

Aromatherapist interview questions

careertips.com.au: common questions and what they're really testing

What to expect

Aromatherapist interviews mix client consultation, safe blending knowledge and hands on treatment skill. Employers want to see that you can listen, assess risk and explain your choices without jargon.

- **Client consultation and safety:** Questions about how you take a health history, check for contraindications and get informed consent before treatment.
- **Blending and dilution technical:** Questions that test your knowledge of carrier oils, essential oil properties and safe dilution for massage, inhalation or topical use.
- **Behavioural and empathy:** Questions about how you have handled sensitive client needs, emotional moments or feedback about a treatment that did not go to plan.
- **Scenario and adverse reaction:** Questions that put you in a live situation, such as a client feeling dizzy or a request for an oil that is not safe for them.
- **Practice and business:** Questions about record keeping, oil inventory, booking software and working within a clinic or spa team.

You might start with a short phone screen about your qualification and availability. The main interview is often in person or by video, with a practical blending task and a client consultation roleplay. Some employers ask you to talk through a recent treatment case or show how you would record a session in their booking system.

1. Walk me through how you consult a new client and decide on a blend.

Why they ask

This shows whether you work safely and systematically, not just from personal preference. Employers want to hear that you ask about health history, medications and skin sensitivity before oils are chosen.

How to structure your answer

A step by step walk through of your consultation process. Start with the intake form, then move to verbal questions, then explain how you match oils to the client's goal.

Example answer

"I start with a written intake form that covers health history, medications, allergies and skin conditions. Then I ask open questions about what the client wants from the session, such as help winding down, easing muscle tightness or caring for dry skin. I explain that some oils are not suitable during pregnancy or with certain conditions, and I check if they are seeing another health practitioner. Once I have that picture, I choose one or two essential oils that match the goal and blend them with a carrier oil at a safe dilution for their skin. I always do a small patch test on the inner arm and wait a few minutes before starting the full treatment. If anything changes during the massage, I adjust the blend or stop and check in."

2. Tell me about a time you had to adapt a treatment because a client reacted poorly to an oil.

Why they ask

Aromatherapists work with strong plant compounds, so a calm response to a reaction matters. This question tests your safety awareness and how you keep the client comfortable while solving the problem.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Situation, Task, Action, Result. Keep the focus on what you noticed, what you did first and how you followed up.

Example answer

"I had a client who wanted a warming blend for lower back tension. During the massage she mentioned a slight tingle on her legs that was becoming uncomfortable. I stopped straight away, wiped the oil off with a warm towel and checked her skin. There was mild redness but no swelling. I explained that some people react to certain oils even at low dilution and offered a plain carrier oil massage instead. She was happy to continue. Afterwards I recorded the reaction and the oil used, and at her next visit we chose a gentler blend. She stayed with me for regular sessions because she felt I took the reaction seriously rather than pushing through."

3. A client asks for a strong essential oil blend for a headache, but they are pregnant. What do you do?

Why they ask

This is a judgement under pressure question. It tests whether you can hold a boundary, explain why, and still offer a helpful treatment without making the client feel dismissed.

How to structure your answer

Acknowledge the request, state the safety concern clearly, offer a safe alternative, and confirm the client is comfortable with the plan. Do not diagnose or give medical advice.

Example answer

"I would thank her for telling me she is pregnant, because that changes what I can safely use. I would explain that some essential oils are best avoided during pregnancy, especially in stronger blends, and that I am not able to offer a strong headache blend. Instead I would suggest a gentle peppermint or lavender inhalation at a very low dilution, or a cool compress on the forehead and neck. I would also ask if her midwife or doctor has given her any guidance on aromatherapy. If she wanted something for the headache itself, I would encourage her to speak with her healthcare provider. I would still offer a relaxing carrier oil massage or a foot and hand treatment, so she leaves feeling cared for and not turned away."

4. How do you ensure safe dilutions when blending for massage and topical use?

Why they ask

This is a technical question. Employers want to know you use measured ratios, not drops guessed by eye, and that you understand the difference between massage blends and leave on products.

How to structure your answer

Explain your method, the equipment you use and how you adjust for the client. Mention any guidelines or training you follow.

Example answer

"I use a measuring tool rather than counting drops by eye, especially when I am making a larger batch. For a full body massage I work to a low dilution, and for a small area like a stiff neck or a spot treatment I might use a slightly stronger blend. I always check the essential oil's recommended maximum and take into account the client's age, skin condition and whether they are pregnant or breastfeeding. I make blends fresh for each client where possible, label the bottle with the date and oils used, and store it away from heat and light. If I am ever unsure, I use less essential oil and add more carrier oil. It is easier to add a drop than to fix a blend that is too strong."

5. Describe a time you managed a difficult client conversation, for example about unrealistic expectations.

Why they ask

Aromatherapy clients sometimes expect a single session to fix a long term issue. This question reveals how you educate without overpromising, and how you keep the relationship respectful.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Set the scene briefly, explain what the client wanted, what you said, and how the relationship continued.

Example answer

"A client booked me because she wanted to stop taking her prescribed medication for anxiety using essential oils alone. I listened to her frustration first, because she had been feeling stuck. Then I explained clearly that aromatherapy can support relaxation and sleep, but it is not a replacement for medical treatment or psychology. I told her I could not promise she would stop her medication, and that any change to her prescription needed to go through her doctor. I offered to focus our sessions on calming blends, breathing and a simple home routine she could use alongside her existing care. She decided to keep her doctor's appointment and booked a weekly massage with me. Over time she said the sessions helped her feel more in control, and she valued that I was honest with her from the start."

6. How do you keep treatment records and oil inventory organised in a busy clinic?

Why they ask

This question checks that you can work inside a team and a booking system without losing client notes or running out of stock. It is especially relevant for spa and clinic roles.

How to structure your answer

A process and tool walk through. Talk about what you record after each session, how you use software, and how you manage stock levels.

Example answer

"After every treatment I record the date, the oils and carrier oil used, the dilution, the areas treated and any client feedback or reaction. I use Cliniko or a similar system to keep those notes attached to the client file, so any colleague can see what was used last time. If I notice a pattern, such as a client preferring a lighter scent, I note that too. For inventory I keep a simple count of each essential oil and carrier oil, and I check it at the end of each week. When something is running low, I add it to the order list before it hits the last few millilitres. I also label every blend with the date and keep them in a cool cupboard. That way I am not hunting for stock during a busy shift, and I can reorder in time."