Attorney Interview Questions

1. **Tell me about yourself.**

   - One of the most important things to remember is that the attorney does not really want to know about you. The attorney wants to know about how you are going to benefit her.
   - Get to the point. Avoid personal details.
   - Focus on your unique selling position (USP) and how it will benefit the attorney.

   “As a director of a nursing home, I'm responsible for a $10-million budget and I am an expert on federal nursing home laws, rules and regulations.”

   “As president of the Houston Chapter of AACN, I'm an expert on critical care standards.”

   “I'm a (Level of education) __________________________prepared registered nurse and have been a nurse for (Years) _______________ years. My expertise is in (Specialty practice area) ________________, I'm proficient in standards of practice and hospital policies and procedures. My certification as a Certified Legal Nurse Consultant™ enhances my ability to help you review and develop your cases.”

   “I'm a registered nurse and Certified Legal Nurse Consultant™. I'm an expert in hospital operations and policy development. In my (Years) ________________ years in nursing I've critically analyzed thousands of medical records, especially when poor outcomes required in-depth review. I have the expertise to efficiently review medical records to save your firm time.”

   “I've been a registered nurse for (Years) ________________ years. I'm currently a (Specify field: risk manager, case manager, supervisor, etc.) ________________. I'm also a Certified Legal Nurse Consultant™, which qualifies me to work closely with attorneys on their medical-related cases. My nursing experience and legal nurse consulting training have given me the knowledge to efficiently and professionally review and analyze medical records. This service will save you time and provide you with competent opinions regarding the merits of your cases.”

   “I'm an advanced practice nurse. I practice as a (Specialty practice area: family nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, etc.) ________________. I want to show you how my clinical experience
as a nurse and my certification as a Certified Legal Nurse Consultant™ can dramatically enhance your case reviews. Because of my (Years) ____________________ years working in hospitals I can quickly identify the healthcare issues that are critical to your cases. I'm also an expert in nursing standards of care.”

- This question is your opportunity to really educate the attorney about why your experience and credentials are so valuable.
- Be brief, then get the attorney involved by asking questions about the firm or how the firm handles medical-related cases.
- Avoid words like "I assist" and instead use words like "I'm responsible for...."
- Also, use words that denote activity such as "I created, saved, started, designed, etc.
- Emphasize that no one on the healthcare team has the viewpoint that nurses do. “Let me show you what I can do for you.”
- Emphasize the education, training and certification you have in the field of legal nurse consulting.
- Show prospects the Core Curriculum for Legal Nurse Consulting® curriculum. They are usually quite impressed with the vast volume of content for which you are held accountable.
- Once you have extensive CLNC® experience, use letters of recommendation.

2. Who have you worked for before as a Certified Legal Nurse Consultant™? How long have you been doing this?

- Be honest.
- Focus on the fact that while you've not had experience with an attorney, this process is not new to you.
- Instead focus on your years of nursing experience and the fact that you critique medical records and care on a daily basis.

“I am just getting started working with attorneys as a Certified Legal Nurse Consultant™, but I have been reviewing medical records throughout my nursing practice. As a CLNC® consultant, I have learned how to use that expertise to help attorneys like you save time while giving you a more thorough record review and a solid work product you can rely on.”

“I have been reviewing medical records for (Years) _____ years. In my clinical setting we commonly review records for optimal outcomes and analyze, compare and contrast them with current standards of care. I have evaluated standard of care issues and identified deviations from standards of care. The only difference is that my opinion was given to my nursing

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director instead of rendering it to an attorney. To answer your question, actually, you are my first attorney to work with as a CLNC® consultant.”

“I've not yet done cases for attorneys; however, I have worked on hundreds of cases in the hospital setting. I review medical records when outcomes are not favorable. We scrutinize the records for deviations from the standard of care, research the current standard of care, and revise or develop policies and procedures to define and implement standards of care. As a nurse, I give my opinion and research to a nursing administrator, as a CLNC® consultant, I give it to you. I am certain you would be interested in my findings on your case.”

“I have been consulting with attorneys for (Years) _____ years and have worked with both plaintiff and defense. Because I have experience with both sides, I can give you a better perspective on your case.”

3. **What makes you qualified to do this?**

- Focus on your nursing and chart review experience.
- Focus on your education and CLNC® Certification.
- Use letters of recommendation.
- Focus on your USP.
- Show samples of your work product.
- Do not focus on traits that are common to most professionals, such as attention to detail, organization, reliable, meet deadlines.
- Do not focus on your weaknesses.
- Mention your ability to access resources like expert witnesses and standards of care.
- Do your research and customize your answer to the attorney.

“𝑋 years of nursing experience.”

“I critique care on a daily basis – not only nursing care, but medical practice and the practice of ancillary disciplines.”

“I've got 15 years experience at the bedside. I'm an expert on what the real healthcare world is like.”

“As a nurse practitioner, I am uniquely qualified to assess the medical and nursing issues in a case.”

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“I am an expert on the inner working of a hospital, Joint Commission accreditation, staffing, delegation, managed care, and policies and procedures.”

“I'm still connected to the healthcare system, and I know its inner workings and hierarchy.”

“As a nurse for (Years) ______ years, I am familiar with hospital records. This allows me to quickly organize the records and identify any records that may be missing.”

“I am quite familiar with medical records because reading and interpreting them has been a part of my profession for over (Years) ______ years. I can quickly organize them and identify missing records as well as pick up on entries that may have been tampered with.”

“I am a Certified Legal Nurse Consultant\textsuperscript{CM}, which means I have received training specifically designed to allow me to assist attorneys in reviewing and developing cases up to and through litigation.”

“I have always been interested in the connection between medicine and the law. My experience and training as a manager involves case review and analysis regarding deviations from the standard of care.”

“I am proficient in regulatory requirements and Joint Commission compliance standards applicable to healthcare facilities.”

4. **What got you interested in legal nurse consulting?**

- Whatever your response is, keep it positive. Do not tell the attorney that you are burned out on nursing or that you are a victim of downsizing.
- Focus on the prospect. Avoid personal benefits, e.g. weekends and holidays off.

  “I like the relationship between law and medicine and my expertise will definitely save you time and money.”

  “I have a lot of knowledge that can help you successfully win cases.”

  “I'm interested in using my knowledge in an expanded way and I’m confident I can free up some of your time to pursue the legal issues.”
5. **What's your fee?**

- Perfect opening to ask for the sale.
  
  “My fee is $150/hour. Which case would you like me to start with? We can discuss a budget to meet your needs.”

- STOP THERE! Do not give a range. Do not justify your fee.
- Offer a risk-free guarantee.
- Show samples.

6. **How much does it cost to work up a case?**

- Perfect opening to ask for the sale.
  
  “My fee is $150/hr. Which case would you like me to start with? We can discuss a budget to meet your needs.”

7. **How much will it cost to work up this case?**

- Emphasize that you consult at all levels.
  
  “I am happy to work within your budget based on your needs and the complexity of the case.”

- Discuss the specific case.
- Communicate and collaborate.
  
  “Let's talk about different ways we can approach this case.” “Verbal or written report?”

- Show work product samples – brief or more comprehensive reports.
- Request a working budget.
  
  “I propose that I screen the case first and then together we identify your needs and where we need to go from there.”
8. You show up expecting to interview with one attorney and eight people are in the room.

- This shows great interest in you and pays you a high compliment because attorney time is valuable.
- Bring extra promo packages.
- Don’t act surprised. Express appreciation.
- Consider shortening the presentation to allow more time for questions.
- Focus on the power players in the room.
- Exchange business cards with everyone.
- Ask questions.
- Follow up with each attorney.
- Send a thank-you note to each attorney.

9. What can you do for me?

- Show samples.
- Discuss three to five CLNC® services.

“I can screen cases for merit. If the case has merit, I will identify the negligent defendants and the significant deviations from the standard of care.”

“I can provide a written report that is consistent with the complexity and value of the case. I will also recommend alternative report styles that will best represent the facts of the case and give you a clear picture of the significant events.”

“Chronological timelines are critical to a comprehensive analysis of more complex cases. My attorney-clients tell me that this is one of their favorite report formats. The chronological timeline can be prepared with or without my analysis so you can use it internally or to prepare your expert witnesses.”

“I can review and assess all relevant medical records prior to the incident for any evidence of pre-existing conditions that will impact causation issues in the case.”

“I can customize your requests for production and interrogatories to assure that you receive all the relevant discovery prior to taking depositions.”
• Focus on benefits.

“My number one objective is to help you win the case and save you time and money.”

“I can access information that your paralegal is probably unaware of such as AMA’s Directory of Practice, Parameters and Guidelines.”

10. What's the difference between a CLNC® consultant and a nurse paralegal?

“A CLNC® consultant focuses on nursing and medical issues. A nurse paralegal concentrates on the legal issues. I can provide an in-depth analysis of the medical issues.”

• If you are active in healthcare, stress that fact.

11. Can you help me with an obstetrical case even though you're a medical-surgical nurse?

“Yes, I can help you develop the case behind the scenes. I have RNs on my team who specialize in this area. I assure you that all my CLNC® subcontractors are highly trained and the quality of their work is impeccable”

“I can help you locate some of the best obstetrical doctors and nurses to serve as expert witnesses.”

12. Why should I hire you to research the scientific literature? We can do this ourselves.

• Distinguish your role.

“I can help you tap into authoritative sources cost-effectively.”

“A standard search will not lead you to all of the relevant standards of care.”

“I can weed out all of the irrelevant information on the Internet.”
“I can apply the relevant research to the case at hand.”

“As a part of my educational training for my (Education degree) __________, we were required to perform extensive literature searches on various topics. Consequently, I became very fast at conducting thorough research and applying the research to the specific case at hand.”

- Remember, it does not have to be ALL or nothing. Turn Objections into Opportunities.
Objections Are Your Opportunity to Educate the Attorney

1. **We already have a CLNC® consultant on board.**

   - Ask questions that probe for gaps.
     
     “Are there any needs an outside consultant could assist you with?”
     
     “Does your nurse consultant ever have more cases than she can handle? I can help with that.”

   - Focus on your specialty and certification in legal nurse consulting.
     
     “What's her specialty? My specialty is (Specialty) ___. I can assist you on (Specialty) ___ cases.”

   - Show samples of your work product.
   - Offer to testify if the CLNC® consultant does not.
   - Stress your risk-free guarantee.
   - Avoid negative comparisons and comments.
   - Build rapport with the other consultants in the office.

2. **We only use MDs.**

   “That’s exactly why you need me! My attorney-clients tell me that using an MD and a CLNC® consultant gives them the best result and saves time and money.”

   - Stress cost-effectiveness.
     
     “I can screen a case to determine whether the case has merit before you retain an expensive MD. My service helps to reduce the hours the MD will have to bill.”

   - Ask questions — get the attorney involved.
     
     “Does the MD analyze the nursing issues in the case?”

3. **I don’t need a consulting expert. I need someone who will testify.**

   - Show how you can be of service.
“I respect that you must have an expert to win your case. In fact, one of my most requested services is locating reputable testifying experts. I have a database of experts in every medical specialty. I can save you time and money by screening the case for merit and locating the appropriate experts for your case.”

- Emphasize that a consulting expert's work is not discoverable.

“As a consulting expert, my work product is generally not discoverable. Therefore, I am able to formulate in-depth reports to help you understand the medical and nursing issues of the case. I can interview clients for pertinent information. I can research the scientific literature more cost-effectively than expensive MD experts.”

4. **You're starting a new career. We're going to have to train you.**

- If you had chosen to become a lawyer, *that* would have been a new career. Remember, you are not rendering legal advice, you're rendering medical, nursing and scientific opinions.

“This is not a new career. This is an extension of what I've been doing for (Years) ___years. I have (Years) ______years of nursing experience and I am the expert on nursing standards of care.”

“I've been critiquing care for (Years) ___years.”

“I'm actually not starting a new career. I've been a nurse for (Years) ___ years. Legal nurse consulting is an extension of my (Years) ___years of nursing experience. I'm an expert in the standards of care because of my clinical experience, and at the hospital I critique medical records daily.”

- Stress your CLNC® Certification.

5. **I've been doing this for 15 years myself. Why do I need you?**

- Emphasize the benefit to the attorney.

“That’s exactly why you need me. I’m here to save you money. My objective is to help create more time for you to focus on the legal issues.”
• Stress the most commonly requested CLNC® services you offer.

“If you use my CLNC® services on just one case, I believe you will quickly realize how I could have helped you for the last 15 years. Nurses have a unique perspective on electronic medical records. My goal is to save you time and money, especially the cost of expensive experts.”

• Stress your risk-free guarantee.

“I’d like to start with one case and guarantee your satisfaction.”

6. You're too expensive.

• Start with silence. The prospect is just processing out loud. Not every comment merits a response.

• Show samples of your work.

“Let me show you some samples of my work product. I think you'll see how my CLNC® services will save you time and money while helping you win cases.”

• Stress your risk-free guarantee.

“I’d like to start with one case and guarantee your satisfaction.”

• Emphasize the benefit to the attorney.

“My goal is to increase your profitability.”

• Business cards for networking.