

Preparing for the Interview

Today's Agenda

- Interview Planning and Preparation
- Three Key Areas of Research
- Interview Strategies
- Performance Anxiety
- Coping with FEAR
- Pre-Performance Planning
- Tool Box of Mental Skills
- Managing Panic Attacks

Career Development Centre

Building Confidence and Managing Anxiety in Job Interviews



Preparing for the Interview

• The Purpose of the Interview

- ☞ To find out whether or not there is a suitable match between your needs and skills and the needs and opportunities of the employer.
- ☞ Employers are looking for FIT
- ☞ It is Your JOB to Know and Communicate your FIT

Preparing for the Interview

Preparation

- ☞ As you begin to search for work you should maintain a list of the places to which you have applied
- ☞ Keep a file which contains copies of the job postings, résumés and cover letters and the dates you sent your application

Preparing for the Interview

First Impressions



How the interviewer is greeted when he or she contacts you is an opportunity to make an impression

- ⇒ Talk to the people in your home and ensure they are answering the telephone professionally. Employers are calling from their office, and expect to receive a professional reception.
- ⇒ Be conservative and professional with your answering machine messages
- ⇒ If you provided a cell phone number, watch out where you are when you answer the cell phone (your car is not an optimal location to answer the phone)

Preparing for the Interview

First Contact

- ⇒ Confirm the time and date of the interview
- ⇒ Confirm proper address and ask if there are any special instructions (for example, parking). You should not ask for detailed directions; rather, buy a map
- ⇒ Request a contact name and telephone number
- ⇒ Request the name and proper spelling of the name(s) of the interviewer(s)
- ⇒ Request a copy of the job or position description

Preparing for the Interview

Plan Your Day

- ⇒ If possible, drive by the location ahead of time and plan your route
- ⇒ Check out the parking (do you need change for meters, will you find parking during the day?)
- ⇒ Plan on arriving at least 10 minutes early (this does not include walking time from the car)

Do not walk in the door more than 15 minutes prior to the interview

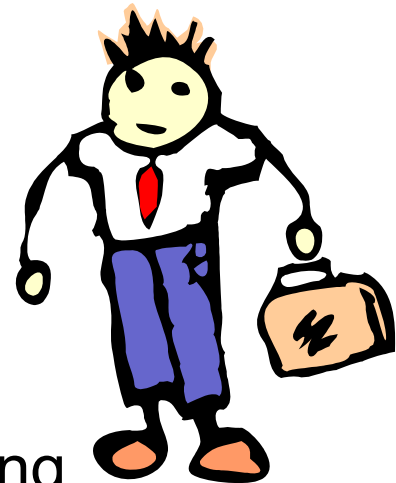
Preparing for the Interview

Plan Your Appearance

If you have done your homework, you should know the organization or industry 'dress code'

There are two basic rules

1. Be conservative (for the industry)
2. Dress 1 step up from the normal dress of the position for which you are applying



Be cautious with fragrances and jewellery

Preparing for the Interview

What Should You Bring?

Bring a portfolio or briefcase which contains the following:

- 2 copies of your résumé
- A copy of your references
- A copy of the job description or posting
- Your portfolio - samples of your work
- A pad of paper and a pen
- A list of questions you want to ask
- A business card if you have one



Preparing for the Interview

Three Key Areas of Research

1. Yourself
2. The Career Field (and specific job)
3. The Employer

Preparing for the Interview

• Individual Challenges

Barriers to beginning work

And/or Potential barriers on the job

1. Be informed about the potential impact of a personal situation
2. Be aware of the potential impact of a disability in the interview and on the job

Preparing for the Interview

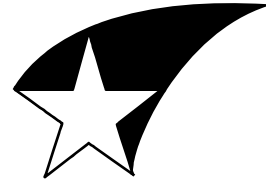
• Your agenda should be comprised of the key points you want to communicate to the employer during the interview.

Your Agenda Should Include:

- Relevant skills/qualifications
 - Key experiences and achievements
 - Knowledge of the company/industry
 - Questions to ask the interviewer
- ⇒ You may bring a 'Cheat Sheet' with you which includes key words or 'point form' agenda items.
- ⇒ You may glance at this agenda during the Interview

Preparing for the Interview

STARR examples for each agenda item



- S - Situation** - Describe the setting/situation/problem
- T - Task** - Indicate what needed to be accomplished
- A - Action** - Detail the actions you took. Describe your thought or decision-making process
- R - Result** - Outline positive results and benefits
- R - Relevance** - Demonstrate your understanding of the relevance of the skills to the job

Preparing for the Interview

• **Types of Interviews**

⇒ **Screening**

⇒ **Telephone**

⇒ **One-on-one**

⇒ **Panel**

⇒ **Group**

⇒ **Group Activity**

⇒ **Behaviour-Based**

⇒ **Testing**

⇒ **Structured (points)**

⇒ **Unstructured**

Preparing for the Interview

At the Interview

- ⇒ Greet the receptionist and introduce yourself, indicating your purpose for being there. Always be polite and respectful to the person who greets you
- ⇒ If you are asked to wait, have a seat and look for brochures or other relevant information. Remove your overcoat if you are wearing one
- ⇒ If offered a beverage or refreshment you usually decline (water is permissible if you really need some)
- ⇒ Relax, you may have to wait awhile

Preparing for the Interview

Greeting the Interviewers



- ⇒ Greet each interviewer with a smile, eye contact and, yes, a proper handshake
- ⇒ Pay attention to each person's name
- ⇒ Wait to be offered a seat. If you are not offered a seat, ask where you should sit. Sit up straight!
- ⇒ If you are being interviewed at a person's desk, place your portfolio on your lap. If you are at a shared table, you can place the material in front of you on the table
- ⇒ Briefcases and purses should be placed on the floor

Preparing for the Interview

During the Interview

- ⇒ Maintain eye contact
- ⇒ Be attentive to body language
- ⇒ Avoid negative comments or information
- ⇒ Listen carefully to a question. If you need clarification or more information, ask for it
- ⇒ It is okay to make brief notes; write quickly
- ⇒ Do not be bothered by short silences
- ⇒ Do not look at what an interviewer is writing

Preparing for the Interview

Preparing Your References

- ⇒ Identify relevant references prior to an interview
(Provide references with copies of your resume)
- ⇒ Contact references prior to each interview and inform them of the specific employment opportunity (you may contact references via email)
- ⇒ Remember to bring copies of your list of References and/or reference materials

Preparing for the Interview

Provide Your References

- ⇒ Try to find an opportunity to offer your references during the interview
- ⇒ If you are not asked for your references, offer them at the end of the interview
- ⇒ Do not be offended if an interviewer does not ask for references during first or screening interviews
- ⇒ If your references do get a phone call, be certain to follow up with a formal thank-you

After the Interview

Make Interview Summary Notes



Wilfrid Laurier University Career Development Centre

Available Resources:

- Interview Guidebook
- Transferrable Skills Booklet
- Call to book interview coaching (ext. 4495)
- Disability Disclosure
- Guidelines



Performance Anxiety

- A Fact of Life
- Common Anxiety-Inducing Performances
- You Can Learn to Handle it

Performance Anxiety

Performance:

Any situation where your actions or the outcome of a situation is important to you.

Anxiety:

- A reaction to an anticipated threat or danger.
- Emotional, cognitive and physiological.
- *Self-doubt* about one's capacity to cope with it

Options for Managing Performance Anxiety:

- **Avoidance**

- **F. E. A. R.**

- **F**ace

- **E**xplore

- **A**ccept

- **R**espond

Anxiety Scale

10

Major Panic: terror, disorientation, fear of dying or going 'crazy', compulsion to escape, feeling of loss of control

Early Panic: heart pounding, constricted breathing, spacey/dizziness, perceived loss of control, urge to escape

Marked anxiety: feeling "spacey", heart beating rapidly, dry mouth, shakiness, urge to escape or avoid

Moderate anxiety: dry mouth, heart beating slightly faster, more rapid breathing, sweaty palms, flushed

1

Mild anxiety: butterflies in stomach; muscle tension, jitteriness e.g. clumsy, trembling hands

Pre-Performance Planning

1. Over preparation: research, prepare questions
rehearse
2. Pre-interview practice
3. Tool box of Mental Skills

Constructive
self-talk

Resilience



Centering/relaxation

Focus/goal setting

Focus



- Set goals for the interview
 - The primary points you want to get across
 - Aspects of your personality you want to stand out
 - Your strengths (can be a great confidence builder)
 - Is this job for you?

Build Resilience



- Respond vs. react
- Challenges vs. threats
- Mistake recovery



The Power of Thoughts



■ Critical Self-talk

- Distracts the mind and interrupts focus
- Increases negative affect including anxiety
- Contributes to mistakes
- Reduces self-confidence

■ Constructive Self-talk

- Provides a positive focus
- Motivates you to succeed
- Allows mistakes and imperfections
- Increases confidence
- Increases positive emotion

Common Cognitive Distortions

- All-or-nothing
- Overgeneralization
- Mental Filter
- Mind Reading
- Catastrophizing
- “Should” Statements

Constructive Self-talk

- “I’m allowed to be anxious in the interview. This is normal.”
- If I become nervous I will use strategies such as... to handle it.
- I know I am qualified for this position and my focus for the interview is to put draw attention to my strengths and skills.
- “I don’t have to be perfect”
- “I am learning and growing”
- “I can handle whatever happens”

10 Second Centering



- Stressed-out person's breathing style
- Belly Breather
- Benefits of deep breathing
- Putting it into practice
- Breathing exercise

Breathing Exercise

1. Find a comfortable position. Release any tension in your muscles, jaw, neck, hands etc..
2. Tune out external distractions and focus on each breath. It may help to close your eyes.
3. Open lips slightly and place your tongue on upper palate behind teeth
4. Put your hand on your belly and notice the gradual rise and then fall as you breathe.
5. Count to five as you inhale through your nose, then count to five as you exhale through your mouth.

Managing Panic Attacks

- Seek support
- Don't fight it
- Manage catastrophic thoughts
- Practice thought stopping/breathing/coping statements
- Get grounded
- Retreat from the situation if necessary

Performance Coaching Areas

- Motivation
- Procrastination
- Performance Anxiety
 - Speaking in class
 - Social situations
 - Presentations
 - Interview anxiety
- Confidence Building
- Self-talk
- Focus
- Mistake Recovery
- Perfectionism

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