



Interview Guide: Nursing

OVERVIEW

- Know your personal and professional goals and what you can contribute to the organization
- **How do my strengths, interests, and work values relate to the requirements of this position?*
- Research the hiring organization
- Be able to communicate WHY you want to work for the organization
- Be able to communicate WHY you want to work in the particular setting
- Practice, Practice, Practice!

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Research the Employer

- **Review**
 - Mission/Vision
 - Service Areas
 - Organizational Culture
 - Industry Trends
 - The person(s) with whom you'll be meeting (if you have that information)
- **Where to Look**
 - Company Website
 - Glassdoor.com
 - Industry Journals/Websites
 - LinkedIn
 - Conduct informational interviews with specific contacts either in the related field or with the organization you will be interviewing with
- **Develop a comprehensive list of your successes, including both nursing and non-nursing situations**
 - Related experience
 - Technical interests
 - Leadership examples
 - Team activities

- Communication skills
- 'Real world' working experience

- **Practice, Practice, Practice!**

Review Storytelling Methods - Using SBAR

Situation: What situation were you in? (company, project, timeframe)

Background: What was the challenge?

Action: What action did you take?

Result: What was the outcome?

The Tough Questions: You and Your "Fit"

Tell me about yourself.

- Employer wants to know why you are a good fit for the job
- Be brief, but focused, aim for 90 seconds
- Highlight skills, education and experiences that best qualify you for the job
- Target your experiences to the job qualifications

Why did you choose a career in nursing?

- Be honest, but brief
- Let your passion for nursing shine through

Why are you interested in our organization?

- Do your research
- Know the organization's mission, philosophy and approach
- Be up-to-date on current news related to the organization
- Answer should specifically align with why you want to work for THIS organization

In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?

- Emphasize how your skills and experience contribute to the organization rather than focusing on what you can learn from them or why you are interested in the organization

What three things would be most important to you in your job?

- Be honest, but tailor your answer to what you have learned about the organization's work and culture
- Take some time to consider what you value? Mentors? Co-workers? Challenging work? Professional development? Organization's mission?

What experience do you have that has prepared you for this position?

- All experience is fair game
- Think about both clinical and other RELATED experiences both paid and unpaid

- Make sure to articulate exactly what experience you have had related to the particular setting you are interviewing for

The Tough Questions: Your Personality and Character

What are some of your strengths?

- Make a list, pick the three that you believe, based on the job description, are most applicable to the job
- Think of a very brief example for each to illustrate each strength
- During the interview clearly identify each strength (1..2..3)
- Develop 1 to 2 sentences about how each strength would be useful on the job

What are your weaknesses?

- Make sure to communicate: you have weaknesses like everyone else but you work constantly to improve yourself and become a more effective worker
- Mention a weakness and then stress its positive aspects or ways you are working to improve your weakness

How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?

- Focus on your strengths. Use this opportunity to highlight an excellent attribute you have that is relevant to the job

The Tough Questions: Your Work Style

Describe your working style

- Be honest about how you work while also showing that you are the type to take initiative and solve problems
- Frame your answer in the context of what you know about the organization and culture
- For example, if the organization is one where teamwork is a big part of the job, you'll want to emphasize how you work well with others.

In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?

- Do research on organization's culture within which you would work
- Give relevant examples that align with the particular setting and organizational culture for the job you are interviewing for

What qualities do you seek in a manager?

- Express interest in supporting the manager and working with the manager to achieve organizational, personal and professional goals
- You may want to ask the manager as a follow-up question how she/he likes to work with her/his team

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions:

- Describe a stressful clinical situation and how you handled it.
- Describe an encounter with a frustrated patient or family member and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a time when your performance did not meet your expectations.
- Give me an example of when you encountered an unexpected change and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a time when you received difficult (or less than positive) feedback from your supervisor. How did you respond to the feedback? What changes did you implement as a result?
- Recall a situation that resulted in poor communication. What happened and how did you resolve it?
- Give me an example of when you had to make a quick decision. What were the results?

Develop Questions for the Interviewer:

- What is the management philosophy of this company?
- What are your company's greatest challenges?
- What are the ideal attributes necessary to succeed in this position?
- How and when would I be evaluated in this position?
- What are the career opportunities in this organization for someone entering this position/department?
- How will the selection process proceed from here? When might I expect to hear from you regarding a decision?

Plan for the Interview Day

What to Wear

- Professional attire: always opt for a suit or similarly formal clothing; it is better to be overdressed!

What to Bring

- Printed copies of your resume and list of references
- Pen and paper
- Professional portfolio/folder
- Comfortable shoes-*just in case they ask you to shadow*

Logistics

- **If you have a phone or virtual interview...**
 - Make sure you have a quiet, professional place
 - Dress as if the interview were in-person
 - Test cell phone reception and/or internet connection
- **If you have an in-person interview...**
 - Confirm location and consider conducting a test-run traveling to the interview site
 - Plan to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early

During the Interview

- **DO**
 - Be yourself
 - Show interest and enthusiasm
 - Take notes during the interview
 - Quantify the details of your answers whenever possible
 - Ask questions
 - Request a business card from each interviewer
- **DON'T**
 - DON'T be unprofessional
 - DON'T take much more than 1-2 minutes to answer each question
 - DON'T forget to set your cell phone on silent and out of sight
 - DON'T be afraid to pause to collect your thoughts before answering
 - DON'T interrupt the interviewer

After the Interview

- **Write or type a formal thank you note or email**
 - Follow up within 24 hours of your interview
 - Use a formal salutation
 - Thank them for the interview
 - Reiterate your interest in the position has grown due to the opportunity to find out more about the position and the opportunity to meet the team
 - Offer your contact information again for follow-up questions and let them know you are looking forward to hearing from them regarding the next step in the hiring process

What to Expect Next

Employers will contact you by phone or email: Do not accept the offer immediately, request time to review the offer (be sure to get it in writing) before accepting. Time line will vary by setting, health care system, etc.