



# THE HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL INTERVIEW

*Pre-Health Professions  
Career Development Center  
Loyola University Chicago  
September 2016*

# Pre-Health Professions Program

- Sullivan Center 255 and Environs
- Component of Larger Career Development Center
- Career Development Center Website
  - <http://www.luc.edu/career/>
- Pre-Health Professions Website
  - <http://www.luc.edu/prehealth/>
- Pre-Health Professions News Letter
- Mock Interviews & Interview Resource Materials
- LUC Mentors

# Types of Interviews

- Traditional
  - One-on-one
  - Two or three interviewers and one interviewee
- Panel
  - Multiple interviewers and multiple interviewees
- MMI
  - Multiple Mini Interviews

# Preparing for the Interview – Congratulations!

- "The invitation to interview generally means you are academically qualified to be admitted. You should be justifiably excited to be invited for one."
- "However schools cannot admit all those who are qualified. An admissions committee wants to take a further look at you to determine if you have the personal qualities that the school is looking for in its students."
- "Your interview should be a conversation during which you both answer and ask questions, as opposed to a firing line where you wait for an interviewer's next question."
- Citation: National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (2004). *Interviewing for health professions schools. Third Edition*. Champaign, Illinois.

# Preparing for the Interview – Responding to Invitation

- "You should respond quickly and politely to the invitation, even if you are declining it. Arrange a date that works with your schedule, within the confines of the admissions office's available dates. Try to plan to spend as much time as possible at the school, certainly arriving a bit early for the interview... Be sure you have an appropriately professional outfit to wear. This need not be the classic dark suit, but it should be neat, clean, and professional looking. It is assumed that men will wear coats and ties and that women will wear pant or skirt suits, or dresses with jackets."
- Citation: National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (2004). *Interviewing for health professions schools. Third Edition*. Champaign, Illinois.

# Preparing for the Interview

## Traditional Types of Questions

- Tell me about yourself
- What are your strengths
- What are your weaknesses
- Why do you want to go into this field
- Why our school
- Context questions
- CASE questions
- Behavioral questions

# Preparing for the Interview

To Answer the questions

- Know thyself
- Know the field
- Know the institution

# Preparing for the Interview

- Know Thyself
  - Assess your strengths and weaknesses
  - Have a few key practiced-stories in your hat
  - Practice with a friend or in a mock interview
  - Review what you wrote on your application (primary & secondaries)



# Preparing for the Interview

- Know Thyself
- "Know yourself and be able to articulate your goals, approach to life, and motivation for medicine. Reread your application, especially to remember what you discussed, but also to assess whether or not you really conveyed a sense of who you are. The interview will be another opportunity to communicate this sense... Think about life experiences and how they have shaped who you are... Do some honest self-assessment about your weaknesses ... The standard interview advice is to twist a weakness into a strength... This strategy can become somewhat contrived and disingenuous, and rarely impresses an interviewer. Think seriously about areas of weakness that have been challenging for you and have helped you grow as a person."
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# Preparing for the Interview

- Know the Health Professional School
  - Research key people or projects
  - Know the types of patients they serve, their mission statement/overall goals
  - Know the curriculum and any opportunities available to you as a student there
  - Use this information to craft your own questions for the interviewer

# Preparing for the Interview

- Know the Health Professional School
- "You have already read about the school before deciding to apply there. But how much do you really know about its mission, curriculum, clinical teaching facilities, research agenda, or opportunities to do elective time away, perhaps in an international setting? What is the student body like? What is the atmosphere like? How are students evaluated? ... Although you want to have questions for your interviewer, you want to do your homework in advance... The questions that you ask about the school should reveal the fact that you have already done this research and that you are enthusiastic about the institution."
- Citation: National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (2004). *Interviewing for health professions schools. Third Edition*. Champaign, Illinois.

# Preparing for the Interview

- Know the Profession
  - Current issues facing this institution in particular
  - Current issues facing the health-care field in general
  - Recent advances in your field of interest
  - Connection to your own experiences and interests
  - Evolution of your motivation for the profession
  - Central aspects of your motivation

# Preparing for the Interview

- "Every interviewer will be attempting to measure your motivation and knowledge in some way. They want to enroll students who will be happy and successful in school and beyond, and who will not feel that they have made a mistake in their choice of professions. To prepare for this part of the interview requires introspection, as well as reading, discussing, and experiencing things within the profession and the wider health care arena. Health care issues are always in the news... There will be no lack of information in the daily newspaper, magazines or on the Web... It is not so important your stand on an issue is, as long as you can discuss it intelligently and articulately."
- Citation: National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (2004). *Interviewing for health professions schools. Third Edition*. Champaign, Illinois.

# Preparing for the Interview

- The Interview Itself
- “Put on your interview outfit and remember that being clean and well groomed is also of great importance. Tone down the makeup and cologne, and remove all but the most subtle jewelry. Hold yourself tall. Remember that body language can be a powerful means of nonverbal communication. Gestures and movements can speak volumes, so be aware of slouching, or nervous habits like playing with a pen or paper clip. Make eye contact with your interviewer. Try to be relaxed and poised. Treat all individuals with whom you come in contact-admission deans, students, secretaries, or custodians-with courtesy... In talking with admissions deans and directors ... it is clear that there are certain qualities that all schools are seeking. The ones that come up time and time again are motivation, intellectual ability, interpersonal skills, and leadership...interviewers will try to measure the qualities mentioned above in a variety of ways, either directly or indirectly, it is critical for an interviewee to be able to engage in an exchange with the interviewer.”
- Citation: National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (2004). *Interviewing for health professions schools. Third Edition*. Champaign, Illinois.

# Preparing for the Interview

## The Interview Itself

### Some Basic Guidelines

- No cells/electronics
- Professional briefcase/portfolio only
- Don't smoke
- Be on time/early
- Bring paper/pen/extra resumes/extra secondaries
- Leave the support group at home...

# Preparing for the Interview

- The Interview Itself
- Some Behavioral Tips
  - Be polite to EVERYONE you meet
  - Act like you belong
  - Don't fidget
  - Eye contact
  - Do not criticize or make excuses



# Preparing for the Interview

- Some Keys to Success
- "The key to success in an interview is to relax and be yourself. Try to answer questions honestly; do not try to second-guess the interviewer. There may be questions for which you do not know the answer. Again, be honest and do not pretend that you have the knowledge you do not. Maintain a positive tone; nobody likes a whiner. Use the opportunities given to you to point out your accomplishments and strong points. Assume that your interviewer is on your side, and do not get defensive over difficult questions. Also be sure to speak clearly. Take time to think about your responses so you can be articulate."
- Citation: National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (2004). *Interviewing for health professions schools. Third Edition*. Champaign, Illinois.

# Preparing for the Interview

- Ill Structured Problems/Ethical Dilemmas
- These are “what would you do if ...” questions, e.g., what would you do if a patient asked you to perform an abortion, help them die, etc. You can’t practice all possible answers to such questions beforehand, but you can prepare a strategy and practicing with some of these types of questions is helpful.
  - Don’t Panic!!! You don’t have to answer immediately. You can say, “Let me think for a minute.”
  - Go in stages; break the problem down. You can say, “these are the issues that have to be considered.” Show that you understand that there are multiple dimensions to the problem.
  - Think aloud so they can follow your reasoning.
  - It can be helpful to ask them questions: “Do you think this is reasonable?” “Can you tell me a bit more about the patient’s situation?”

# Preparing for the Interview

- The Panel Interview
  - Awareness of Others in this Setting
  - Ability to Work Well with Others in this Setting
  - Comfort with Others in this Setting
  - Practice Panel Format
  - Basics of Preparing for the Traditional Interview Apply (e.g., still essential to know yourself, know the school, know the profession, etc.)

# Preparing for the Interview

- MMI – Multiple Mini Interview
  - “The Multiple Mini Interview (MMI), developed by McMaster University, is an interview format that gauges an applicant’s potential to successfully interact with patients and colleagues. The MMI is designed to measure communication skills, specifically verbal and nonverbal skills that cannot be measured using standardized written exams or by reviewing coursework transcripts. The MMI typically consists of six to 10 very short interviews that revolve around a specific scenario.”
  - Source: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/what-its-participate-multiple-mini-interviews-mmis/>

# Preparing for the Interview

- Practice
- Get into pairs
- One Member Select a Scenario
- 90 seconds to prepare/3 minutes to Respond
- Feedback: Individual and Group
- Switch

# Preparing for the Interview

- Some MMI Resources
- <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/what-its-participate-multiple-mini-interviews-mmis/>
- [http://as.vanderbilt.edu/hpao/documents/Preparing Applicants for the MMI.pdf](http://as.vanderbilt.edu/hpao/documents/Preparing%20Applicants%20for%20the%20MMI.pdf)
- [https://umanitoba.ca/faculties/health\\_sciences/medicine/admissions/8967.html](https://umanitoba.ca/faculties/health_sciences/medicine/admissions/8967.html)
- <http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/preprofadvising/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2016/01/MMI-extra1.pdf>
- <http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/medical-school-admissions-doctor/2015/02/24/what-to-expect-during-a-medical-school-multiple-mini-interview>
- <https://careercenter.umich.edu/article/mmi-resources>

# Preparing for the Interview

- Some Tips for After the Interview
- After your interview, be SURE to write a “thank you” note to EVERYONE who interviewed you. We have been made aware of instances in which students were placed on wait-lists rather than admitted because they didn’t write thank you notes, and the school just assumed they weren’t really interested in attending! A WORD TO THE WISE!
- You’ll be tempted to just breathe a sigh of relief and try not to think about your interview again. Don’t give in! After your interview, as soon as you can, write down everything you remember about it, what went well and what went poorly, questions that threw you, how you feel you can do better the next time. This step can be very powerful in improving your interviewing skills.

# Preparing for the Interview

- Thank You!
- Questions?