



How to be the STAR of Your Community Alternatives Unlimited (CAU) Interview

How Do You Prepare?

Making sure you've read and understand the job description, consider bringing relevant samples that showcase why your skills are right for the job. Interviewing for a Case Manager or Care Manager job? Bring samples of your writing. Also consider bringing certifications to display that you're qualified to do the work.

Brainstorm some examples of experiences that you've had and tailor them to the job you're applying to. It's important to have a few different examples to pull from to avoid over-describing one example. "It can feel strange to brag about yourself, but this is the one occasion where it's completely appropriate. Come in confident and ready to show why you're the best person for the job."

What Kinds of Questions Will You Be Asked?

Though you won't know the questions you'll be asked ahead of time, you can practice the style of interviewing that CAU follows: STAR. You should practice structuring your responses by describing the Situation at hand, the Task you needed to accomplish, the Actions you took to impact the situation and then clearly articulate the Results of your actions. Remember: those interviewing you want to know **your** role and **your** impact, not the collective work or impact. Learn more about STAR interviewing.

The biggest tip is to be specific and concise. Being long-winded doesn't mean you're giving the interview panel the information they need to understand how your experience adds value to the team. Bring a "cheat sheet" to the interview with you to help jog your memory during the interview so you are sure to hit all the important parts of your experience and recall the many experiences you have to prevent the nerves from getting the best of you. Nerves are normal but being prepared ahead of time can help you stay calm and collected when it's time to shine.

What Questions Are Okay for You to Ask?

Candidate should always ask questions. Remember just as much as we are interviewing you, you are also interviewing us. Ask about the CAU culture, team you'd be working with, and even the challenges of the job you're applying for.

The job is important, but the supervisor you'd be working for might be what makes or breaks your experience. Ask questions to understand your potential supervisor's leadership style, experience, team dynamic, etc.

It's also okay to ask when a decision will be made about the job before the interview ends. This will give you an idea of when you'll hear back.

Should You Plan on Sending a Follow Up Email After the Interview?

YES! Sending a thank you email within the week serves as a follow up and an opportunity for you to highlight something that you learned in your interview that stuck out for you. It also helps HR and the supervisor remember you as they move forward in the interviewing process.

How to Ace Your Community Alternatives Unlimited (CAU) Interview

Here are some tips she shares for those preparing for their CAU interview:

1. Do your research

Make sure you can speak both knowledgeably and confidently about CAU and the position you have applied for. Having a good understanding of the role's duties and responsibilities enables you to identify your own skills and experiences which will bring great value to the position.

2. Get ready to share some of your experiences

Interviewers want you to bring your experience and skills to life. This is your opportunity to tell us about the most challenging, rewarding, and impactful projects or tasks you have worked on which best demonstrate your behaviors.

3. Structure your Answer

Practice communicating your experiences clearly, effectively and with impact.

CAU recommends you use to structure your answer is called the STAR method:

- **Situation** – Provide the context and background around the situation or task you were involved in. *Tip* - Ensure you give a specific event as opposed to talking generally.
- **Task** – Describe your role and responsibility within the scenario. *Tip* – Explain the goal you set out to achieve.
- **Action** – Explain the actions you took to address the situation. *Tip* – Remember we are interested in what you specifically did, so even if there was team involvement, make sure you focus on your own contributions.
- **Results** - Describe the outcome of your actions. *Tip* – Try to provide real tangible results to show the great impact you made.

4. Think about why you are interested in the role

At CAU, we want to understand what motivates you to serve others. Be ready to tell the Interview team why you are interested in working for CAU and in this particular role. Think: What motivates you and how does this role fit into your long-term plan?

5. Have questions ready

The interview is a two-way process, so use it as your opportunity to find out all you need to know about the role and what it's like to work and build a career at Community Alternatives Unlimited.

Ready to ace that interview? Want to get started finding a position at Community Alternatives Unlimited (CAU)? Check out our website and apply for jobs today.