

Writing Strong Resume Bullet Points: Mental Health & Counselling Industries

Turn experiences into impact using the SAR method

What do employers look for in these industries?

Effective resumes in these industries highlight measurable results, such as progress toward therapeutic goals, strengthened coping skills, improved emotional well-being, or reduced crisis-intervention needs. Overall, this handout will help you write strong accomplishment statements for roles in mental health and counselling.

Tip: Remember to [customize your resume](#) by incorporating keywords from the job description. For additional guidance on formatting and structure, review our [Resume/CV templates](#).

SAR Method: Core Framework

- ✓ Your resume must contain concise bullet points to describe your experiences
- ✓ SAR statements effectively outline your accomplishments in a simple, informative way

What is SAR?

S = Situation: What was the context? (e.g., problems you encountered or tasks you took on)

A = Action: What did you specifically do? (e.g., use a strong past-tense [action verb](#))

R = Result: What changed because of your actions? (e.g., improvements or outcomes)

Note: When formatting a resume bullet point, the sequence should be Action + Situation + Result. Also, try to incorporate numbers, percentages, or dollar amounts to further demonstrate your impact.

A weak example for a summer internship could be:

- Assisted clients with mental health concerns

A strong example for a summer internship using the SAR method could be:

- Facilitated weekly psychoeducational workshops for 20 individuals experiencing anxiety-related challenges, with 80% reporting improved coping skills through feedback surveys

How the SAR Method was implemented:

ACTION: Facilitated

SITUATION: weekly psychoeducational workshops for 20 individuals experiencing anxiety-related challenges,

RESULT: with 80% reporting improved coping skills through feedback surveys

Note: This statement includes industry-specific context and skills, clearly communicates the result or intent of the action, and incorporates numbers to strengthen its impact

Tip: For current students, review the [Carleton Career Competencies](#) to identify the knowledge, skills, and attributes developed through your academic journey. These reflections can help articulate your employability and write stronger SAR statements.

Impact Levels: Early Experience vs Advanced Experience

This section will help you brainstorm the context of your work (Situation) and the impact of your contributions (Result), with sample examples tailored to your level of experience.

Early Experience (e.g., co-ops, placements, internships, projects, clubs, and entry-level roles)

Considerations for the Situation	Questions to Help Frame the Result
• Carleton Career Competencies (e.g., Communication, Diversity & Intercultural Awareness, or Community Engagement) • Therapeutic activities (e.g., # of intakes, treatment planning, psychoeducation groups) • Clients, techniques, or standards applied (e.g., teenagers, CBT, duty to report)	• What client or therapeutic outcomes resulted? (e.g., improved coping skills, better program completion rates) • What evidence demonstrates your contribution? (e.g., 15 referrals coordinated) • What clinical skills did you strengthen? (e.g., active listening, risk assessment, notes)

Program Evaluation Assignment: Analyzed student feedback from 75 counselling service users, resulting in 5 recommendations to help improve awareness of mental health supports

Residence Field Practicum: Facilitated 15 sessions with homesick students using motivational interviewing, contributing to stronger emotional regulation and a reduction in crisis intervention requests

Advanced Experience (e.g., professional experience and leadership roles)

Considerations for the Situation	Questions to Help Frame the Result
• Care responsibilities, concerns, or populations served (e.g., case management, trauma, refugees, families) • Clinical approaches (e.g., biopsychosocial assessments, symptom rating scales) • Care teams or community resources coordinated (e.g., hospitals, RSWs, grants)	• What client or therapeutic outcomes resulted? (e.g., reduced symptoms, fewer interventions, treatment goals achieved) • What care delivery improved? (e.g., waitlists, client capacity, engagement) • What practices changed? (e.g., standardized screening tools)

Registered Psychotherapist: Provided psychotherapy to 30 youth experiencing eating disorders, improving body image and psychosocial functioning as part of their treatment goal

Clinical Case Manager: Facilitated group therapy for 10 bereaved families using grief-focused interventions, improving adjustment to loss and increasing engagement with local supports

Other ways to show impact if you do not know exact numbers

- **Scope** (e.g., approximate # of care plans): Developed 30+ care plans incorporating exposure-based interventions for teens with OCD to support symptom management
- **Scale** (e.g., approximate caseload size): Managed a 125+ refugee caseload using a trauma-informed approach, reducing service gaps through coordinated care planning
- **Quality Improvements** (e.g., care coordination, referral processes): Refined intake assessment practices that improved client-program matching and referral quality

Tip: Begin [tracking data](#) to incorporate stronger metrics into future SAR statements.