

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (VDBHDS) Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. It is acceptable to label someone as 'crazy' in supportive discussions.**
 - A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Sometimes**
 - D. Not sure**

- 2. Which stage involves taking action to change behavior?**
 - A. Contemplation**
 - B. Preparation**
 - C. Action**
 - D. Maintenance**

- 3. Which statement best describes privacy under the Learning Agreement?**
 - A. What is said stays in the room**
 - B. Personal information may be shared with any classmate**
 - C. There is no privacy policy**
 - D. The Learning Agreement imposes no confidentiality**

- 4. If a Peer Recovery Specialist has an attitude of being more knowledgeable than the person we are supporting, what is lacking?**
 - A. Mutuality**
 - B. Boundaries**
 - C. Empathy**
 - D. Leadership**

- 5. Open-ended questions can help to develop a conversation.**
 - A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Sometimes**
 - D. Not sure**

- 6. Recovery from mental illness can include hope as a critical factor.**
- A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Sometimes**
 - D. Not sure**
- 7. People with mental illnesses lead active, productive lives.**
- A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Sometimes**
 - D. Not sure**
- 8. Which component is described by a focus on strengths and a resource-based approach?**
- A. Strengths-Based**
 - B. Holistic**
 - C. Empowerment**
 - D. Self-D Direction**
- 9. Empathy and guiding to appropriate resources are important when supporting someone in distress.**
- A. Silence and avoidance**
 - B. Empathy and guiding to appropriate resources**
 - C. Lecturing and minimizing feelings**
 - D. Telling them to calm down**
- 10. Which statement best describes the Maintenance stage?**
- A. It involves relapsing back to old habits**
 - B. It marks the start of contemplation**
 - C. It involves planning to take action**
 - D. It involves sustaining changes over time**

Answers

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1. B
2. C
3. A
4. A
5. A
6. A
7. A
8. A
9. B
10. D

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Explanations

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1. It is acceptable to label someone as 'crazy' in supportive discussions.

A. True

B. False

C. Sometimes

D. Not sure

In supportive discussions, how you talk about someone's mental state matters because labels like "crazy" stigmatize mental illness and can cause real harm. This kind of term reduces the person to a label, carries judgment, and can make them feel misunderstood or shamed, which may push them away from seeking help or sharing what they're experiencing. It also reinforces stereotypes that mental health struggles define a person's character, rather than describing a state they're in. A more helpful approach is to focus on specific behaviors or feelings and express genuine concern and support. For example, you might describe what you've observed, ask open questions, and offer to help without judging. Using person-centered language, such as referring to someone as "a person experiencing distress" or focusing on the behavior or symptoms, keeps the conversation respectful and more likely to foster trust and continued dialogue.

2. Which stage involves taking action to change behavior?

A. Contemplation

B. Preparation

C. Action

D. Maintenance

Taking action to change behavior is the stage where plans become real, and the person actively implements new behaviors. After moving through awareness and planning, this stage is marked by observable steps taken to change, with the new behavior being practiced consistently over time. It's not just thinking about change (contemplation) or making plans and small steps (preparation); it's the period when those plans are put into practice and maintained. Once the change is in motion, the focus shifts to keeping it going and preventing relapse (maintenance). This is why taking action is the best fit for describing the stage where behavior actually changes.

3. Which statement best describes privacy under the Learning Agreement?

A. What is said stays in the room

B. Personal information may be shared with any classmate

C. There is no privacy policy

D. The Learning Agreement imposes no confidentiality

Confidentiality and privacy in the Learning Agreement means that what participants share is protected and kept within the group to create a safe space for open discussion. The statement that what is said stays in the room best captures that intention, signaling that personal information should not be disclosed to others outside the room. Sharing personal information with any classmate would violate that privacy. Saying there is no privacy policy or that the Learning Agreement imposes no confidentiality also misstates how these agreements are meant to function, since they're designed to safeguard trust and protect sensitive information unless there are specific, appropriate exceptions.

4. If a Peer Recovery Specialist has an attitude of being more knowledgeable than the person we are supporting, what is lacking?

- A. Mutuality**
- B. Boundaries**
- C. Empathy**
- D. Leadership**

Mutuality in peer support means approaching the relationship as equals, valuing the person's lived experience, and sharing decisions together. When a Peer Recovery Specialist acts as if they know more, the partnership ceases to be collaborative and the person being supported can feel disrespected or disempowered. That loss of equal footing undermines trust, engagement, and empowerment in the recovery process. Peer support is most effective when the specialist and the person served contribute knowledge and choices, honoring each other's perspectives. Boundaries help keep relationships healthy, empathy fosters connection, and leadership can guide the process, but the specific issue described is the absence of equal, collaborative partnership—mutuality.

5. Open-ended questions can help to develop a conversation.

- A. True**
- B. False**
- C. Sometimes**
- D. Not sure**

Open-ended questions promote conversation by inviting clients to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in their own words rather than giving a simple yes or no. This leads to richer information, helps build rapport, and lets you understand what matters most to the person—goals, concerns, strengths, and barriers. By encouraging elaboration, you can tailor support, ask meaningful follow-up questions, and keep the dialogue collaborative. For example, asking what has been most helpful or what challenges the person is facing invites detail and context that a yes/no question would miss. Closed questions can halt the flow of conversation and miss important nuances, though they can be useful for clarifying specifics when needed.

6. Recovery from mental illness can include hope as a critical factor.

- A. True**
- B. False**
- C. Sometimes**
- D. Not sure**

Hope is a driving force in recovery. In recovery-oriented approaches, hope isn't optional; it helps people envision a life beyond symptoms, stay motivated to engage in treatment, and persist through setbacks. It supports goal setting, resilience, and the use of coping strategies, all of which are key to managing mental illness and building a meaningful life. Because of this foundational role, recovery from mental illness can include hope as a critical factor. The other options underestimate this, since the framework recognizes hope as central rather than optional or uncertain.

7. People with mental illnesses lead active, productive lives.

- A. True**
- B. False**
- C. Sometimes**
- D. Not sure**

People with mental illnesses can and do lead active, productive lives, especially when they have access to effective treatment, ongoing support, and opportunities to participate in work, education, and community life. Recovery-focused care helps people manage symptoms, build skills, and pursue personal goals, so functioning and engagement in daily roles—employment, school, relationships, and community activities—are achievable for many. While experiences vary and some periods may be more challenging, the overall message is that leading active, productive lives is common and attainable, making the statement true.

8. Which component is described by a focus on strengths and a resource-based approach?

- A. Strengths-Based**
- B. Holistic**
- C. Empowerment**
- D. Self-D Direction**

The idea being tested is focusing on what a person can do and using available resources to support change. A Strengths-Based approach centers on identifying a person's talents, skills, past successes, and the supports they already have—family, friends, community services, and other assets—and then actively building plans around those strengths. This helps people feel capable and empowered, and it uses what's present in their life as the foundation for progress, rather than dwelling on deficits. In practice, professionals ask about strengths, map out resources, and design goals that leverage those assets, which is why this option fits best. It aligns with recovery-oriented, person-centered care common in VDBHDS practice, where collaboration and empowerment hinge on recognizing and mobilizing an individual's strengths and supports. The other concepts are related but don't capture this exact emphasis. A holistic view cares about the whole person and context, not specifically the asset-and-resource focus; empowerment is about increasing control, which is broader than the asset-based method; self-directed models center on who directs services, not necessarily on leveraging strengths and community resources.

9. Empathy and guiding to appropriate resources are important when supporting someone in distress.

A. Silence and avoidance

B. Empathy and guiding to appropriate resources

C. Lecturing and minimizing feelings

D. Telling them to calm down

Empathy establishes safety and trust for someone in distress, showing you truly hear them and understand their feelings. When you respond with empathy and then guide them to appropriate resources, you validate their experience and offer practical steps to get help, which can reduce isolation and increase their willingness to seek support. This compassionate approach helps them feel seen and supported while connecting them with the right services, whether that's crisis lines, local mental health resources, or emergency assistance if there's immediate danger. Silence or avoidance leaves distress unaddressed and can feel rejecting, making it harder for the person to reach out for help. Lecturing and minimizing feelings dismiss the person's experience and can heighten shame or resistance to seeking support. Telling them to calm down treats distress as something one should simply control, which ignores their actual emotional or physiological state and can shut down communication.

10. Which statement best describes the Maintenance stage?

A. It involves relapsing back to old habits

B. It marks the start of contemplation

C. It involves planning to take action

D. It involves sustaining changes over time

The Maintenance stage is about sustaining changes over time. After a change has been initiated, the focus shifts to keeping that new behavior going long-term, making it a stable part of daily life, and using strategies to prevent slipping back into old habits. This involves solidifying routines, continuing supports, and monitoring progress to handle challenges or triggers that could lead to relapse. The other descriptions fit earlier stages or relapse: contemplating change, planning to act, or returning to old habits.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://vdbhds.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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