed the changes are highly experienced and trained is much more unlikely to reduce resentment and stress than the other choices, which all focus on more positive aspects of the changes.
10. The answer is b. Again, it's so important to read the question carefully. Choices a, c and d are all appropriate behaviors during a performance evaluation. It is not appropriate, however, to set standards for evaluation during the evaluation itself. The employee should know what the criteria are at the onset of his or her job, and be updated as those criteria are changed.



11. The answer is d. It is very important to take any complaint seriously, no matter how ridiculous or silly it may seem to you. Supervisors should be as objective as possible when listening to the complaints of employees. It's also important for employees to feel that they are being treated fairly, and the other possible choices don't do this.
12. The answer is d. Never admitting mistakes, taking credit for the work of others, and rarely praising employees are all behaviors that are considered poor supervisory practice. It is very important to be consistent with those you supervise.
13. The answer is c. Again, it is very important that supervisors be as specific as possible when criticizing employees. An employee should be told exactly what needs to be changed, and how to change it. Being told that one has a "bad attitude" is too vague and subjective a criticism.
14. The answer is c. Choices a and c are unfair to the newer and younger examiners. While choice b, assigning unpleasant tasks to those examiners who are least likely to complain, may be a real life answer for some, it is not a fair solution. The best answer is to rotate assignments.
15. The answer is c. It is very important in test questions not to ignore the "chain of command" that exists in an organization. In this case, the employee should have first discussed the situation with you. If you had refused to take action after that, the employee would be more justified in taking further action.
16. The answer is d. Choice a is incorrect because it is too indirect and could be very embarrassing for the employee. Choice b is incorrect because half of your staff has already complained to you, and some action should be taken. Choice c is incorrect because it is your responsibility to take care of problems as they arise, and four of the eight people you supervise have already voiced complaints. In this case, the employee's "quirk" is creating disruption that you'll need to deal with. Choice d, speaking with the employee privately, is the best choice.
17. The answer is b. Supervisors are often unwilling to criticize employees because they want to avoid unpleasant situations and be liked by those they supervise. If you read this question carefully, you would probably have been able to get it right just from the context of the question.
18. The answer is a. It is very important that you try to first discover an employee's reason for doing or not doing something when you answer these types of questions.
19. The answer is d. Choice a is incorrect because the space available for a training program should not be the best basis for planning the content of the program. Choice b is incorrect because the primary social problems of the community may not be most directly related to the goals or services of your agency. Choice C is incorrect because the experimental programs of other agencies may not be relevant to the needs of your employees. The needs of the staff related to the situations they are dealing with, choice d, is an excellent basis on which to plan a staff development program.

20. The answer is b. Management By Objectives involves the active participation of employees in evaluating how well they have met goals and objectives at the workplace. While choice b is not the clearest of descriptions, it is closer to describing MBO than any of the other choices. Choice a is related more to employee involvement programs, choice c mentions two tools commonly used in planning by managers, and choice d is totally unrelated.

21. The answer is d. Choice a is incorrect because it would be good to have the representative participate, if that is possible. Choice b is incorrect because it is inappropriate and would be putting him on the spot. Choice c is incorrect for the same reasons. Choice d is the best of the four possible answers.

22. The answer is d. This is actually a harder question for many people than it looks. Changing established ideas is considered to be the problem that requires the most amount of skill and diplomacy in management.

23. The answer is a. Choice b is incorrect because the exit interview is not usually the place to try and convince an employee to reconsider leaving the agency. Choice c is incorrect because it is inappropriate to evaluate the work performance of the employee at this time. Choice d is incorrect because, while it may sometimes be a nice by-product, it is not the primary reason for the interview. The primary reason is that the administrator will hopefully be able to ascertain the reason the employee is leaving. Since employee turnover can be very costly, it is in the interest of the agency to try and find out why it occurs.

24. The answer is a. Statement one is correct because it is generally not considered good management practice to make budget estimates on the basis of the previous year's budget. New programs and new situations may occur that would not be properly recognized by this method of budgeting. The second sentence is incorrect because there are few things that are more important in good supervision than consistency. In this case, consistency is much more important than improving communications skills. Statement three is correct because it is definitely considered good management practice for administrators to be able to admit when they have made a mistake. The inability to admit mistakes is a problem some administrators have, and it can decrease the amount of respect they receive from the people they supervise. Statement four is incorrect, but if you didn't know what "Theory X" and "Theory Y" meant, you wouldn't know this. Briefly, "Theory X" is the older school of management thought which feels that workers work only to be paid, don't really care about the quality of their work, and need to be watched as much as possible and closely supervised. "Theory Y" takes a more optimistic approach to workers' behavior, and feels that employees also want to feel good about the work they do, and can be trusted more to do a good job on their own. Employee involvement programs would not be considered to be closely associated with "Theory X", since they involve giving employees more of a say in how decisions are made in the operation of an organization. (This is sometimes known as "Theory Z".) You shouldn't feel badly if you missed this question, sometimes on exams questions that ask more technical or unrelated things are thrown in. There's really no way to study for these types of questions. You do the best you can, and any related background reading you can do ahead of time may help, but that's not really guaranteed either. Since these types of questions are usually few in number, doing some background reading on the topic you're being tested on and educated guessing should be sufficient.

25. The answer is c. choice a is incorrect because it is stating the opposite of what the stem of the question is stating, and you are looking for the chief implication of the first statement. Choice b is incorrect because it is not really related to what the statement is saying. Fear of favoritism undermining staff morale is not the chief implication of the statement that good administration allows for the different treatment of different workers. It would be a possible argument against it. Choice d is incorrect because it is too broad an answer. If choice c were not available you might have to pick it, but since c is a much better choice, d can be eliminated. Choice c is a logical extension of the thoughts contained in the opening statement.

## INTERVIEWING

1. The answer is a. Again, it's important to remember that an exam by its very nature creates an artificial environment that you must work with. Since you can't know too much about the situation you've been given in this question, you have to go with what you've been given. Choice a, confronting the client, would probably be more likely to lead to additional problems. The same is true of asking the person to stop or leave the interview, choice d. Choice b, questioning the client about the behavior, would be giving attention to the remarks and would possibly prolong them. Choice c, selectively ignoring the remarks, is the best of the four choices you've been given.

2. The answer is d. Choices a and c are incorrect because they are more likely to result in increasing the client's inability to focus<sub>1</sub> since open-ended questions and summarizing require more concentration on the part of the client. Choice b is incorrect because trying to lead a client through the questions can result in a client giving you incorrect information because it is what he or she thinks you want to hear. It is best to use a close-ended question<sub>1</sub> choice d.

3. The answer is a. Choices b, c, and d are all components of good interviewing. Choice a, analyzing each behavior individually as it arises, is not considered valid because no one behavior should be analyzed without placing it in the context of the rest of the interaction. Each behavior is merely a clue.
4. The answer is a. All of the other choices are true statements about nonverbal behavior. Choice a is incorrect because nonverbal behavior is usually reflexive, and the person is often unaware that he or she is exhibiting the behavior.
5. The answer is c. Choice a is incorrect because this statement assumes she feels ashamed, but she may not. If she does feel ashamed, this statement may make her feel even more upset, as she may feel you are disappointed that she is expressing feelings of shame. Choice b is incorrect because if you're asking if she feels ashamed the client might feel that she should be feeling ashamed, and that she has reason to feel badly. Since choice d states "either choice a or b", choice c is the correct answer by the process of elimination. In this case, it really didn't matter what you thought of choice c, it was the best of the choices given.
6. The answer is c. Again, when answering questions it is so important that you read the question carefully. Here they are asking which behavior would be the worst to display. Of the four choices you've been given, it would be least desirable to be judgmental. That is one of the worst traits an examiner could display.
7. The answer is d. Choice a is incorrect because it is impossible to ignore your own values and past experiences. Choice c is incorrect because it is poor practice to explain your own values to clients. Choice b is incorrect because it is not best to utilize your own values and past experiences in recording information. This would allow your own judgements to more easily influence what you have been recording. Choice d, being aware of your own values and experiences and how they might influence the interview, is the best of the four choices.
8. The answer is a. Stating the continuing responsibilities of the client and the worker, summarizing, and describing any additional steps that may need to be taken are all part of the closing stages of an interview. Verifying information, choice a, is not part of that process. it would be considered part of the "conducting" stage of an interview.
9. The answer is c. Choice a is incorrect because they are not two names for the same process. Choice b is incorrect because Confronting does not have to be done aggressively. Choice d is incorrect because the testwriter is hoping you'll confuse behavioral feedback with biofeedback. Choice c is correct because, while not a great definition of both, it does define both behavioral feedback and confronting more accurately than any of the other choices.
10. The answer is C. Rationalizing, talking about problems and withdrawing would all be considered "flight" responses, whereas using threatening language is of the "fight" variety. Even if you weren't sure initially what they were talking about, common sense would help you figure this question out.

11. The answer is c. Focusing on nondefensive behaviors and respecting silence are effective interviewing techniques. Giving advice is not appropriate in a difficult situation. Avoiding upsetting issues may sound good, but is not useful if it means avoiding dealing with the underlying problem.

12. The answer is b. Sincerity is more important for an interviewer than conversational skills, a sense of humor and a probing intellect. Another way to approach questions like this is to think of the consequences of not having each particular trait. If an interviewer doesn't have conversational skills, humor or a probing intellect these defects are less serious than if the interviewer lacks sincerity.

13. The answer is d. Choice a is incorrect because it is inappropriate for the interviewer to use his or her own judgement to decide which questions to use, as the authority to do this is usually lacking. Choice b is incorrect because reading from the form (there is no mention of whether the interviewer understands the purpose of each question) will probably result in superficial or inadequate answers. Choice c is incorrect because the interviewer will not be able to obtain behavioral feedback or probe deeply into questions. Choice d is the correct answer because it ensures that the interviewer will have a good grasp of what each question is attempting to determine, and the interview has a much better chance of being more effective.

14. The answer is b. This is a difficult question for many people, probably because it requires a textbook answer. Congruence in communication refers to a speaker being able to express exactly how he or she actually feels.

15. The answer is b. Choice a is incorrect because it negates the client's experience and makes an assumption that he is most likely wrong. Choice c is incorrect because it is too callous a response. Choice d is incorrect because it is inappropriate and too confrontational in nature. Choice b is the best choice because it allows the client to express his feelings without disrupting the interview.

16. The answer is c. Choice a is incorrect because it is too harsh a response and could lead to problems. Choice b is incorrect because it would be incorrect to answer questions about your personal life. Choice d might be a possible choice, but choice c is a better response because it explains why it would be inappropriate to answer personal questions in a more supportive fashion than choice d does. Choice d is too hardline, but if there were no better choices available you would have been forced to choose it.

17. The answer is a. You may have been hesitant to pick choice a because it says to interrupt the client, but it is the best of the choices that you've been given, and it makes sense. Choice b is incorrect because it is unlikely to stop the client from rambling, and could make him feel even more stressful. Choice c is incorrect because it is unproductive and not practical. Choice d is incorrect because it is likely to make the client more uncomfortable, and make it more difficult for you to get the information you need.

18. The answer is b. All of the other choices are incorrect because they are too negative in their approach. Since the question states that the client may have been afraid or confused earlier, any of these approaches would make it more difficult to obtain the accurate information that is needed. Choice a is incorrect because it contains the expression "deliberately gave false information". Choice c is incorrect because it advocates putting pressure on the applicant, and choice d is incorrect because it recommends letting the applicant know that "you are aware of his deceptiveness."

19. The answer is c. Again, these are exam questions, not real life so you are required to answer questions that are placed in an artificial environment. The question is asking for the trait that would be most valuable when helping an angry applicant understand why he has received less assistance than he feels he is entitled to. Choice a is incorrect because, while it is a desired skill, it won't do much to help an angry applicant understand why he is getting less assistance. The same is true of choice b. That leaves choices c and d, and that sometimes maddening situation on exams that can happen when you're forced to choose between two choices, neither of which you're too crazy about. So you have to choose between being patient and understanding and remaining completely objective and uninvolved in individual personal problems. Since the question states that the applicant is angry, and the goal is to get him to try and understand why he is not receiving as much assistance as he would like, the better choice would be to be patient and understanding. A tough question for many people. On these types of exam questions, it may be useful to remember that patience and understanding on the part of examiners and supervisors are usually highly valued by the testwriters.

20. The answer is b. On exams it is important to keep in mind that the first thing you should usually do, if it's one of the choices given, is to try and ascertain the reason for someone's uncooperative behavior, whether it's a client or someone you supervise (see question 18 in the Supervision and Administration section). Once you have an idea of why someone is acting a certain way it will be easier for you to plan an effective response.

## UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL AND HUMAN RELATIONS PROBLEMS

1. The answer is c. This section also requires very careful reading. It's very easy, when dealing with social issue questions, to jump ahead and anticipate what they're asking for without really thinking the question through. Statement one is incorrect because the question is asking for the problems that are faced by most of the elderly in our society. Statement one is incorrect because less than one quarter of the elderly report feeling socially isolated and lonely. Statement three is incorrect because the elderly have far fewer auto accidents than other age groups. A high number of auto accidents is not a problem faced by most elderly in our society. Statement four is also not true. While there is a slightly higher occurrence of mental illness among the elderly, it is not a problem facing most of them. Of the four statements, only statement two, having to deal with the misconceptions of others, is correct.

2. The answer is b. Studies have shown that those overly dependent on alcohol tend to lack an underlying belief system. If you did not know this, you may still have been able to answer the question correctly by the process of elimination. Again, it's important to read the question carefully. The question is asking what is typically not present in the life of a person dependent upon alcohol. Choice a is incorrect because there is a high correlation between alcoholism and a need for power or control over the environment. Choice c is incorrect because unresolved dependency issues are often found in those dependent upon alcohol. Choice d is incorrect because no definite pattern with regard to family support has been found. Problems occur regularly in both families that offer and families that don't offer strong support.

3. The answer is c. Statements one and three are correct. Statement two is incorrect because it is not true that there is a very low correlation between alcohol dependency and physical abuse in families. Statement four is incorrect because parents who abuse their children ironically often want a strong emotional relationship with the child.

4. The answer is c. It seems like most every exam has a few really strange questions, and this one is a good example. It looks like the kind of question someone wrote when he or she was having a really bad day. Nonetheless, you have to answer it. At least this one is more strange than it is difficult. When you get the strange and difficult question, then it's time to try and appeal the question the following week. We're looking for the best rationale for increased government involvement in solving urban problems. Choice a is incorrect because it is more of an argument against involvement than it is an argument for involvement. The same is true of choice b, since it seems to be saying that additional research and experimentation should be done before any action is taken. That leaves choices c and d. Choice c seems to be a call to action, stating that our urban problems have solutions, if we would only explore them and take action. It's not the greatest rationale, but it's better than the other choices. Choice d is very ambiguous, and it's unclear if this would be a rationale for taking action or not. Perhaps they mean that there is no need for taking additional action since the only problem is public opinion. They could also mean that public opinion prevents desirable governmental action from taking place. Since we have no way of knowing, choice c is the better choice.

5. The answer is d. It's too bad more test questions aren't this easy. When communicating with the hearing impaired, it's good to make sure the person can see your lips, speak slowly and clearly and use gestures. It's undesirable to shout.

6. The answer is c. Statements a, b, and d are all true. It is not true that research has found that mental illness is caused primarily by genetic transmission.

7. The answer is d. Here you're looking for the main reason that foster home placement is preferred to institutionalization for children. Of the choices, choice d is by far the best. The other choices are either untrue or generalizations. The primary reason foster homes are advocated is because they provide a more normal home environment for children.

8. The answer is b. When taking exams it's important to keep in mind that it's always very important when planning to first define the problem and analyze the situation. In this case, before determining treatment priorities or studying available community resources, it's best to analyze the facts and define the problems that are involved. Choice a is incorrect because it would be wrong to limit any help that is to be given before analyzing the situation. It's important to note when a question asks you what to consider first. Usually those key words aren't underlined, and it's so easy to overlook them.
9. The answer is b. If you weren't sure how to answer this, the process of elimination could have helped you. Most examiners would know that choices a and d were true, so these could be eliminated. While choice c is true, many people might not be sure. It's quite obvious, however, that choice b is not true because it is overly pessimistic. Therefore, choice c can also be eliminated.
10. The answer is d. Again, you might not be sure of all of the choices. But choice d stands out to most people as not true, and the others can be eliminated. The first three sets of facts are correct, but choice d is overly pessimistic about the abilities of mildly retarded adults to achieve adequate skills necessary for minimum self-support.
11. The answer is d. While your children may tell you otherwise, having nice clothes and being able to dye their hair purple is not as important to their development as the feeling that they are loved and wanted by their parents.
12. The answer is d. Children are a large percentage of the urban poor. Choices a, b, and c are all incorrect.
13. The answer is c. Agent Orange, a toxic defoliant that was used in Vietnam, is negatively affecting many of those who were exposed to it.
14. The answer is c. Normalization does not allow someone to do whatever they would like, nor does it encourage the developmentally disabled to be normal or just like everyone else. It does encourage the improvement or enhancement of attitudes concerning the developmentally disabled, choice c. This is a tricky question, and requires careful reading.
15. The answer is c. Choice a is incorrect because the gap between incomes of the poorest and richest Americans has increased since 1980. Choice b is incorrect because the sales tax is considered a regressive tax, since it taxes everyone equally, regardless of income. Choice d is incorrect because it is not true that the mentally ill are permanently disabled. That is an overly pessimistic statement. It is true that research has found a correlation between rising unemployment and increases in mental illness, cancer, alcoholism and suicide.



If you didn't do as well on this section as you would have liked, we recommend doing a little extra reading if this section is going to be on your next exam. Reading newspapers and magazines is one good way to keep up with issues and studies that have been done, since the most "newsworthy" research is likely to be reported there. You could also read professional journals, but these are very time consuming. Since there are usually just fifteen questions on this section, it may be a lot of work for little results. You could also go to a public library a few weeks before the exam and look these items up there. This is a difficult section to prepare for, since it is so broad. The more you keep up with current issues in these fields, and the more carefully you approach the test questions, the better your chances of success will be.

Good luck!

## ANSWER KEY

### SUPERVISION AND ADMINISTRATION

- |    |   |     |   |     |   |     |   |     |   |
|----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | d | 6.  | c | 11. | d | 16. | d | 21. | d |
| 2. | a | 7.  | d | 12. | d | 17. | b | 22. | d |
| 3. | c | 8.  | d | 13. | c | 18. | a | 23. | a |
| 4. | a | 9.  | a | 14. | c | 19. | d | 24. | a |
| 5. | a | 10. | b | 15. | c | 20. | b | 25. | c |

### INTERVIEWING

- |           |          |            |          |            |          |            |          |
|-----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>c</b> | <b>6.</b>  | <b>c</b> | <b>11.</b> | <b>c</b> | <b>16.</b> | <b>c</b> |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>d</b> | <b>7.</b>  | <b>d</b> | <b>12.</b> | <b>b</b> | <b>17.</b> | <b>a</b> |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>a</b> | <b>8.</b>  | <b>a</b> | <b>13.</b> | <b>d</b> | <b>18.</b> | <b>b</b> |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>a</b> | <b>9.</b>  | <b>c</b> | <b>14.</b> | <b>b</b> | <b>19.</b> | <b>c</b> |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>c</b> | <b>10.</b> | <b>c</b> | <b>15.</b> | <b>b</b> | <b>20.</b> | <b>b</b> |

### UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL AND HUMAN RELATIONS PROBLEMS

- |    |   |     |   |     |   |
|----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | c | 6.  | c | 11. | d |
| 2. | b | 7.  | d | 12. | d |
| 3. | c | 8.  | b | 13. | c |
| 4. | c | 9.  | b | 14. | c |
| 5. | d | 10. | d | 15. | c |