

Interview Preparation Highlights:

1. **Study Your resume**
2. **Research the company & key players**
3. **Perform a “T” Exercise if there is a job description**
4. **Create a “Tree Diagram” to help with “tell me about yourself”**
5. **Build a storybook for “tell me about a time when....” Or “what would you do if...” questions**
6. **Outline answers to the most common introductory questions: Why do you want this job, what are your key strengths, what is a weakness, what will you bring to the table**

- First Impression:

The interviewer will form opinions of you in the first 90 seconds. Think about the often overlooked and often taken for granted details and be your friendly, professional “best version” self - smile, dress well, shake hands, don't sit until they sit, have good eye contact, introduce yourself to everyone, give fresh copies of resume on good paper, maybe have something to write with and pad of paper to take notes. Basically, orchestrate the “first impression” you want to give.

- Be ready for the first few questions:

Be sure to study your resume closely - trying to anticipate what kinds of resume-specific questions you may be asked, initially. If there are any obvious concerns (“red flag items”) in your resume, you are likely to be asked to clarify these first.

If there are no resume questions (or after) you will get the all important “*opening questions*” which will set the stage for the rest of the interview. Likely these will be: "Why did you decide to become a XXX? or "Tell us a little bit about yourself? or "So, tell me why you are applying for this job on this floor/unit/clinic?" Follow-up questions that will often come include: "What are your top 3 strengths? What is a weakness? How have your clinical rotations prepared you for this role?" Your research of the company or organization will help inform your first few questions. Take a look to see if they have been in the news lately....look at press releases.

- Most other questions are likely to be "**performance based**" questions - ones that start with "Tell me about a time when....." Or, a **situation based** "what would you do if?"

- Prepare your STORIES:

Readying your story-book from your past relevant jobs and your student clinical rotations is the key to answering these performance-based questions. Write down two highlights or “take-aways” for each clinical you completed. You can always adapt the story to fit the question. The questions all are pretty much the same....dealing with some kind of challenge. The question that always comes up is "tell us about a difficult patient and how you worked through it."

- The structure to your answer to these kinds of questions should follow **C. A. R. = (C) Context, (A) Action Steps, (R) Result**. You spend 30 seconds explaining the context of the story, you spend most of the time on the specific action step you took to deal with the situation, finally, you indicate the result that your actions had on the patient, the hospital, your boss, their family...etc.

- Prepare good strategic questions to ask your interviewer:

Most people wait until the end of the interview to ask their questions. And it is good to have a few ready for the end - but it is FAR MORE effective to ask good questions throughout the interview. A well placed question that fits naturally into the discussion can reveal "secret" desires or biases of the interviewer. For example, imagine asking early - "What was it about my resume/experience that prompted you to interview me?" or "What makes new grads successful here," or "What key assets of new grad do you value the most?" If you knew these answers early in the interview - it could help you answer later questions even better - because you now know what they are thinking!

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For those of us who suffer from intense nervousness before interviews, here are some useful tips:

(1) Social psychologists have shown that viewing pictures/images/movies/art/nature that are inspiring or peaceful or happy – greatly increase the likelihood that our very next interaction with a person is a positive one. It can often cause an increase in confidence, positivity, and morality (as detected in conversation). The opposite is true when we view something “disgusting” before an interaction. With this in mind – watch an inspirational movie, listen to your favorite music, read a touching letter, look at inspiring pictures – before you go in to your interview.

(2) For nerves: it is “good” to have a little anxiety, but only a little. You can perform a few body/mind “hacks” that can reduce your stress hormones and leave you with more “bodily” confidence.

- Workout the night before or the day of the interview; show up early to the interview and walk the stairs or do breathing exercises to get endorphins up.
- Try watching this cool TED talk about “power posing” for 30 seconds to reduce stress before interviews: http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en
- Do some hard stretching in the bathroom right beforehand. I actually push with all of my might against the wall for 30 seconds and then release.
- Instead of sitting in the waiting room – walk around, stay standing, talk to secretary if possible.
- Get some “small talk” in beginning of interview to break the nerves. They usually ask me if I would like a glass of water. Say “sure, thank you. Can/May I go with you to get it?” This buys you some time to chat with small talk before your interview.
- Get some small talk going on the walk to interview room – find some “common ground” to establish rapport. This reduces the stress.
- Remember how it felt after you did that good deed? Help another ALWAYS gives us a natural “high” and helps us think clearly.
- Get some good sleep!

(3) Voice – be mindful of your speech: speed, clarity, strength, pitch, volume. Social scientists have shown that people often make unconscious snap judgments based only on hearing our first words – even how we say “hello” can make an impact.

(4) Video-taped mock interview – if you have the time, consider a taped mock interview and watch yourself back in three ways: (1) with sound off and only video, (2) with video off and only sound, (3) both on. You can do this with your career counselor or from home using www.mghihp.interviewstream.com