**INTERVIEW PREP 101**

PRIOR TO INTERVIEW

* **Research residency programs** and have questions prepared that cannot be answered by the program website or pamphlet.
* **Look at agenda** **for the interview** and have specific questions for each interview session (especially with the director of the program). Perform a background search on the interviewers so that if you have extra time you can ask them specific questions about their background or job. Also look at the agenda to see if they will require a written test or presentation. Look at the residency director closely. ( i.e. how long have they been director?  what is their practice area?  where did they train?)
* **Have a professional portfolio** (leather) notebook to take with you on interviews, so that you can keep your extra copies of resumes, pen, and paper for notes in one location.
* **Review your CV.** Interviewers may ask you about anything that you have placed on your CV.
* **Practice answering questions,** with friends or in front of a mirror. You never know what you are going to say until you have to actually say the words. Make a list of 4 accomplishments that you have enjoyed. Think of 2 large decisions you have made recently and be able to describe how you made those decisions.
* **Preparing for interviews out of state:** Plan travel arrangements to and from the airport, coordinate a place to keep your luggage during the interview, find a hotel that is close to the hospital, figure out transportation to and from the hospital. Make sure you know where the interviewing site is located and how long it takes to get there.

DAY OF INTERVIEW

Remember, you are qualified for this position but you will not get it unless you nail the interview! This is your chance to show them that you know what a residency is, you’re definitely interested in their particular program, you’re highly motivated, you work well with others, and you have a clinical mind. Just about everyone gets asked a question that they are not ready for. If you get asked the same question throughout the day, answer it as if it is the first time you have been asked it. Try not to answer just “yes” or “no” to questions, you want to make it a conversation and let them know as much about you as you possibly can in the short period of time that you have.

* Dress professionally: suit, closed-toed shoes, minimal jewelry, NO gum
* Turn cell phone OFF (vibrate can still be heard during the interview)
* Plan to arrive 15 minutes early. Do NOT be late!
* Lunch or downtime with the current residents is still considered part of the interview! Watch what you say. This is a great time to ask questions about the program…ex.
  + do you hang out together as a group
  + how often do you interact with the resident director
  + What are your thoughts on how pharmacy is received in this hospital
  + If you could change something about the program, what would that be
* Write down notes after each interview so that you remember everything about the program and so that you have ideas to personalize a thank you note

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

* Write a “hand-written” thank you note to the interviewers (especially the program directors). These are best if written the DAY OF the interview and mailed out. Just make sure that you send a thank you note (email/handwritten) to EVERYONE who took the time to interview you.
* If you decide not to participate in the Match, contact the programs to let them know

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

…TO ASK ON AN INTERVIEW

Good to have written down prior to the interview and bring them with you. When they ask if you have any questions, YOU HAVE TO ASK QUESTIONS.

* What are some of the former residents doing now?
* Are there any teaching/precepting opportunities? (ask if not on the website, if on website may ask for them to elaborate on the experience)
* Tell me a project a current resident is working on.
* What makes your program unique or successful?
* Describe your typical day at work. Do you have any interactions with the residents?
* What is your favorite part about your job?
* What made you get involved in the residency process?
* How do expectations change for a student on rotation to a resident on rotation?
* What organizations are you involved with (is you suspect involvement)?
* How flexible are rotation schedules? Can I change rotations that have been scheduled in the spring?
* How easy is it to get a desired elective rotation?
* Are there any opportunities to publish? How about outside of my research project?
* How are residents evaluated during the program?
* Has the pharmacy and residents ever worked with the medical department on research projects?
* What is the current pharmacy model? Are there any changes for the future?
* What clinics are available during the ambulatory care rotation (if not available on website)?
* Are there opportunities for leadership development?
* Have there been any significant changes in the residency program this year? Are there any changes planned for next year?
* What is the vision for the pharmacy department?

…HAVE BEEN ASKED DURING AN INTERVIEW

* What made you interested in this program?
* What made you want to do a residency
* Tell me about yourself (have a summary prepared)
* What drove you to the profession of pharmacy
* Tell me about a time you impacted a patient’s healthcare
* What is your biggest strength (don’t just say it..elaborate on how it will help you with the residency)
* What are some of your weaknesses (don’t just say it! Elaborate on how different aspects of their program will help you to work on this weakness or state how you consider this a weakness but it is also a strength….always put a positive spin on this!)
* Tell me about the hardest job you have had to perform
* Tell me about a time you did work you didn’t find valuable and how you dealt with this
* Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
* Are you a team player?
* What was your least favorite rotation and why?
* Tell me about a time when your carefully laid plans were fouled up. How did you react? What happened?
* Describe how you scheduled your time on an unusually hectic day. Give a specific example.
* IF you had to live your life over again, what would you change?
* How has your education prepared you for your career?
* What is your least favorite aspect of where you work now?
* What do you think is the biggest issue facing pharmacy today?
* Have you done anything to improve yourself this past year? What?
* Have you read something that’s changed your life?
* If you were stranded on a deserted island, what two drugs would you take with you?
* What do you like to do in your free time?
* What else do you think that I should know about you?
* Why do you think that you deserve the position?
* So, what questions do you have for me? (this has been asked at the beginning of an interview by a program director, be prepared to fill some time with questions)
* Describe what you do to ‘keep up with the literature” and tell me a me about a recent paper you’ve read or a presentation you have attended
* What was your most rewarding moment during your job/experience/rotation/etc?
* What would your coworkers say about you?
* Who among all your teachers and mentors has had the most influence on you and why?
* What situation, in our current position, do you wish you had handled differently?
* Give me an example of a conflict you have encountered on your rotations and what you did to resolve that conflict?
* Some of your preceptors will not have PharmD degrees, do you have any issues taking directions from someone with a lesser degree?
* Give me an example of a leadership project or position you have been in?
* Give me an example of a team situation you have worked in, what was your role within the team, and did you experience any conflicts?
* I see from your CV you have done a presentation about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, what can you tell me about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
* (if late in the interview day) What has surprised you about this site or residency program so far now that you are onsite?
* What was your favorite non-pharmacy job, and why?
* What was your favorite and least favorite rotation, and why?
* We all have to bend the rules at one time or another.  Give me an example of when you had to bend the rules and how you handled the situation.
* Give me an example of an instance where you disagreed with how the team handled a specific problem and how you handled the situation
* Tell me why I should choose you over your peers for this residency.
* Why have you selected this institution?  And, what do you think you will bring to our program?

Materials referenced here have been adapted from “Residency Prep 101: What to Do While You are Still in Pharmacy School” presented by Dr. Shannon Holt at the ACCP ESCP International Congress on Clinical Pharmacy in Orlando, Florida on April 26. 2009.