



National Conference 2022

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

Wendy Barr MD, MPH, MSCE

Keith Nokes MD, MPH



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

Most Important Factors when Ranking Applicants

(2020 NRMP Survey of Program Directors – Family Medicine)

- Interpersonal skills 4.9
- Interactions with Faculty 4.8
- Feedback from residents 4.7
- Interactions with housestaff 4.8
- Perceived commitment to the specialty 4.6
- Leadership Qualities 4.3
- Personal Statement 4.0
- Step 2 CK/COMLEX 2 CE 3.9



The
Interview

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.

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



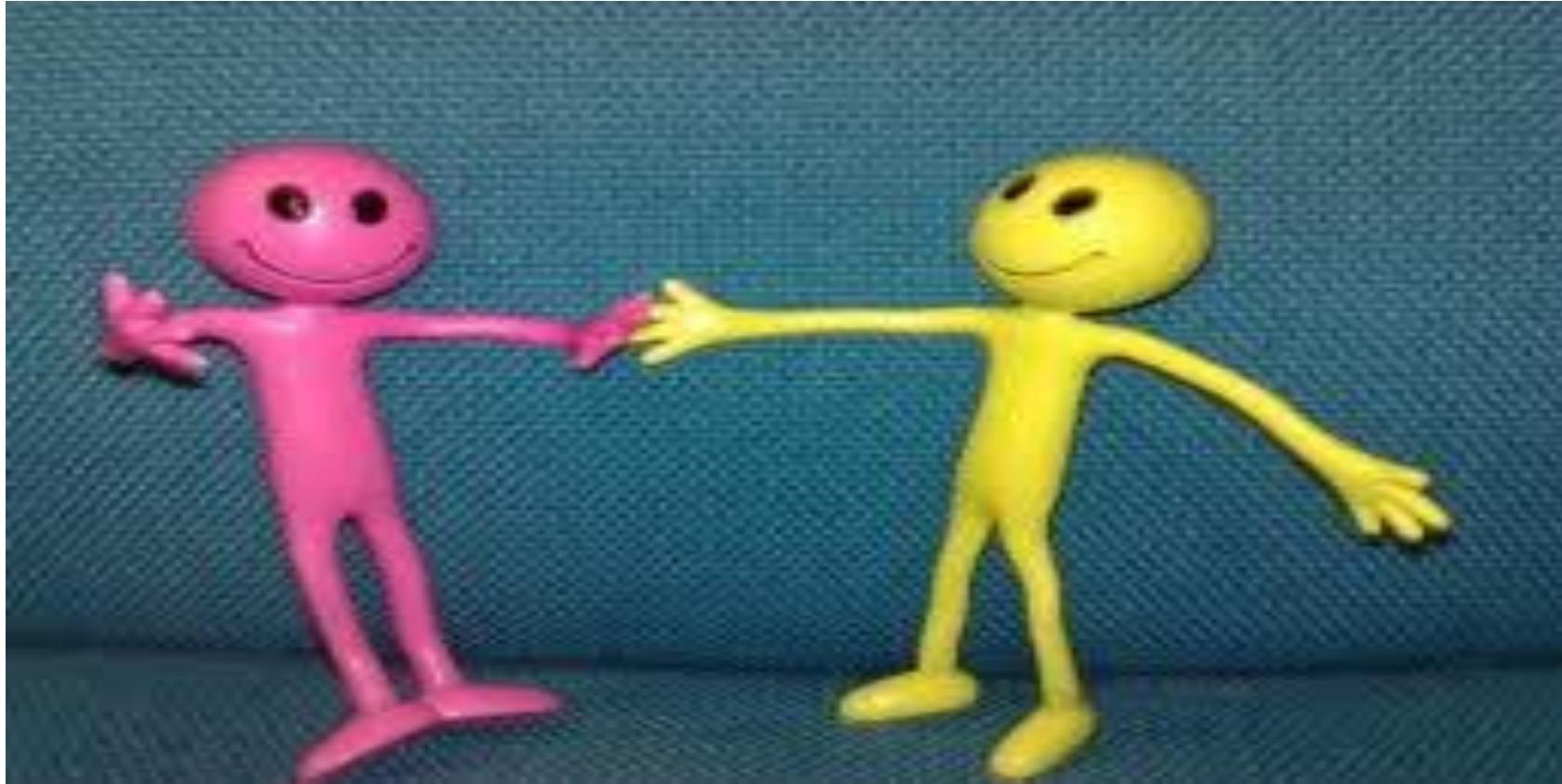
Great Sources for Interview Preparation

- **“Strolling Through the Match 2022”**
(Section 6- pp 53-67)
- **“How To Answer The 64 Toughest Interview Questions”**
<http://soulsearch.files.wordpress.com/2007/05/64interviewquestions1.pdf>
- **The Residency Program’s Website-**
AAFP Residency Directory, Google

Strolling Through the Match - Section 6 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
- Global Health Experience Questions

It's Time for A Role Play!



“Tell Me about Yourself.”

Poll Question - You are asked, “Tell me about yourself.” You respond by:

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

“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.

Mutual Goals of Interviewing

Your Goals

Can They Do the Job?

Is This a Good Fit?

Would I Be Happy Here?

Residency's Goals

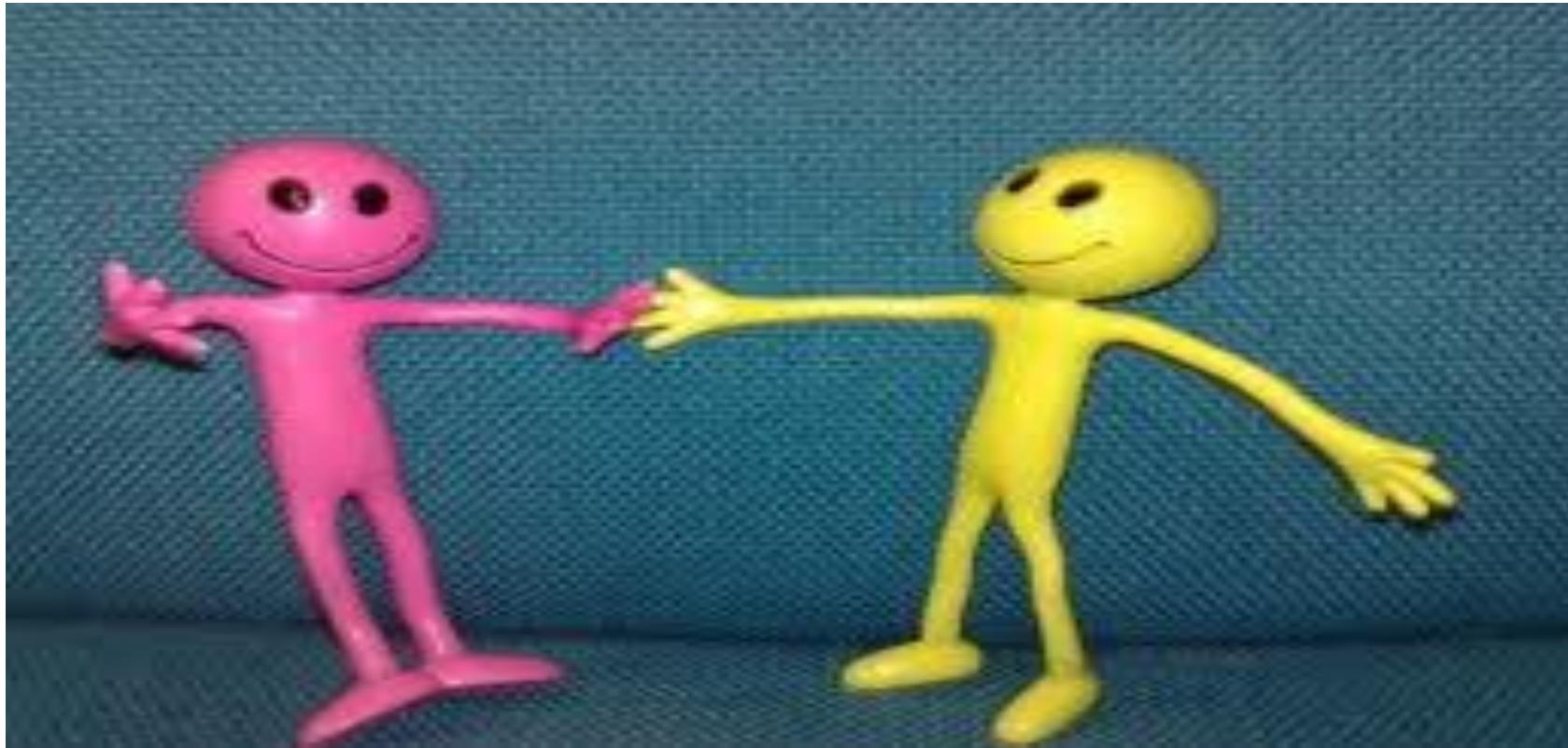
Can They Do the Job?

Is This a Good Fit?

Would They Be Happy Here?

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

It's Time for A Role Play!

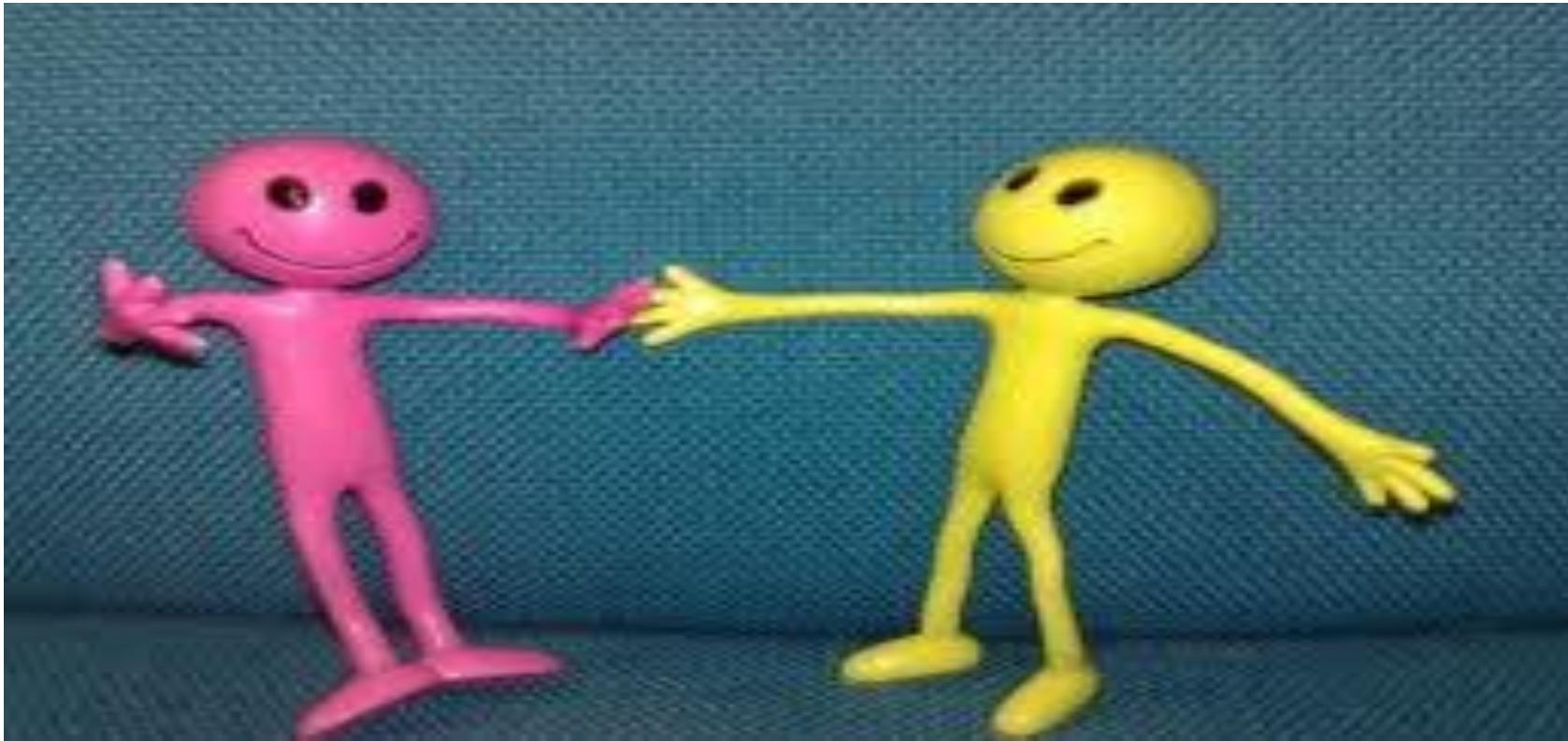


What are your greatest strengths?

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)

It's Time for A Role Play!



“What are your greatest weaknesses?”

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.”

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)

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?

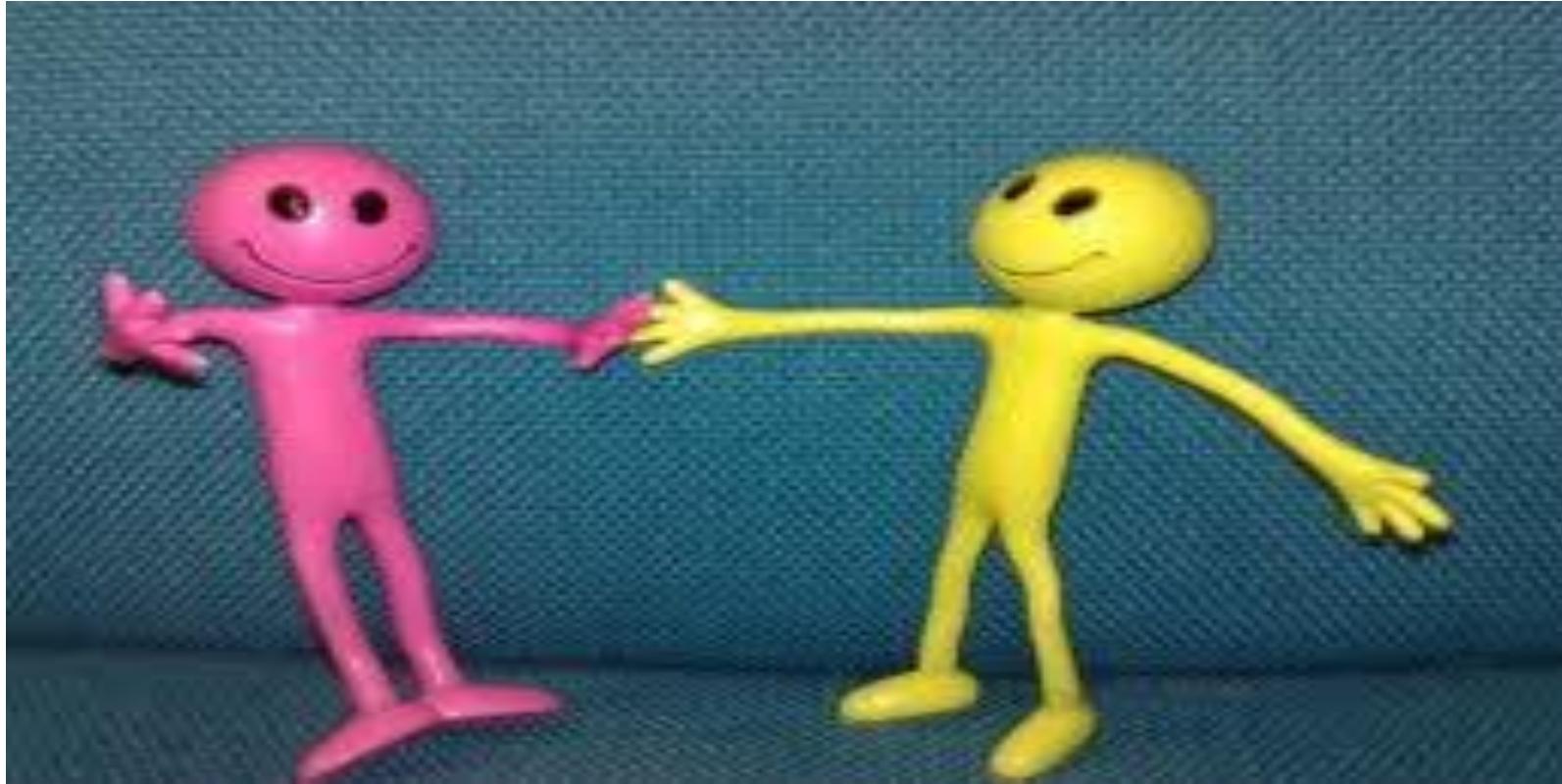
Questions to Prepare For - *Behavioral/Situational Questions*

- 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?

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?

It's Time for A Role Play!

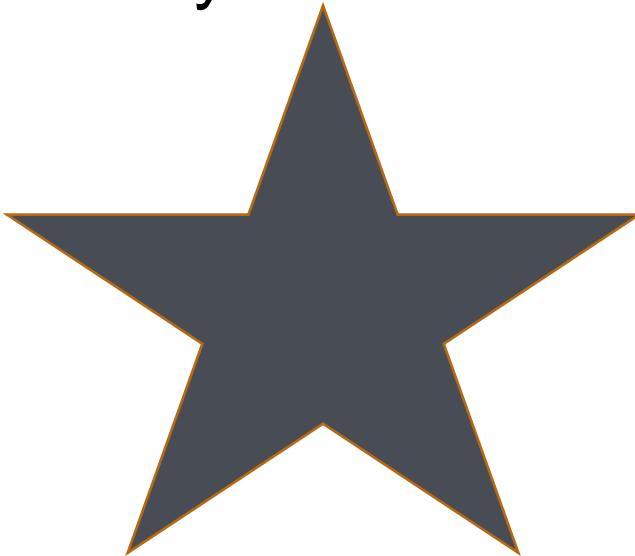


“Tell me about a time you had a conflict.”

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



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

More on Prohibited Questions

- 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: If you want to ask about how the program handles parental leaves- asking a **resident is best**.

Residency Interviewing is a 2 way street



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.

What questions are best asked to the Program Director?



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?

Questions for the Program Director

- Finances/ institutional support?
- What are you looking for in a resident?
- Plans for how to implement new FM program requirements?
- Any plans in my area of special interest?
- Graduates: where located, types of practices, feedback from them, specific skills (Ex: How many of your graduates in the last 5 years deliver babies?)
- (Discuss any major issues/ red flags in your application-ending it with a positive statement)

What Questions are best asked to a Faculty member?



#AAFPNC

AAFP NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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

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



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?)

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?

Practice Before Your First Interview!

#AAFPNC

AAFP NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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-Formality- (“bad” words, be careful about humor)

4 Classic Mistakes in Interviewing

#1 – Being Unprepared

- Being unprepared and letting in show in a question or an answer
 - Content – Ex: “How many residents do you have?”
 - Extroverts → ramble; need to listen more
 - Introverts → very awkward silences; need to talk more
 - Perceived lack of interest – Ex: “No, I don’t have any questions.”

4 Classic Mistakes in Interviewing

#2 – Negativity

- Negativity toward anyone (including yourself)
- Lack of enthusiasm



4 Classic Mistakes in Interviewing

#3 – Not Mirroring Communication

- Not mirroring the communication style of the interviewer
 - Talk too much or too little
 - Formal/informal



4 Classic Mistakes in Interviewing

#4 – Selling Yourself Short

- This Goal is to project

“Self Confident Humility”



#AAFPNC

AAFP NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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 virtual events with resident(s) if offered.

▪ Significant others

▪ Be Prepared- Residency Website, review common questions

▪ Be Rested/ Positive Attitude

▪ Be Early- Whether in-person or virtually

- Get on the Video Conferencing early and ideally trial run internet and area where you will do the interview
- Bad Internet/Computer Issues Happens. Try to have a back up plan.

What to Wear?

- Neat
- Comfortable
- "Professional"
- "Wear what makes you feel confident"!
(Strolling through the Match)
- Keep potential activities in mind (e.g.,
good shoes if will be doing walking
tours)



Tips for Successful Video Interviewing

- Find a quiet, private, well-lit place, free from possible interruptions. – Ask Medical School for help with space
- Ensure your internet connection is stable.
- Check that your computer's audio is working.
- Test your computer's webcam.
- Close any unnecessary web browser tabs and applications.
- Dress professionally and avoid bright colors.
- Have a pen, notepad and copy of your resume on your desk.
- When listening, nod and smile to show you are engaged.
- Use hand gestures when appropriate.
- Place your phone in silent mode.



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.

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 or attending virtual events.
- **Social media**- review your footprint, no comments about your interviews.

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.

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

Thanks / After this Session

Any follow-up questions, just send an email to:

wendy.barr@tufts.edu

Wendy Barr MD, MPH, MSCE

Associate Professor Family Medicine

Tufts University School of Medicine

Wrap-up Q&A

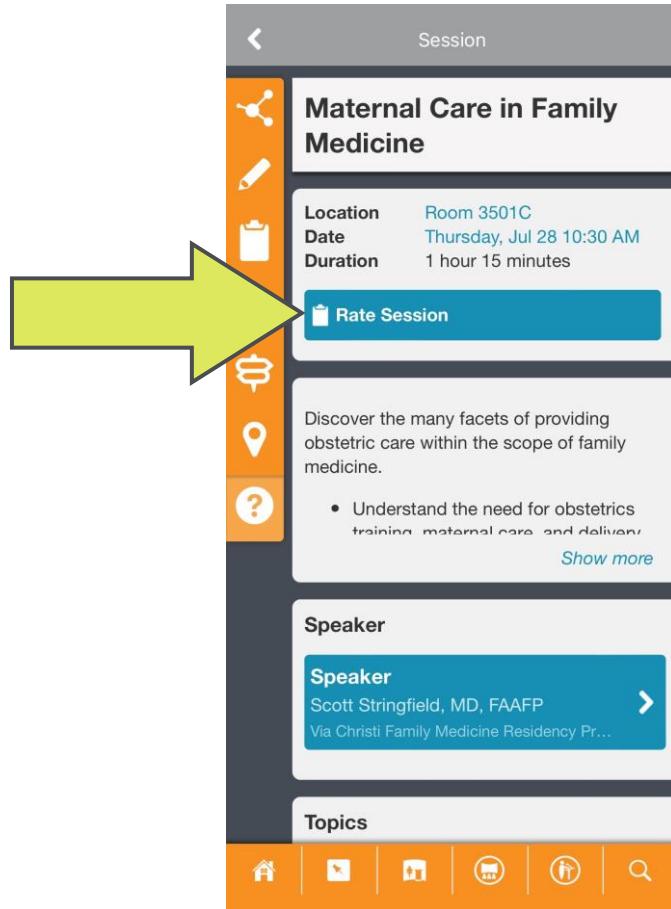


#AAFPNC

AAFP NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Let your voice be heard!

Evaluate workshops on the NC app



#AAFPNC

AAFP NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Keep Up With National Conference



@familymed (hashtag #aafpnc)



@aafp (hashtag #aafpnc)



@the_aafp (hashtag #aafpnc)

© 2022 American Academy of Family Physicians. All rights reserved.

All materials/content herein are protected by copyright and are for the sole, personal use of the user.

No part of the materials/content may be copied, duplicated, distributed or retransmitted
in any form or medium without the prior permission of the applicable copyright owner.



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA