



# SAMPLE SCENARIOS AND QUESTIONS

The following scenarios and questions are similar to the ones included on the CYC Certification exams. Some of them were included on the initial version of the exam used during the pilot testing. They offer an opportunity to practice identifying the key principle(s) involved and becoming more familiar with the testing process. Questions are coded to indicate the competency they are testing and the practice setting they describe.

When you read the scenarios, notice how the text describes key ideas that describe the answer. Read the questions carefully and don't assume. All the information you need to understand the question is given, either in the scenario or in the question.

The exam is formatted with a scenario first followed by one or more questions that relate to the scenario. Some scenarios initially describe a situation and are then followed by a question. Additional information may be provided before the second or third question is asked. In these cases, be sure to consider all of the information provided in the scenario before identifying the answer.

It is helpful to review not only what the correct answer is, but also why each of the other answers is incorrect. You will notice that the correct answer reflects one or more principles of practice properly applied (e.g., creating genuine caring relationships, rewards work better than punishment, focus on strengths and competence, etc.).

The exam typically doesn't ask about principles directly. Instead, it asks you to apply a principle correctly to arrive at the best answer (e.g., you have to understand the stages of group development to understand the meaning of the behavioral cues in the scenario, etc.).

## FOSTER CARE

Julie, a fifteen year old, has been late to school many times during the last several weeks. Julie's foster father has noticed that Julie has trouble getting up on time and getting ready to leave the house. When she finally does leave, she often takes longer than the other kids to walk to school. She always gets there, but often late.

1. *VB9.c The foster father has decided that one of the approaches described below will be used to address the issue. Which approach is based on current best practices?*

- a) Julie will not have use of her favorite radio until she has been able to arrive, on time, at school for two weeks.*
- b) Julie will have to get up an hour earlier on school days and leave the house earlier.*
- c) Julie will not be allowed to interact with friends after school until she has been able to arrive, on time, at school for two weeks.*
- d) Julie's foster father will deliver her to school in the car.*

## RESIDENTIAL CARE

A group of pre-teens has been working together for about two months. A number of them have begun to establish connections with each other as they have had the opportunity to get know each other better. In particular, you have noticed that group rules and established roles are beginning to emerge from among the members of the group and that you don't have to rely as much on external rules.

One afternoon you are working closely with a subset of the larger group. Each person in this group had a chore they were responsible for. As the others in the group are finishing their chores, you notice that one is behind in completing her task. When you take a closer look you realize she is attempting to complete her responsibility, but lacks the skills to do so. The next activity begins in ten minutes and it appears that she will not be able to finish in time to attend.

2. *VB7.c What stage of development is this group currently experiencing?*

- a) *Forming*
- b) *Storming*
- c) *Norming*
- d) *Performing*

3. *VB6.d Which immediate response would likely best support the optimal development of the youth in this situation?*

- a) *Ask youth to complete a different chore while you complete her original task.*
- b) *Join in the chore alongside youth to model how to complete the task and allow her to be late to the activity.*
- c) *Swap chores between two youth.*
- d) *Let the youth complete the chore on her own without interrupting and then redo the task yourself at a later time.*

## OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

You are observing an out-of-school time program located in a middle school. A small group of 7-10 year olds and a youth worker are preparing snacks in the afternoon recreation program. Youth are drifting in and out of the activity from outside. When they join the activity, they help by peeling bananas or cutting slices of cheese and salami. Some of the youth are wiping their runny noses on their shirtsleeves as they work. Some are openly coughing on the prepared food. The youth worker continues to prepare snacks without comment.

4. *VB6.d A better response might be:*

- a) *Follow a policy that only the youth workers can prepare snacks.*
- b) *Only allow youth who have washed their hands to participate, and tell everyone that if they are sick they should not handle food.*
- c) *Put up HIV/AIDS awareness posters, and only allow youth who have washed their hands to participate in preparing the snacks.*

- d) *Require a note from a caregiver for any youth that has been sick before allowing them to participate in snack preparation.*

5. *VB2.b The best way to prevent illness is to:*

- a) *Avoid physical contact with youth that appear sick.*
- b) *Mop the floors frequently with disinfectant.*
- c) *Isolate children who are ill.*
- d) *Wash your hands frequently.*

### **OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME**

A week later you observe an out-of-school time program for older youth. You and the other youth workers have become increasingly concerned about the disruptive nature of the teasing among the 11 to 12 year olds in this group of children in the program.

6. *III B3.b Which of the following programs would you implement to specifically target this concern?*

- a) *A series of 30-minute anti-bullying lessons for the next week with the whole group.*
- b) *A 60-minute social skills group with the whole group every second day.*
- c) *A peer helping program that teaches the older children conflict resolution skills to use to mediate in the younger group.*
- d) *A reading buddy program, linking older and younger children.*

### **CAMPING/RECREATION SCENARIO**

Several days after camp started, one of the youth in your group, Chris, became very upset and left the group during an activity. Another staff member covered your group while you went to find Chris to figure out what was happening.

Your experience with Chris has shown you that he behaves more like a 10-12 year old, instead of the 16 year old that he is. You realize as you talk to Chris that he is feeling overwhelmed by the stimulation of group experience and not feeling like he fits in. This has apparently been developing since the beginning of camp.

You ask Chris why he didn't say anything about his feelings before the blow up. He doesn't answer. You suggest that it may be hard for him to talk about these feelings in front of the other group members. He nods. You suggest that maybe the two of you can agree on a signal that will let you know when he is beginning to feel overwhelmed so you can arrange for him to take a short break from the group. He nods again but after several prompts he never produces a signal.

7. *VB9.b From what happened and Chris's response to you, you conclude that:*

- a) *Chris doesn't want the problem to be solved because he really wants to go home.*
- b) *Chris may have a learning disability and is having problems thinking of a signal.*

- c) *Chris is probably diagnosed as oppositional – defiant disorder.*
- d) *Chris is developmentally disabled and not capable of fitting into the group.*

It is the last day of camp. This afternoon the group will disband and the youth will return to their communities.

8. *VB7.b The best activity to include as a closing activity is:*

- a) *Plenty of time for individual journaling focused on thinking back over the week and what each participant learned about the group during the week.*
- b) *Discussions focused on the group's sense of loss and sadness at the completion of the group experience and how these experiences make people stronger.*
- c) *Discussions which acknowledge the group members' perceptions and feelings about the week long experience and how the experiences might be useful in their lives when they return to their communities.*
- d) *Problem solving initiatives that will end the week with a reminder of how well the group worked together.*

### **SHELTER SCENARIO**

You are a practitioner working in an inner-city emergency shelter that primarily serves homeless youth. The shelter serves youth who are 14 to 21 years old. Legally, in this state, runaways under the age of 16 must be reported to authorities.

One evening a young-looking female youth comes in and makes inquiries as to the services available in the shelter. She tells you she is 18, but you strongly suspect she is much younger, possibly 13 or 14.

As you interview her, she reveals that she ran away from home about a year ago and has been working as a prostitute for the past 6 months. She refuses to tell you her real name or where she is from. When you ask her what she needs from the shelter, she tells you that she doesn't know but she sure could use a place to stay overnight.

You end up in the kitchen talking with her as she eats the soup you heated for her.

9. *VB8.c As a practitioner, you:*

- a) *Have a legal obligation to talk her into staying at the shelter until a longer-term program can be worked out or she can be reconnected with her family. You have no obligation to contact the authorities.*
- b) *Have a professional obligation to make the shelter services available to her and check to be sure she is aware of the risks involved in her lifestyle.*
- c) *Have a professional obligation to contact the appropriate authorities if she leaves the shelter.*
- d) *Have no legal or ethical obligation beyond making services available to her that she has specifically asked for.*

10. VB8.c As a practitioner, you view your ethical responsibility to her as:

- a) *Providing expertise and protection.*
- b) *Fostering client self-determination.*
- c) *A combination of (a) and (b) above.*
- d) *Not relevant, because of the legal implications of the situation.*

## Answers to Practice Exam Questions

The answers to the practice exam questions are provided below. The correct response is bolded.

1. VB9.c The foster father has decided that one of the approaches described below will be used to address the issue. Which approach is based on current best practices?

a) *Julie will not have use of her favorite radio until she has been able to arrive, on time, at school for two weeks. (Although restricting Julie's use of the radio may get her attention, there is nothing in the scenario that indicates that she is unwilling to comply with getting to school on-time. Taking a radio in response to a timing problem is not using a natural or logical consequence. It does little to help Julie develop self-regulation skills or learn to think ahead.)*

**b) Julie will have to get up an hour earlier on school days and leave the house earlier.** (CORRECT – This uses a natural and logical consequence to address the issue. The scenario suggests that Julie takes longer than others to prepare for and travel to school. This strategy leaves the responsibility for addressing the issue with Julie which affirms her strengths and capabilities. Learning to self-regulate arriving to appointments on-time is a developmentally appropriate activity for a 15 year old moving in the direction of living on her own.)

c) *Julie will not be allowed to interact with friends after school until she has been able to arrive, on time, at school for two weeks. (Limiting access to friends may get Julie's attention but it also denies her social and emotional support that is critical during adolescent development. We have no reason to believe that her friends are negatively influencing this situation. Restricting relationships is not a natural or logical consequence in this situation. There are other options available that are better aligned to Julie's needs.)*

d) *Julie's foster father will deliver her to school in the car. (This takes responsibility for solving the problem away from Julie and may communicate that the foster parent views Julie as incompetent to address her own needs. There is nothing in the scenario that indicates that Julie needs this level of intervention to solve the problem so the response does not reflect the practice of using the least restrictive intervention.)*

2. VB7.c What stage of development is this group currently experiencing?

*(General Comment: Notice that the information to address question #2 is in the first paragraph. The information to address question #3 is in the second paragraph. The first paragraph comments on the group experience while the second paragraph describes an individual experience within the group context. The information that it is a group of “pre-teens” sets their ages at between 9 and 12 years of age.)*

a) *Forming (The scenario indicates that the group has been working together for “about 2 months”. Most groups move out of the “forming” stage much quicker. There is no behavior described in the scenario that fits “forming” group behavior).*

b) *Storming (The “Storming” stage is characterized by conflict, vying for leadership, struggling for control, arguing, etc. There is nothing in the scenario that indicates that this is occurring.)*

**c) Norming** *(CORRECT - The text in the scenario provides a classic description of “norming” behavior - “ have begun to establish connections with each other”, “group rules and established roles are beginning to emerge from among the members”, and “ don’t have to rely as much on external rules”. You can eliminate “performing” as an option because the text indicates that the connection process has “begun”, rules and established roles are beginning, don’t have to rely as much on external rules indicates that external rules are still needed but some “Norming” (Internalizing within the group) has occurred. In a “Performing” group, you would expect scenario descriptions to talk more about the strength of relationships/connections and group’s ability to self-govern and self-regulate without external controls.)*

d) *Performing (You can eliminate “performing” as an option because the text indicates that the connection process has “begun”, rules and established roles are beginning, don’t have to rely as much on external rules indicates that external rules are still needed but some “Norming” (Internalizing within the group) has occurred. In a “Performing” group, you would expect scenario descriptions to talk more about the strength of relationships/connections and group’s ability to self-govern and self-regulate without external controls.)*

3. VB6.d Which immediate response would likely best support the optimal development of the youth in this situation?

*(General Comment: the focus of the question is “what would best support this young person’s OPTIMAL DEVELOPMENT?” so you are looking for the response that best focuses on the individual’s growth and development).*

a) *Ask youth to complete a different chore while you complete her original task. (This response may communicate to the young person that the caregiver doesn’t believe in the young person’s competence and ability. It takes the opportunity to respond successfully out of her hands. When the task is successfully accomplished, the young person gets none of the credit.)*

**b) Join in the chore alongside youth to model how to complete the task and allow her to be late to the activity.** *(CORRECT - this response places the importance of optimal*

development before the need to complete tasks on-time. It acknowledges that scheduling issues do not take precedence over individual learning and growth. Joining in the activity with the youth demonstrates a relational approach that uses modeling and direct teaching of skills as the central intervention.)

c) Swap chores between two youth. (This response doesn't seem to offer much positive learning. There is no reason to believe that modeling of new skills will occur or that the young person will be getting any help with learning new skills. It may communicate to the youth that the caregiver doesn't think she is capable of learning. No additional relationship supports seem to be offered. The young person may conclude that getting other people to complete your assigned tasks is a better option than taking responsibility and learning how to do it yourself.)

d) Let the youth complete the chore on her own without interrupting and then redo the task yourself at a later time. (This response does not model new skills and does nothing to strengthen relationships. Allowing the young person to complete the task poorly and redoing it may communicate the caregiver's belief that she is incapable of handling her own life skills or learning to be more competent.)

#### 4. VB6.d A better response might be:

a) Follow a policy that only the youth workers can prepare snacks. (Although this option addresses the need to avoid contaminating food, it does little to teach the youth applicable skills. Following policies without communicating the "why" of a policy is not a strong teaching response. Eliminating participation in snack preparation from available activities further limits offering a "normalizing" environment that allows young people to learn important life skills while participating in daily life activities.)

**b) Only allow youth who have washed their hands to participate, and tell everyone that if they are sick they should not handle food.** (CORRECT - this is the best answer available. It addresses the need to limit contamination while offering the young people specific information that can be used to support future problem solving.)

c) Put up HIV/AIDS awareness posters, and only allow youth who have washed their hands to participate in preparing the snacks. (This is not the best answer available. Although "only allowing youth who have washed their hands to participate" addresses the issue described in the scenario, "putting up HIV/AIDS awareness posters" does nothing to address the issue raised in the scenario.)

d) Require a note from caregiver for any youth that has been sick before allowing them to participate in snack preparation. (This removes responsibility for making good decisions from the young people and invests it in the adults. It may communicate the adult's lack of faith in the young people's ability to be responsible, solve problems, and be competent.)

5. VB2.b The best way to prevent illness is to \_\_\_\_\_.

(General Comment: this question asks for information that goes beyond what is described in the scenario.)

a) *Avoid physical contact with youth that appear sick. (Although this may help limit germ transfer, it also limits important physical contact between young people and caregivers.)*

b) *Mop the floors frequently with disinfectant. (Although this may help limit germ transfer, it is not the best answer available. Most germ transfer occurs from person to person contact and doesn't involve floors.)*

c) *Isolate children who are ill. (Although this is used in some instances to limit germ transfer, it is not the best answer available. Isolation often limits involvement in important developmental activities and opportunities. It sometimes communicates to the child that (s)he is unaccepted and undesirable. It is also often impractical to implement in a child care program with limited staffing resources.)*

**d) Wash your hands frequently.** (CORRECT - this is the best answer available. Research shows that this is the most effective method for limiting germ transfer.)

6. IIB3.b Which of the following programs would you implement to specifically target this concern?

(General Comment: The ages of the younger group are included in the text of the scenario of the previous question.)

a) *A series of 30-minute anti-bullying lessons for the next week with the whole group. (There is a wide developmental difference between the younger (7-10 year olds) and the older group (11-12 year olds). The needs and comprehension levels of the two groups may be very different which may limit the impact of the anti-bullying lessons. The question doesn't specifically describe the behavior involved but refers to it as "teasing". This may or may not be "bullying" behavior; so this approach may or may not be relevant to addressing the problem)*

b) *A 60-minute social skills group with the whole group every second day. (This intervention's impact relies on 60-minute group sessions. This time period is too long for youth 7-12 to maintain focus and is not developmentally appropriate.)*

**c) A peer helping program that teaches the older children conflict resolution skills to use to mediate in the younger group.** (CORRECT - This is the best answer available. Most conflict resolution skill training addresses "teasing" within the structure of providing alternative responses, awareness of the impact of "teasing" on the other person, and sensitivity to other's needs. All of these could be helpful in this situation. Additionally, it provides the older youth with adaptive skills to provide modeling for the younger group, which will likely increase their use by the younger group.)

d) *A reading buddy program, linking older and younger children. (Although this intervention will likely help develop stronger relationships between the younger and older groups, it does not directly address the stated concern “teasing”.)*

7. VB9.b From what happened and Chris’s response to you, you conclude that:

a) *Chris doesn’t want the problem to be solved because he really wants to go home. (There is nothing in the question that indicates that this is true. In fact, Chris is continuing to engage with you to find a solution, even though his verbal skills seem to be lacking.)*

**b) Chris may have a learning disability and is having problems thinking of a signal.**  
*(CORRECT - This is the best answer available. It does not contain conclusions that go beyond the information available. It indicates that the practitioner recognizes that their information is limited by stating that, “Chris may have a learning disability.” Many people with learning disabilities have problems processing language meaning and signals. This information provides helpful guidance so the practitioner can better understand Chris’s needs and how best to help Chris construct a workable solution.)*

c) *Chris is probably diagnosed as oppositional – defiant disorder. (This answer goes well beyond the information available in the scenario and introduces labeling and diagnosing that is unwarranted, unsupported, and likely counter-productive to helping Chris develop a response to the situation.)*

d) *Chris is developmentally disabled and not capable of fitting into the group. (This response is stated unequivocally as though the practitioners knows these things to be true. Although Chris may have some developmental delays, may be experiencing a learning disability, and may have communication limitations, none of this information is verified or reliable. Diagnosing a young person based on limited contact and sparse information is unacceptable professional practice.)*

8. VB7.b The best activity to include as a closing activity is:

a) *Plenty of time for individual journaling focused on thinking back over the week and what each participant learned about the group during the week. (This response does not take into consideration the opportunity for group reflection and discussion. There will be plenty of time after the group disbands for individual journaling when the group is no longer available. Typical group facilitation focuses closing activities on helping the group members construct individual meaning from the experience and think through how the group experience can be generalized and applied after the group experience is completed. Focusing on “what you learned about the group” is not particularly relevant to future application of individual experiences and learning.)*

b) *Discussions focused on the group’s sense of loss and sadness at the completion of the group experience and how these experiences make people stronger. (This response assumes that all the group members will be experiencing a sense of loss and sadness. Although this may be true for some group members, it is typically not true for the whole group. Focusing on loss and sadness limits the range of emotion that is focused on and may leave some youth wondering if they should be feeling something different. Holding a*

*conversation about how sadness and loss causes people to be stronger is questionable, at best. It treads on deeply held feelings and offers little of help. This is not a strong approach to use when ending a group experience.)*

**c) Discussions which acknowledge the group members' perceptions and feelings about the week-long experience and how the experiences might be useful in their lives when they return to their communities.** (CORRECT - This is the best answer available. It encourages construction of individual meaning within the group context and makes a connection between the group experience and how learning can be generalized and applied following the experience.)

*d) Problem solving initiatives that will end the week with a reminder of how well the group worked together. (This response focuses on the group experience which is about to end. The more important issues is how the group experience impacted the individuals in the group and how they might use this in the future.)*

9. VB8.c As a practitioner, you:

*a) Have a legal obligation to talk her into staying at the shelter until a longer-term program can be worked out or she can be reconnected with her family. You have no obligation to contact the authorities. (The scenario provides no information to lead you to believe that there is a legal obligation to talk her into staying at the shelter. You do, in fact, have some legal obligation to report her to the authorities if you have persuasive evidence that she is 16 or younger. The question does not provide this information.)*

**b) Have a professional obligation to make the shelter services available to her and check to be sure she is aware of the risks involved in her lifestyle.** (CORRECT - This is the best available answer. You have an ethical responsibility to make services available to qualified children, youth, and families. It is best practice to explore her understanding of the risks involved in her lifestyle and to provide relevant resource information.)

*c) Have a professional obligation to contact the appropriate authorities if she leaves the shelter. (You may or may not have a legal responsibility to contact the appropriate authorities. Your professional obligation is to the client, not the legal system.)*

*d) Have no legal or ethical obligation beyond making services available to her that she has specifically asked for. (You may or may not have a legal obligation to report her as a runaway. You have many ethical obligations that go beyond making services available to her.)*

10. VB8.c As a practitioner, you view your ethical responsibility to her as:

*a) Providing expertise and protection. (This ethical responsibility is taken directly from the ethics code and is relevant to this situation.)*

*b) Fostering client self-determination. (This ethical responsibility is also taken directly from the ethics code and is relevant to this situation.)*

**c) A combination of (a) and (b) above.** (CORRECT - This is the best answer available. Given that both answer a) and b) could be correct, this is the only answer that takes this into consideration.)

d) Not relevant, because of the legal implications of the situation. (Ethical and legal responsibilities coexist. Legal obligations do not supersede or negate professional ethical responsibilities. This answer cannot be correct.)