

TOOL: Using a scenario in an interview

A ready-made interview scenario, with notes on what you might hope to hear. It helps you and an applicant gently explore how they'd respond to a difficult moment in the role, and gives them a real feel for what the role involves.

"I am going to give you a situation that could happen in your volunteer role and then ask you some questions about it.

Iqbal was diagnosed with advanced bowel cancer 8 months ago and lives on his own. You have been meeting with Iqbal every week for the past 7 weeks and have been getting on well. You have lots of shared interests and Iqbal has been telling you about his life story and his plans for the future.

When you meet Iqbal he is very down. He tells you that he has just seen his doctor and they have told him that his cancer has spread and that there is nothing more they can do to treat the cancer. He says he feels hopeless and asks you what you think he should do. What would you say to Iqbal?"*

Using a scenario like this can help you get a better understanding of how much someone has thought about the role. It can also help an applicant understand more about the role and think about how they might feel in a difficult situation.

Use scenarios which are realistic examples of situations that a volunteer might face in their role. Think about what you want an applicant to say and how you will help them think it through if they do not know.

*In this case (and depending on the exact role) you may want someone to say that they would do some of these things:

- Ask him if he would like to tell you what exactly the doctor told him
- Empathise – you can understand why he might feel hopeless at the moment and that it must have been a shock and a lot to take in
- Listen – offer him the chance to talk to you about how he is feeling if it helps
- Ask Iqbal who else he has spoken to – say that if he wants to talk there are people who can help him. Offer to help him to contact people if it is useful.
- Suggest he speaks to his medical team, Macmillan, his GP, local support groups if he would like to talk
- Suggest he writes down any questions he has so he has a list
- Offer him support based on your volunteer role
- Do not offer false reassurance