Pre-Health Interview
Preparation
Overview

• Interview “Basics”
• Behavioral Based Interviewing/STAR
• Preparing for your interview
• Mock Interview
First Impressions

Make a GREAT first impression

- Arrive early
- Use a firm handshake
- Smile, display confidence
- Make good eye contact
- Make an impression
General Guidelines

• What to bring:
  – Resume, personal statement draft/final version – have your resume reviewed by CDS
  – Extra copy of your unofficial transcript
  – Note pad and pen

• Dress Professionally
  – Conservative – no bold colors
    • Ladies: Low heels, minimal jewelry, hair out of your face
    • Men: Matching shoes and socks, buttons on your jacket
  – Neatly groomed, no strong perfumes/cologne
  – Nothing that would cause a distraction
Other General Tips

• Keep in mind:
  – Names are important; repeat them if you can to help you remember
  – Your interview begins the moment you arrive on site and doesn’t end until you leave
  – Be mindful of how you treat others you meet during the day-staff, students, other potential students
  – Take note of the culture and be aware of “Fit”
Behavioral Based Interviewing

- Past behavior is the best indication of future performance
- Requires specific stories in response
  - Tell me about a time when....
  - Give me an example of...

- STAR Formula: situation + tasks + action = result
- You must be forthcoming, use specific examples, think of examples that best showcase multiple positive qualities, walk the committee through the steps and the outcome – what did you take away from that experience?

- More info on Behavior Based interviewing is on our website:
  - www.odu.edu/cds
The Formula

1- Briefly Answer Question
2- Give an Example From Your Experience
3- State what you’ve learned
4- Describe how this makes you the best candidate for the school you’ve applied to

Every question should be answered using the formula
• **Question:** What qualities do you possess that will make you a good doctor?

**Lacking Answer:** I’m good at helping people and great at Biology

**Better But Needs Improvement:** I have always wanted to help people, I have done well in all my classes, and want to take my education to the next level.

**Best Answer:** I have been working part time as a Scribe at DePaul Medical Center where I have been able to observe and record medical situations. From that experience I have learned the importance of good patient communication and a “can-do” attitude. For example there was this one time that __________________________. I feel that my current patient interaction is only the beginning to what I can really contribute in my field, and participation in your medical program will help me achieve my goal of becoming a __________.
Know Your Experiences

- Come up with 8-10 medical experiences off of your resume

- For Each Experience Describe:

1. What’s the Experience?

2. Identify Themes/Qualities
   (time management, communication, compassion)

3. What Did You Do/Learn/Observe in the Situation?

4. Why Does It Make You A Better Candidate?
### Behavioral Interview Techniques – The STAR Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation/Task</th>
<th>Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action You Took</td>
<td>Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did -- not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did. What was your take away from the experience, what do you know about yourself and your abilities now as a result of participating. What is that important to a medical school candidate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results You Achieved</td>
<td>How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? How does this relate to your medical school application?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use examples from internships, classes and school projects, activities, team participation, community service, hobbies and work experience -- anything really -- as examples of your past behavior. In addition, you may use examples of shadowing, scribing whether personal or professional, as it relates to medicine.

Remember that many behavioral questions try to get at how you responded to *negative* situations; you'll need to have examples of negative experiences ready, but try to choose negative experiences that you made the best of or -- better yet, those that had positive outcomes.

Here's a good way to prepare for behavior-based interviews: Identify six to eight examples from your past experience where you demonstrated top behaviors and skills that professional schools typically seek. Think in terms of examples that will share your top selling points.

Use fairly recent examples. If you're a college student, examples from high school may be too long ago.

Try to describe examples in story form – situation, task, action result (STAR)

Prepare 5 examples using the STAR formula above that describe qualities and experiences you have had.
Practice, Practice, Practice

- In addition to writing out practice responses, practice verbally telling them
- Look up sample questions on-line
- Don’t forget about the ethical questions *Research some of the common questions and applicable laws*
- Consider signing up for a Mock Interview through the PHAC *Required for MD/DO applicants
- ***Non pre-med students*** - Mock Interview sign up sheets are up here at the front. If you would like to do a more generic mock interview with CDS, please sign up for a slot before you leave today
Questions?

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