



## Do's and Don'ts of Residency Interviewing: Advanced Skills for Residency Applicants

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### Poll Question- The Most Important Factor When Residencies Rank Applicants is...

- a) Board scores
- b) GPA and Clerkship Grades
- c) Letters of Reference
- d) The Interview
- e) The medical school you attended

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### Most Important Factors when Ranking Applicants

(NRMP Survey of Program Directors)

- Residency interview 4.7
- Interactions with residents during interview day 4.6
- Feedback from current residents 4.5
- Evidence of professionalism & ethics 4.5
- Perceived commitment to the specialty 4.2
- Letters of reference 4.2
- Grades in clerkship in desired specialty 4.2

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### Learning Objectives For Today

- Know the "Do's and Don'ts" of Family Medicine Residency Interviewing and utilize them.
- Know about useful resources for your interview preparation.
- Be prepared for the most difficult questions you may be asked at your FM residency interviews.
- Know the most helpful questions for you to ask interviewers.
- Gain some practice in some of these advanced interview skills.
- Increase confidence by learning what to expect and how to adequately prepare.
- Know pre /post interview do's and don'ts.

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### The Main Points

- Be prepared
- Be yourself
- Remember that the interview is a two way street
- Don't do stupid stuff
- Remember that "the interview" is the sum of all personal interactions with the program

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**Great Sources for Interview Preparation**

- 1) **"Strolling Through the Match 2017-2018"**  
(Section 5- pp 49-62)
- 2) **"How To Answer The 64 Toughest Interview Questions"**  
<http://soulsearch.files.wordpress.com/2007/05/64interviewquestions1.pdf>
- 3) **The Residency Program's Website- AAFP Residency Directory, Google**



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**Strolling Through the Match- Section 5 on the Interview Process**

- Interviewing Tips (Goals, Scheduling, Research, Attitude, Fine Points including Pre and Post Interview Etiquette)
- Elements of the Interview (Structure, Prohibited Questions, Discussion of Parental Leave, Pregnancy, and Child-Rearing Plans)
- Questions to Consider Asking
- Follow-up
- Evaluation Check-lists
- PCMH Questions to Ask Residency Programs
- Global Health Experience Questions

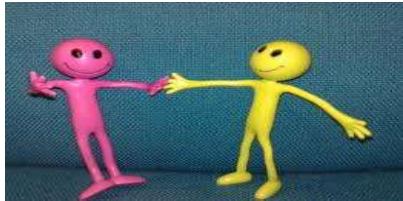
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**Let's Help Nail Your Residency Interview!**



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**It's Time for A Role Play!**



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**Poll Question- You are asked, "Tell me about yourself."**

**You respond by:**

- Reviewing the details of your birth, childhood, adolescence, college years and med school years.
- Asking "What specifically do you want to know?"
- Providing an excellent verbal summary of your CV.
- Describing the context of your life and its relationship to choosing FM, goals, and interest in this residency.
- Mentioning your regrets and any failures you've had to show you are honest and forthright.

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**"Tell Me About Yourself"**

- *Don't* talk about your pets, hobbies, etc.
- Know the resident profile of what this particular residency most values- experiences, skill set and personality- and then discuss how you fit- in 30-60 seconds.
- Practice with a SO/ friend or calling your cell phone voice mail and listen to it.
- Non-verbal communication skills- Eye contact, enthusiasm, confidence, etc.

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## Mutual Goals of Interviewing

### Your Goals

Can They Do the Job?

Is This a Good Fit?

Would I Be Happy Here?

### Residency's Goals

Can They Do the Job?

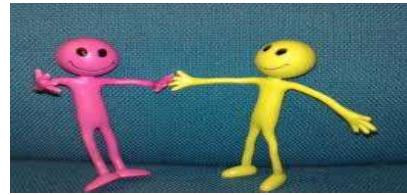
Is This a Good Fit?

Would They Be Happy Here?

"Fit": Both are looking for Bio-psycho-social-spiritual compatibility

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## It's Time for A Role Play!



What are your greatest strengths?

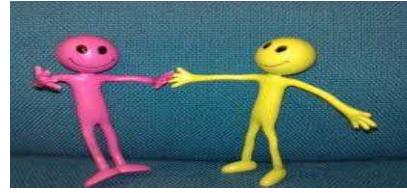
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## Poll Question- "What are your greatest strengths?" You answer:

- a) "Board scores."
- b) "Clerkship grades." (or in Boston: "I'm wicked smaht")
- c) By describing your personal qualities and skills relative to residency.
- d) "I don't think I'm better than others so- Nothing really."
- e) "I'm a really good musician." (marathoner, dancer, etc)

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## It's Time for A Role Play!



What are your greatest weaknesses?

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## Poll Question- "What are your greatest weaknesses?"

- a) "Chocolate- lol"
- b) "I can't think of anything at the moment."
- c) "My work-life balance isn't what I want it to be."
- d) "I'm sometimes too sensitive and take things to heart too much."
- e) "I'm still not great at my office efficiency and procedures."

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## Questions to Prepare For Before the Interview- Questions About You

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What are your greatest weaknesses?
- What do you see yourself doing in 5 (10, 20) years?
- What do you like doing outside of work? (favorite recent books, movies, activities, etc)
- Who has inspired you and why?
- How do you define success?
- What do you think about "Obamacare"? (or other political/social issue)

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**Questions to Prepare For:  
Questions About FM /being a Resident Here**

- Why family medicine?
- Why are you applying to our residency?
- What would you bring to the program?/ Why should we rank you highly?
- Describe your ideal residency/ What are you looking for in a residency?
- Are you applying to any other specialties?
- Are you really willing to relocate?
- What are your training goals for residency?
- What have you heard about our residency?

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**Behavioral/Situational Questions**

**Applying for a job at IKEA**



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**Questions to Prepare For-  
Behavioral/Situational Questions**

- Did you like your medical school?
- Can you describe a situation in which you... (failed at something/ worked under pressure/ was criticized/ had a conflict/ went the extra mile for a patient/ dealt with a "difficult" patient...)?
- What makes you angry?
- Can you recall a time you had to deal with adversity?/ Toughest challenge faced?
- What would you say to your senior resident if she's for a treatment plan, but you don't agree?
- What do you anticipate will be the most difficult part of being a physician?

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**Questions to Prepare For-  
Behavioral/Situational Questions**

- Hypothetical problem- what would you do...? (interviewer want to hear the *process*, not *solving* the problem)
- Looking back on medical school, have you done your best work?
- What's the hardest thing for you to say- I don't know, I can't do that, I won't do that, or I need your help with this?

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**It's Time for A Role Play!**



"Tell me about a time you had a conflict."

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**Situation /Behavioral-based Interview Questions  
"Tell me a time when you had to deal with a..."**

1. Don't be general- asking for a **specific** event
2. Think ahead about these- you want to be ready with a success story.... and **you are the star** of the story!
3. "STAR"
  - Situation
  - Task
  - Action
  - Result

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### Prohibited Questions

- Federal law prohibits making employment decisions on basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, or disability- questions related to these are illegal.
- This applies to discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and child-rearing plans.
- The NRMP ("the Match") prohibits programs from asking about identifying information for other programs you are applying to this includes:
  - Names of programs
  - Specialties
  - Geographic Locations

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### Prohibited Questions (cont.)

- You do not have to answer questions related to marital status, number of children, or plans to have children.
- Federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
  - Provides up to 12 wks unpaid leave (maternity/paternity/adoption/family or personal illness)
  - Individual states may have their own paid or unpaid parental leave laws

Note:

- Ask about how the program handles parental leaves- asking a **resident** is best.

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### Residency Interviewing is a 2 way street



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### The Most Helpful Questions To Ask To Gain Insight into Them are....

- Open-ended
- Things that you can't get on the website
- Able to address their motivations and the residency culture: Values, Priorities, What is most important to them.
- Able to find out the "unwritten curriculum" as well as the written one.

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### What questions are best asked to the Program Director?



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### Questions for the Program Director

- Why did you choose to lead this program?
- What do you see as the program's strengths?
- What are the program's areas where you are working on improvement?
- What is your 5 year vision of the program?
- What challenges does the program face?

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### Questions for the Program Director

- Finances/ institutional support?
- What are you looking for in a resident?
- PCMH Development? Areas of Concentration?
- Any plans in my area of special interest?
- (Discuss any major issues/ red flags in your application-ending it with a positive statement)

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### What Questions are best asked to a Faculty member?



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### Questions for Faculty

- Why did you choose to teach here?
- Graduates: where located, types of practices, feedback from them
- How and how often is feedback provided to residents?
- How would you describe the patient population?
- What community service programs does residency participate in?
- Areas of particular interest- yours and theirs

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### What questions are best asked to a Resident/ the Residents?



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### Questions for Residents

- Why did you decide to come here?
- What does a typical work week look like?
- What is call like? What kind of support is there?
- How is your interaction with specialists?
- How do you view the presence of the other residencies in hospital? (Or- what do you think about being the only residency in the hospital?)

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### Questions for Residents

- What are your plans after graduation?
- What do residents do outside of work for fun?
- Where do you feel most of your learning is coming from?
- What are the program's areas of strength?
- What are the program's areas where improvements could be made?

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## Practice Before Your First Interview!

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## Practice Before Your First Interview



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## Interview Bloopers

- 1) Presentation-poor handshake, dress, chewing gum etc.
- 2) Talking too much
- 3) Talking too little
- 4) Talking negatively about anyone, other places
- 5) Showing up late or leaving early
- 6) Treating the residency staff rudely
- 7) Not preparing for the interview
- 8) Asking about salary, benefits, vacation time
- 9) Failure to match communication styles
- 10) Not silencing cell phone
- 11) Arrogance, Disinterest, Fatigue, Lack of Sincerity
- 12) Over-Informality- ("bad" words, be careful about humor)

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## 4 Classic Mistakes in Interviewing

- 1) **Being Unprepared** and letting it show in a question or an answer.
  - *Content* (How many residents do you have?)
  - *Extroverts*-> ramble; need to listen more
  - *Introverts*-> very awkward silences; need to talk more
  - "No, I don't have any questions."
- 2) **Negativity** re: anyone, including you / Lack of enthusiasm

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## 4 Classic Mistakes in Interviewing (cont.)

- 3) **Not mirroring** the communication style of interviewer (Talk too much/ Talk too little, Formal/Informal)
- 4) **Selling Yourself Short-** The Goal is to Project "Self-Confident Humility"

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## Pre-Interview Tips

- Scheduling & Follow-up**  
Call to cancel interview appointments NLT 48 hrs ahead  
Don't reschedule multiple times!!!!  
Understand the process of scheduling the interview – is part of the interview!  
Try to make it to the dinner with resident(s) if offered.
- Significant others**
- Be Prepared- Residency Website, review common questions**
- Be Rested/ Positive Attitude**
- Be Early- Traffic Happens. Weather Happens.**  
Getting Lost/ Not Quickly Finding the Office (even when in the right building)  
Happens.

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## Pre-Interview Tips (cont.)

- Reread your Personal Statement** before the interview and be prepared to expound on it.
- Read online bios of interviewers** (if available to you beforehand and on residency website)
- Remember that the interview is every interaction you have with anyone in the program.**  
Don't kick the resident host's cat off the couch.  
Don't have >1 alcoholic beverage during dinner.  
Don't ask to be examined for a personal medical issue during your interview.

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myjobhelper.com

### What to Wear to Your Job Interview

Interview Attire for Men:	Interview Attire for Women:
<b>Clean shaven face or neatly trimmed beard</b>	<b>Two-piece, matched suit</b>
<b>Two-piece suit</b>	<b>Don't cover traps when seated</b>
- Clean and pressed	- Make sure your interview clothing is clean and pressed
- Colors like navy and dark grey	- Avoid perfume, cologne, and aftershave
<b>Long-sleeve shirt, even in summer</b>	- Avoid perfume, cologne, and aftershave
- White or light teal solid color	- Don't be cross-shaven. A slightly trimmed beard or mustache is fine, but don't shave a few days of growth.
<b>Empty pockets to eliminate bulges</b>	- If possible, cover your tattoos
<b>Conservative tie</b>	- Wear clothes that fit well
<b>Bel matching color of shoes</b>	- Avoid heavy perfume
<b>Leather shoes, black or corduroy</b>	- Avoid heavy makeup
- Polished right before	- Clean, trimmed fingernails
<b>No earrings</b>	
<b>Clean, trimmed fingernails</b>	

**Tips**

- Only put your interview outfit the evening before and check for any last minute wrinkles.
- Make sure your interview clothing is clean and pressed.
- Except for women's ruffles, belts, and bows, avoid accessories.
- Don't be cross-shaven. A slightly trimmed beard or mustache is fine, but don't shave a few days of growth.
- If possible, cover your tattoos.
- Wear clothes that fit well.
- Avoid heavy perfume.
- Avoid heavy makeup.
- Clean, trimmed fingernails.

You only get one chance to make a good first impression with a potential employer. The clothes you wear are the first part of that first impression, so dress to impress. A business suit says you're more business, even though it may make you feel overdressed and uncomfortable. It shows that you care about making a good first impression. Thousands of people are interviewed as job candidates every year, so many because they were not dressed appropriately for the interview, and many more because they were underdressed.

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## Post-interview Tips

- Follow-up thank you via email or hand-written card.**
  - Personalize the message, build on the conversation you had in the interview.
  - Don't send identical messages to multiple people at the same residency- they are often batched when organizing your file.
- Know what the residency's culture is on second look visits.
- Social media- review your footprint, no comments about your interviews.**

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## Learning Objectives Recap- What We Covered

- “Do’s and Don’ts” of Family Medicine Residency Interviewing.
- Useful resources for your interview preparation.
- The most difficult questions you may be asked at your FM residency interviews.
- The most helpful questions for you to ask interviewers.
- Gained some practice in some of these interview skills.
- Increased your confidence by knowing what to expect and how to adequately prepare.
- Pre /post interview do’s and don’ts.

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## The Main Points - Again

- Be prepared
- Be yourself
- Remember that the interview is a two way street
- Don't do stupid stuff
- Remember that “the interview” is the sum of all personal interactions with the program

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## Thanks / After this Session

Any follow-up questions, just send an email to:  
[wbarr@glfhc.org](mailto:wbarr@glfhc.org)

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## Wrap –up Q & A



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## Q&A



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