

## Worksheet: Interviews 101

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### Before the Interview:

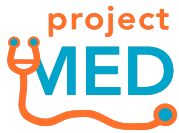
- People
  - Speak to people who have gone through a similar process or work in the position you're interviewing for
    - Helps gain perspective on key traits or skills you want to highlight
  - Do preliminary research on the company/organization
    - Know their vision, projects they're involved in, the people who make up the team
    - Integrate them into your responses and save some material for small-talk
- Preparation
  - Don't memorize a script!
  - Have an outline and key words/ideas to mention
  - Think about your experiences and what you've learned from them
- Practice
  - Practice speaking about your responses more than writing them down
  - Practice in front of a mirror/record yourself
  - Have a friend or parent interview you
    - Helps catch unconscious fidgeting, practice eye contact/hand gestures
  - Practice speaking spontaneously—have a friend/parent ask off-script questions
    - It's okay if you don't have the exact question prepared
      - Use responses you've already prepared and try to fit them to the question

### During the Interview:

- Bring copies of your résumé
- Dress for success!
- Offer a firm handshake
- Maintain eye contact
- Use the STAR approach
  - Situation: What was the challenge or problem?
  - Task: What were your roles and responsibilities?
  - Action: What actions did you take?
  - Result: What was the positive outcome?
  - \*Learn: What did you learn from the experience?
- Provide clear and concise stories and examples to support your answers

### After the Interview:

- Within 48 hours, send a thank-you note to each person that interviewed you.
  - Adapt your notes to the conversations that you had with different interviewers.
  - Elements to consider include:
    - Show your appreciation
    - Highlight part of the conversation that particularly interested you
    - Restate your relevant qualifications
    - Communicate your continued interest in the opportunity



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### How to Answer Three Common Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
  - Warm-up question! Breaking the ice
  - Talk about your interests, passions, background and what makes you unique!
  - Showcase yourself in a way that's relevant to the role/company
    - Tailor your answer based on the role
  - Present-Past-Future framework
    - Present: current roles, latest accomplishment, what you're studying
    - Past: relevant previous experience
    - Future: what you're looking to do next, why you're interested
2. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
  - Use specific, personal examples to illustrate your strengths
    - Common traits: flexible, open-minded, determined, collaborative, communicative
  - Your "weakness" should allow you to show self-improvement
    - Avoid using words like lazy, irresponsible, disorganized, etc.—don't incriminate yourself
    - Explain the drawbacks of one of your strengths and how you're working to overcome it!
    - E.g.: my investment in and dedication to all tasks I take up means I sometimes sacrifice a work-life balance, but I am actively working to improve this by ....
3. Tell me about a time when you failed.
  - Take responsibility for your failure—this shows accountability
    - Everybody fails, they're not expecting you to be perfect
  - Emphasize what you've learned
    - Talk about how you've used the experience to improve
    - Show a clear growth curve—describe your failure but also how you've worked forward and improved from it
  - Tell a clear, concise story

### Common Interview Questions:

#### *Personal*

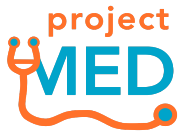
- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- How would your friends describe you?
- What do you do in your free time?
- Who is your role model?
- How do you deal with stress?

#### *Experience*

- Tell me about a time you were the leader.
- Tell me about a time when you worked in a team.
- Tell me about a time you made a difficult decision.
- Tell me about a time when you failed.
- Tell me about a time when you handled conflict among team members.
- What is your biggest accomplishment?
- What has been your most rewarding experience?

#### *Company-Specific*

- Why are you interested in this position/company/university?



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- Why do you think you would be a good fit for this position/company/university?