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## 15 What are values and how can we assess them? Implications for values-based recruitment in healthcare

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*'We are clear about the behaviour we expect, and clear about our values' says the Chief Executive of one of the most successful National Health Service (NHS) trusts in the United Kingdom.*

*In July 2013, an independent review into healthcare professionals in the NHS and private healthcare organisations in the United Kingdom was conducted. One of the major themes running through the entire review was the importance of values in healthcare. Of the many healthcare trusts and independent organisations reviewed, the top performers all had one thing in common: their emphasis on values. Conversely, the failure to embed core values into the standards of care expected in healthcare settings has been found to have disastrous consequences. But how do we effectively test them? This chapter examines the evidence base for the effectiveness of a range of selection methods that have the potential to assess values in values-based recruitment. In this chapter, we explore one selection method in detail and provide a review of Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs) as a reliable and valid method for measuring the values that are important in clinical practice, including integrity, caring, empathy and compassion.*

### Introduction

There exists a large body of international research exploring the impact of core values of compassion, empathy, respect and dignity on patients' experience of health and social care services. In the United Kingdom, for example, although the values and behaviours expected of health and social care professionals are preserved in the National Health Service (NHS) Constitution, recent government enquiries<sup>1,2</sup> have highlighted major concerns about the decline in compassionate care within all healthcare roles. Undoubtedly, healthcare education and training can have a major impact on shaping core values, and an important first step is ensuring that the right individuals with the appropriate values are

appointed to any training place or healthcare role. But what are robust selection methods for attracting and selecting students, trainees or employees whose individual values and behaviours align with the desired values in healthcare (delivering compassionate care)?

In this chapter, we explore the latest theoretical developments drawn from the psychology literature on values. The aim of the chapter is to help the readers gain knowledge around a number of key areas relating to the role of values in healthcare recruitment and selection. We then examine the evidence base for a number of selection methods and the strengths of each for use in values-based recruitment. Although there are several selection methods that could be useful in assessing values, we look in detail at situational judgement tests (SJTs). This chapter should give the reader an understanding of (a) what values are, their theoretical underpinnings and how they can be an important addition to recruitment and selection in healthcare; (b) the links between values and factors, such as personality, motivation and behaviours at work and (c) the selection methods that are best used for values-based recruitment in terms of their effectiveness.

### What are values, and how do they link to personality, motivation and behaviours?

In reviewing the evidence base for values-based recruitment, it is important to consider how values are defined in the research literature and explore how they link to other concepts that are often discussed simultaneously (e.g. personality, motivation and behaviours). This is particularly important in a recruitment context as there are implications for the measurement tools available to assess each of these