PSCR Comms In-depth Interview
Interview Questions

Context and Beliefs of Work

1. What is your job title?

    a. If you were describing your job to someone who knew nothing about it (like to a kid, or someone from another planet), how would you describe it?

2. Describe a little bit about the community you serve (size, SES, homelessness, etc.)?

3. Tell me about the physical place where you work. (Is it a dispatch center or a station or...?)

    a. Do you work the same shift every day?

    b. Tell me about the different kinds of people you talk to or communicate with during a typical day (public, other dispatchers, fire/law enforcement, etc.).

        i. Describe your relationships with the other folks you work with (not only other dispatchers, but also the fire fighters, police officers, the public, etc.).

4. Tell me about the daily routine for a [dispatcher] in your district, if you have one. How does your day begin (or end—do you have to log into programs, get things ready, write reports, or...)?

    a. If there isn't one, ask them to list the different kinds of things they do during the day.

5. What, if any, are the stressors in your work?

Communication and Technology

6. We know that every call is different, but could you describe a "typical-type" call, from start to finish, what's your process from the moment you answer the call? (*Ask about script if they don't bring it up.*)

    a. What do most of your calls have to do with—are they fire or police or EMS—are they short or long or complicated or...?

b. In the "perfect" call, what kind of information would you be getting?

c. What are your responsibilities when you're on a call?

d. What kind of decisions are you making about that information as you get it and pass it along?

e. How easy or hard is it to communicate with the fire fighters, police officers, EMTs, and/or other dispatchers you work with?

f. How, if at all, does that process change when call volume goes up?

7. Are there times you ever have to communicate with other jurisdictional agencies? (like surrounding counties, cities; local, state, and/or federal)

a. When does that happen and are there any challenges with that communication?

8. Describe the different kinds of technology (applications, devices, equipment) you use to do your job (phone, headsets, cell phones, video, computers, etc.)?

a. What are the adjectives you would use to describe the equipment you're currently using? (old, new, up-to-date, useful…)

9. What, if anything, do you think causes communication problems in your work?

a. What do you think could help solve these problems?

10. Have there been times when technology has created problems with communication?

a. *If so*—Can you describe those problems and what happens?

b. Have there ever been times when 911 was down here?

11. Have there been times when technology has really been particularly helpful in a call?

a. *If so*—Can you describe one of those situations.

12. How have things changed, if at all, in terms of how you communicate in your job, since you began working in the field?

a. Do these changes make communication better or worse?

b. How do you think NG911 (Next-Generation 911) will change things, if at all?

13. If we think outside the box for a minute and you could have whatever you wanted to do your job, what would it be? (*this could be technology or budget or people or...*)

Closing Questions

14. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your job that you think is important for us to know?

15. Do you have any questions for me/us?

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