

Tips on How to Ace the Job Interview

Before the Interview

1. Research the health care agency; know basic facts. Call any contact you have to get an insider's perspective.
2. Review your resume (and the folder of information you used to prepare it) so you will be ready to discuss your background, experience, and the contributions you can make.
3. Prepare responses to potential questions. Be ready for: "tell me about yourself," "discuss your strengths and weaknesses," "what are your most significant accomplishments," "how do you make important decisions," "What would your co-workers, instructors or classmates say about you," "how do you handle pressure," "why do you want to work here," and "what is your ten-year plan."
4. Prepare a sheet with 3 references that know you well and can speak to your ability to do this job. Usually one theory instructor, one clinical instructor (preferably from your preceptorship) and one former employer or long time associate (perhaps one who knows how hard you have worked to be a nurse).
5. If possible, find out ahead of time the names and titles of those who will be interviewing you.
6. Prepare questions to ask them.
7. Write up for yourself one particularly successful patient day; as you are writing ask: what did I learn about myself, about what it means to be a nurse, about what kind of impact I can make? Take the memory of that experience and the confidence you felt that day with you into your interview!

During the interview

8. Know exactly where you are going and what kind of parking is available so that you can arrive five to ten minutes early.

9. Dress professionally (i.e. a pressed, solid colored, button up shirt w/ slacks and a blazer) and appropriately (nothing too tight or too revealing, no jeans or sneakers and no wild hairdos).
10. Bring a brief case or covered notepad with a tablet and a pen for notes; copies of the resume and cover letter you submitted; your references (only give them your references, if they ask for them at the end) and the questions you have prepared.
11. Be genuine and direct; practice a firm handshake, use the interviewer's name; use good eye contact, if culturally appropriate.
12. Listen to questions carefully and ask for clarification if you are unclear.
13. Answer questions briefly, but more than one-word answers. Use examples.
14. Ask good questions about the agency.
15. Get the names, correct spelling, and titles of those who interview you.
16. **Please do not:** Share negative information about other work/ clinical experiences; ask about salary, vacation time, or other benefits on the first interview, chew gum, swivel in your chair, jiggle your foot or play with your hair.

After the interview

17. Send a thank you note within 48 hours. Mention something specific from the interview and state why you would be good for that position.
18. Make a follow-up phone call in three weeks if you have not heard back.
19. If you are not offered the position, do not be discouraged. See it as a practice for the next one.
20. When you are offered the position, take an internal check on your reaction to the person(s) you met, especially your future boss. It is the people who will make the most difference to your job satisfaction.
21. Get the offer confirmed in writing!