



Bringing People and Services Together

# You Can Do It!



**AIRS Exam  
Get Started  
Studying Group!**

# Introductions

- \* Tell us about you!
  - \* Where do you work?
  - \* How long have you been an I&A Specialist?
  - \* What exam are you planning on taking?
- \* What are your expectations of this study group?

# Our Purpose Today

- \* Agenda
  - \* Introduction
  - \* AIRS
  - \* Development of Exams
  - \* Review Study Materials
  - \* Exam info and Tips
  - \* Let's Practice

# I'M SAFE



- \* **I** – I will not let myself get sick over this
- \* **Me** - Taking care of me .. exercise, good night sleep, etc
- \* **Stress** – I’m not going to pick a fight with a family member the night before the test
- \* **Achiever** - I have achieved many other things in my life
- \* **Feel Good** – I know that I know “my stuff”
- \* **Eating** – I will not decide to start my diet the day before the test

# AIRS is....

- \* International professional membership organization with over 1,000 organizational and individual members
- \* Founded in 1973
- \* Mission to support the profession of information and referral/assistance
- \* Oversees Certification program
- \* National Standards
- \* Conferences & training for the field

# WisconsinAIRS is...

- \* Designated AIRS Affiliate
- \* Sponsor of the Get Started – Study Group
- \* Hosts AIRS exams
- \* Coordinates annual conference
- \* Promotes education and training
- \* Publishes Newsletter

# AIRS Certification Program

## History:

- \* Aging, Crisis Lines, Military I&R and Comprehensive I&R were all involved in the process.
- \* There was a 12 month process that took place to gain consensus about the certification.

# AIRS Certification Program cont.

- \* The questions were tested by several universities and I&R Professionals for validity.
- \* The certification committee carefully monitors the exams for validity and makes changes when appropriate.

# Types of Exams

- \* Certified Information & Referral Specialist
- \* Certified Information & Referral Specialist – Aging & Disability
- \* Certified Resource Specialist

# Competencies

- \* CIRS, CRS and CIRS-A/D each have their own competencies. However, everyone needs to know the scope and variety of comprehensive and specialized I & R services:
  - \* Comprehensive serving the entire community
  - \* Older adults
  - \* People with disabilities
  - \* Victims of crimes
  - \* People in military and their dependents
  - \* Children and youth
  - \* Other targeted populations
  - \* Hotlines and helplines
  - \* Crisis intervention programs
  - \* Volunteer clearinghouses

# Study Materials

- ***ABC's of I&R***
- ***AIRS National Standards***
- ***AIRS Online Training***
- ***NASUAD Online Training***
- ***Go to [www.AIRS.org](http://www.AIRS.org)***

# Glossary

- \* In back of Standards, there is a Glossary of terms used in the Standards
  - \* Examples:
    - \* Assessment – process of helping an inquirer identify, analyze and prioritize his or her needs
    - \* Eligibility Criteria – guidelines a service provider uses to determine who is qualified to receive services

# More about the exam

- \* Question format
- \* Computer based testing
  - \* Login ID test taker & proctor
  - \* Locations posted on AIRS website
  - \* Proctor U
- \* Oversight of the exam
- \* Additional study resources
- \* Application procedures

# What is the exam

- \* 100 question exam – 2 Hours 10 minutes
- \* Pass/Fail (cut-score) for each exam is established
- \* Recertification every two years
  - \* 10 hours of I&R training

# AIRS Certification Commission

- \* Oversee the review and validation of questions with assistance from psychometric experts
- \* Supports writing of exam questions
- \* Oversee the development of the test - multiple exams/questions changes

# Where can I get More Information?

- \* Visit [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org)
  - \* Applications packet may be downloaded
  - \* Test locations
  - \* Fees
  - \* Deadlines for applications
  - \* NASUAD IQ - <http://www.nasuadiq.org/login/index.php>

# Who do I call with Questions?

- \* Two ways to get answers:
  - \* Call the AIRS office at 703-218-AIRS (2477) ext. 211
  - \* Email AIRS Headquarters at [certification@airs.org](mailto:certification@airs.org).

# AIRS Certification Exams Application Guidelines

- \* Complete applications must arrive in the AIRS office at least 30 days before the test date
- \* Late applications will not be accepted

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following comments is the best way to let older adults know that you are listening without interrupting?

- A. “I see.”
- B. “Really?”
- C. “I am listening, keep going.”
- D. “I’m sure that’s the case.”

# Lets Try To Test

If an I&R Specialist is feeling stress, it is best to:

- A. Keep working until it disappears
- B. Assess and attend honestly to the situation
- C. Deny for as long as possible
- D. Ignore completely

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following achieves rapport with inquirers?

- A. At the start of the call, focus on what inquirers are feeling
- B. Suggest appropriate solutions to inquirer problems
- C. Assure inquirers that their situations can be solved with help
- D. Ask inquirers to outline their problem/needs

# Lets Try To Test

In communicating with inquirers, the I&R Specialist should strive to use a vocabulary that:

- A. Demonstrates his or her own professionalism
- B. Is appropriate to the inquirer
- C. Is the same for all inquirers
- D. Is appropriate to the inquiry

# Lets Try To Test

Demographic information can be relevant to a client's problem because it:

- A. Helps determine appropriate referrals
- B. Gives the I&A Specialist complete contact information
- C. Opens the door for continuous dialog between the inquirer and the I&A Specialist
- D. Allows the I&A Specialist to collect information on community needs

# Lets Try To Test

For an I&R Specialist to advocate for an individual, which of the following is required?

- A. The supervisor's permission
- B. A signed statement from the inquirer
- C. A prior agreement with the agency that would be contacted
- D. The inquirer's oral permission

# Lets Try To Test

An I&A program gathers information on the unmet needs of a community by documenting:

- A. Situations where referrals cannot be provided
- B. Experiences of I&A Specialist answering complex calls
- C. Areas where individual advocacy was essential
- D. Total calls minus total referrals

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following demonstrates active listening skills?

- A. Trying to understand how to apply AIRS Standards during an I&R inquiry
- B. Going into detail about personal problems similar to those of the inquirer
- C. Clarify what the inquirer is saying the details of their circumstances
- D. Summarizing the reality of the situation to the inquirer

# Lets Try To Test

Clarification occurs when the I&A Specialist:

- A. Ensures that both parties share the same understanding of the situation
- B. Understands the situations and knows how to help the inquirer
- C. Makes sure that the inquirer has properly taken down the referrals provided
- D. Is able to explain the inquirer the exact nature of the saturation

# Lets Try To Test

What is the first thing an I&R Specialist should do when talking with someone in crisis?

- A. Call for a supervisor to provide advice
- B. Provide some reassurance that the situation will get better
- C. Refer the inquirer as quickly as possible to a specialized agency
- D. Make contact and assess if there is an immediate danger

# Lets Try To Test

The process that the I&A Specialist follows to confirm the accuracy of their understanding of a situation is known as:

- A. clarifying.
- B. empathizing.
- C. probing.
- D. inquiring.

# Lets Try To Test

If an inquirer doesn't want to contact the referrals provided the I&R Specialist should:

- A. work with the inquirer to discuss any other options.
- B. explain that these are the only options available.
- C. ask the reason why the inquirer has made this decision.
- D. state that the inquirer should write down the referrals but does not have to call them.

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following situations in most states/provinces requires mandatory reporting to the relevant authorities?

- A. Sexual assault
- B. Child abuse
- C. Spousal abuse
- D. Suicide threats

# Lets Try To Test

An I&A Specialist receives a call from someone whose older relative lives in another state. Which of the following is the most appropriate response?

- A. Search the Eldercare Locator for the nearest AAA or ADRC in that area
- B. Refer the caller directly to the Administration on Aging
- C. Politely explain that you have no resources for that area
- D. Assess whether the caller has any needs that can be addressed locally

# Lets Try To Test

Why is it necessary for the I&A Specialist to know the application and intake procedures of agencies?

- A. To ensure that the client is potentially eligible for the services provided
- B. So the agency will not have to explain their services to the client
- C. To know how many clients the agency can assist
- D. To ensure that the agency will not discriminate against the client

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following is the best way of exploring the actions previously taken by an inquirer?

- A. “Tell me what you’ve already done about this?”
- B. “Did you talk to anyone before calling us?”
- C. “It might help if you could go over anything that you’ve previously tried.”
- D. “Have you made any attempt to solve this situation?”

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following is a good question to ask an inquirer in order to get more information

- A. “Do you understand why you got into this situation?”
- B. “Are you sure about that?”
- C. “Can you share some details about that?”
- D. “Why do you feel that way?”

# Lets Try To Test

When paraphrasing what the inquirer says, which of the following is used?

- A. Repeating the essence of what the inquirer has said
- B. Asking questions to further clarify the problem
- C. Giving an opinion on what the inquirer has shared
- D. Helping the inquirer understand what they intended to say

# Lets Try To Test

One of the objectives of an I&R service is to identify the types of unmet needs people have and to:

- A. share this data with community planners and decision-makers.
- B. encourage callers to contact their government representatives and demand action.
- C. inform people to stop contacting us for services that are unavailable.
- D. provide this data to the I&R service's governing body.

# Lets Try To Test

What information concerning a client's abilities will best determine if the client is able to follow through independently with the suggested referrals?

- A. The inquirer's ability to communicate and the capacity to understand provided
- B. The client's financial resources reflecting the ability to actively attend to their own interests
- C. The availability of one or more family members to support the client
- D. The client's ability to accurately record the referral information

# Lets Try To Test

What is the best response when an inquirer refuses to answer a question during an assessment?

- A. “This is a confidential service but I respect your right to privacy.”
- B. “If you don’t answer these questions, I won’t be able to help you.”
- C. “I have no personal interest in your answer.”
- D. “This is a confidential service, so you can tell me anything.”

# Lets Try To Test

What is empathy?

- A. The ability to assess a situation after only hearing a few words
- B. A feeling of genuine sorrow for the situations of others
- C. An understanding of the feelings of the others
- D. The ability to show support for another person's situation

# Lets Try To Test

What is the best method of making sure that an inquirer has written down the correct phone numbers for a referral?

- A. Asking them to read back the numbers provided
- B. Repeating the numbers provided to them
- C. Reminding them at the beginning of the call to have a pen and paper ready
- D. Asking them to call back if any numbers prove incorrect

# Lets Try To Test

If an inquirer says s/he needs someone to look after an elderly relative while s/he is at work, the needed service is most likely to be which of the following?

- A. Adult day program
- B. Assisted living program
- C. Respite care
- D. Case/care management

# Lets Try To Test

I&A problem-solving:

- A. relies upon the I&A Specialist's database searching skills.
- B. allows the inquirer to draw from the I&A Specialists knowledge
- C. is the responsibility of the inquirer
- D. involves the inquirer throughout the process.

# Lets Try To Test

When an inquirer has several issues, which one should be handled first?

- A. The one which would make the largest long-term impact
- B. The easiest one to address
- C. The one that the inquirer most wants to address
- D. The most critical in the short-term

# Lets Try To Test

One of the main advantages of empowerment within I&R is that it:

- A. means that the inquirer will be more reliant on the I&R service in the future.
- B. means that the inquirer will not contact the I&R service in the future.
- C. means less work for the I&R Specialist.
- D. helps people learn how to help themselves.

# Lets Try To Test

When searching a resource database, the I&R Specialist should focus on:

- A. the service that meets the inquirer's expressed needs.
- B. the closest service to the inquirer's address.
- C. the services that are targeted specifically for the inquirer.
- D. the service that meets the inquirer's underlying need.

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following is a reason for an I&R Specialist to ask a question?

- A. The need to know something relevant to the inquirer's situation
- B. The need to know everything about the inquirer
- C. A healthy curiosity and genuine desire to help others
- D. The need to ensure that the inquirer is paying attention

# Lets Try To Test

Confidentiality is:

- A. a right of the inquirer.
- B. applied in all situations.
- C. secondary to meeting the inquirer's needs.
- D. a courtesy that the I&A service extends to inquirers.

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following is the first priority when dealing with individuals in crisis?

- A. Determining physical safety
- B. De-escalating the situation
- C. Exploring the problem/need
- D. Referring to professional counseling.

# Lets Try To Test

When a person has threatened suicide, has a specific lethal plan, and seems determined to follow through, the I&A Specialist may first need to:

- A. call the police or paramedics and ask them to intervene.
- B. make the individual think about those who will be left behind.
- C. persuade the person that suicide is morally wrong.
- D. ask about whether there is a family history of suicide

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following is usually included in the information provided to an inquirer about a referral?

- A. Service hours of the program
- B. ZIP/Postal code of the program's location
- C. Name of the program's director
- D. Date of the program's last resource database update

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following is an example of aggregate reporting data that should be collected?

- A. Mr. Brown called twice last month to get help with his utility payments
- B. Our service is confidential and does not generate statistics
- C. We answered 900 difficult and important calls last month
- D. Our service received 35 calls in the last six months for family counseling

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following inquiries is more likely to receive advocacy from an I&R service?

- A. Someone needing information on obtaining health insurance
- B. Someone needing to find a bed in a homeless shelter
- C. Someone needing to find a job
- D. Someone needing the opening hours of the nearest food pantry

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following best describes individual advocacy within an I&R?

- A. Providing three or more referrals
- B. Reporting statistics on unmet needs for the local United Way
- C. Directly contacting a referral agency on the inquirer's behalf
- D. Writing full case histories of the inquirer interaction

# Lets Try To Test

In order to help inquirers evaluate their choices, it is helpful for the I&R Specialist to:

- A. share their own insights based on experiences with other inquirers in similar situations.
- B. understand the inquirer's preferences.
- C. start with the easiest issue and move to the most difficult.
- D. provide clear direction to the inquirer's.

# Lets Try To Test

When inquirers lack focus during the assessment, it is:

- A. the responsibility of the I&R Specialist to ensure the conversation stays on track.
- B. only natural because inquirers can take as much time as they want to express themselves.
- C. the responsibility of the inquirer to empower themselves.
- D. a signal that the Specialist needs to move on to the referral provision stage.

# Lets Try To Test

An informed choice is made when the inquirer:

- A. understands the options available.
- B. has a choice of available options.
- C. requests and receives the I&A Specialist's opinion.
- D. decides which option to follow.

# Lets Try To Test

Creative problem solving is a technique generally used for:

- A. referring the inquirer to programs which provide the needed service.
- B. handling difficult and demanding inquirers.
- C. dealing with inquirers with multiple service needs.
- D. attempting to resolve a problem when there are no available programs.

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following questions best measures I&A service outcomes?

- A. Did inquirers contact the referrals provided?
- B. Was the I&A service polite and helpful?
- C. Did inquirers feel like they were listened to?
- D. Would inquirers recommend the I&A service to family and friends?

# Lets Try To Test

## The Americans with Disabilities Act:

- A. provides a legislative mandate to develop information and assistance services for people with disabilities
- B. covers individuals under the age of 60 and is not intended for older persons covered by the Older Americans Act
- C. applies to all individuals who have a disability regardless of their age
- D. is only designed to help low income individuals with disabilities.

# Lets Try To Test

What does prioritization involve?

- A. Making sure that empathy is the first consideration
- B. Repeating key phrases used by inquirers
- C. Helping inquirers focus on the issues they find most important
- D. Ensuring that the I&R Specialist's advice is followed closely

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following parts of a database record should be checked closely when providing a referral?

- A. The location of the agency's program site
- B. The URL of the agency's web site
- C. The first name of the program coordinator
- D. The mailing address of the agency

# Lets Try To Test

In order to identify trends, which of the following pieces of information should be obtained and documented during a call?

- A. Type of service requested
- B. Telephone number of the client
- C. The street the client lives on
- D. Referrals that were refused by the client

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following is the source of advocacy guidelines for an I&A Specialist?

- A. The organization's policies
- B. The funders
- C. The I&A specialist's experience
- D. The client's needs

# Lets Try To Test

The inquirer's unstated or underlying problems:

- A. should be explored during the assessment process.
- B. should be addressed in subsequent contacts.
- C. remain the personal business of the inquirer.
- D. require a more clinical intervention from a crisis worker.

# Lets Try To Test

When searching for a program that meets the inquirer's needs, which of the following is the most important criterion?

- A. The area served by the program
- B. The location of the program
- C. The ZIP/postal code of the program
- D. The telephone number of the program

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following is an example of an open-ended question?

- A. “What happened next?”
- B. “Do you live on your own?”
- C. “How old are you?”
- D. “Is this the first time you have had this problem?”

# Lets Try To Test

When an inquirer is facing a complex situation and is uncertain how to approach the problem, the I&A Specialist should:

- A. work with the inquirer to clarify the full nature of the situation.
- B. ask the inquirer to make their own decisions.
- C. tell the inquirer what the I&A Specialist would do in the same situation.
- D. ask the inquirer to paraphrase all of the options.

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following is an example of a close-ended question?

- A. “Have you previously applied for this program?”
- B. “What usually happens when you go to the drop in?”
- C. “How do you feel when he says that to you?”
- D. “Why do you think you’ve had difficulties getting a job?”

# Lets Try To Test

What is the prime purpose of the 'closure' stage of an I&R inquiry?

- A. To allow the I&R Specialist to get to the next call
- B. To allow I&R Specialists time to deal with their feelings
- C. To conduct a final assessment of the inquirer's circumstances
- D. To summarize the referrals and encourage the inquirer to contact the I&R service again if needed

# Lets Try To Test

If the inquirer has multiple problems, in most situations the I&R Specialist should begin with the:

- A. problem that is most important to the inquirer.
- B. first problem the inquirer raised.
- C. problem that is easiest to solve.
- D. most difficult problem.

# Lets Try To Test

Which of the following best describes empowerment?

- A. Helplessness
- B. Receiving help
- C. Self-help
- D. Advocacy

# Lets Try To Test

Assessment includes the process of:

- A. writing a full situational analysis.
- B. understanding the inquirer's problem.
- C. providing three referrals.
- D. ending a call on a positive note.

# Let's Try To Test

The I&A Specialist's sister has opened a new, badly needed , home health agency in the area. The I&A Specialist should:

- A. follow-up with clients who need home health services and make referrals to the new agency.
- B. inform all inquirers about the availability of this new service.
- C. suggest the call center partner with the new agency to help more clients.
- D. inform his supervisor of the relationship to prevent a perceived conflict of interest.

# Question Key: Slide Number and Answer

19 - A  
20 - B  
21 - A  
22 - B  
23 - A  
24 - D  
25 - A  
25 - C  
26 - A  
27 - D  
28 - A  
29 - A  
30 - A

31 - B  
32 - A  
33 - A  
34 - C  
35 - C  
35 - A  
37 - A  
38 - A  
39 - A  
40 - C

41 - A  
42 - A  
43 - D  
44 - C  
45 - D  
46 - A  
47 - A  
48 - A  
49 - A  
50 - A  
51 - A

52 - D  
53 - B  
54 - C  
55 - B  
56 - A  
57 - A  
58 - D  
59 - A  
60 - C  
61 - C  
62 - A

62 - A  
63 - A  
64 - A  
65 - A  
66 - A  
67 - A  
68 - A  
69 - A  
70 - D  
71 - A  
72 - C  
73 - B  
74 - D

# Language

- \* AIRS exams use national terms:
  - \* Community-Based Residential Facility = Assisted Living
  - \* Family Care, Partnership, PACE = Home and Community-Based Waiver
  - \* IRIS = Home and Community-Based Waiver
  - \* Title 19, Medicaid, Medical Assistance, MA = Medicaid

# National Resources

- \* National Eldercare Locator [www.edercare.gov](http://www.edercare.gov)
- \* National Association of States United for Aging & Disabilities [www.nasuad.org](http://www.nasuad.org)
- \* National Association of Agencies on Aging [www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org)
- \* Administration for Community Living [www.acl.gov](http://www.acl.gov)
- \* United Way/AIRS 211 [www.211US.org](http://www.211US.org)
- \* National Council on Aging [www.ncoa.com](http://www.ncoa.com)
- \* National Council on Independent Living [www.ncil.org](http://www.ncil.org)

# Sources

- \* Information on this power point was gathered from AIRS national office and presentations at AIRS national conferences.
- \* Additional information is available at:  
[www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org)