



60th Annual Meeting

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Talk the Talk: Strategies for Exceling in Pharmacy Interviews

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Disclosure

I do not have a vested interest in or affiliation with any corporate organization offering financial support or grant monies for this continuing education activity, or any affiliation with an organization whose philosophy could potentially bias my presentation (within the last 12 months).

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Presentation Objectives

- Describe common pharmacy interview formats including behavioral, situational, and clinical interviews
- Identify appropriate interview etiquette, including professional communication and follow-up practices
- Discuss best practices for developing clear, confident, and impactful interview responses

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Why Do Interviews Matter?

- CVs are looking more and more similar these days
 - Involvement in 1 or more organization + leadership position
 - Research with ASHP Midyear abstract
 - Good (or overinflated) GPA (3.2-3.6)
 - Variety of APPE rotations
- Assess candidate's communication skills
- Validate candidate's ability to speak to items on CV
- Only part of application process which can ensure no AI use (vs application, CV, letter of intent)
- Usually the final step to determine candidate's fit within an institution

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Types of Interviews

- Typical questions: Strengths/weaknesses, why residency?
- Behavioral/STAR: "Tell me about a time when..."
- Situational: What would you do in disagreement, if need to multitask, etc
- Clinical: Case, therapeutic questions
- Human Resources: Screening or final stage, explore past experiences, information (benefits)
- Sometimes occurs in stages
 - HR screening interview
 - Phase 1 with clinical group
 - Phase 2 with pharmacy/hospital leadership

<https://www.ashp.org/-/media/assets/professional-development/residencies/docs/Comprehensive-Residency-Interview-Guidebook.pdf>

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Interview Setting

- 1-on-1
 - Residency program director/coordinator
 - Director of pharmacy/pharmacy manager
- Panel
 - Multiple interviewers together (preceptors, residents, administrative team)
 - Tip: Talk to all panelists, not just the lead or who's asking questions
- Multiple mini-interviews
 - Short (~30 min) stations that assess different competencies (clinical reasoning, communication, problem-solving, patient case)
 - Tip: It's ok not to know everything, don't guess and create "red flags"
- In person vs virtual

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Interview Preparation

- Commonly asked questions
- Review interview itinerary (start/end times, meeting location, interviewers)
- Understand the position/job description
- Research the health system/site- bed size, service lines, hospitals/clinics within their system
- Learn about interviewers
 - Look them up on LinkedIn
 - Have they published?
 - Where did they go to school, residency?
 - Where are they from?
 - Past jobs?
 - Relate to them!

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Interview Preparation

- Prepare examples
 - Important intervention/patient interaction
 - Conflict/handling mistake
 - Good/bad personal qualities
 - Overcoming challenges
 - Time management issue
 - Multitasking
- Review common clinical cases and drug resources
 - Pneumonia/ID, VTE, sepsis
- Know your CV and anything on it
- Review your social media presence (your interviewers may look you up)

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Virtual Interview Preparation

- Test the technology in advance
 - Video/camera, audio
 - Screen sharing
- Have Zoom/Teams link open in case you are logged out (can easily log back in)
- Assess your background (no background/blurred/picture)
- Use computer/laptop over phone
- Log in early
- Minimize distractions/noises (headphones/quiet room)
- Do not read straight from pre-prepared notes

• Tip: Don't let tech issues throw you off (we're all used to it!); how you recover will say a lot about how you handle stress

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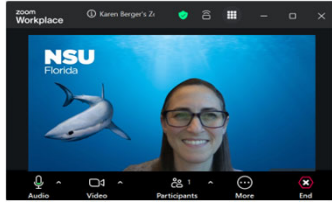
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Virtual Interview




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Answering an Interview Question

- Answer the question asked- do not deviate
- Make answers concise; there is opportunity to elaborate if the interviewer has questions
- Do not ramble
- Do not speak poorly of anyone
 - Watch the traps- what was your least favorite rotation/preceptor
- Speak positively
- Include examples when applicable
- Don't interrupt

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Nonverbal Communication

- Make eye contact (with everyone, not just the lead/question asker)
- Smile (naturally)
- Don't look at your phone
- Uncross your arms
- Can take notes, but minimize this and look up as much as possible

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The Intro

- Tell us about yourself- elevator pitch
- Why residency?
- Why us?
- What are your short term and long term professional goals?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you do in your free time?
- What do you do to mitigate stress?
- What differentiates you from other candidates?
- What steps have you taken to improve yourself in the past year?
- Tell me about a recent paper you've read
- What are you most proud of that's not on your CV?

<https://www.ashp.org/-/media/assets/pharmacy-student/docs/Competencies-Residency-Interview-Guidebook.pdf>
<https://www.ashp.org/-/media/assets/pharmacy-student/docs/Residency-Interview-Skills-Packet.pdf>
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Behavioral Questions

- STAR Method
 - Situation: Background
 - Task: Your responsibility
 - Action: What you did
 - Result: Outcome/what you learned
- Sample of Behavioral Questions:
 - Tell me about a time you made a clinical intervention that improved patient outcomes.
 - Describe a time you worked as part of an interprofessional team.
 - Tell me about a conflict with a colleague and how you resolved it.
 - Describe a time when you made a mistake. How did you handle it?
 - Give an example of when you had to prioritize multiple tasks.
 - Tell me about a time you received constructive feedback.

<https://www.ashp.org/-/media/assets/pharmacy-student/docs/Student-Residency-Interview-Skills-Packet.pdf>
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Clinical Questions

- Don't guess, but give your best educated opinion
 - Saying something wrong obviously red flag, but so is saying I'll get back to you on every question
 - Can state where you would look to find/confirm the information
- Review common disease states/topics, guidelines in advance
 - Anticoagulation (DVT/PE)
 - Pneumonia/UTI
 - Hypertension/heart failure
 - Sepsis/vasopressors, pain/agitation
 - Diabetes/insulin
 - Renal/hepatic dose adjustments
 - Common drug interactions
 - Commonly used drugs
 - Clinical guidelines
 - Tertiary references (Lexicomp, Clinical Pharmacology)

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Clinical Experience

- Shows what you learned in APPEs, work, and other professional experiences
- Tell me about a time you impacted a patient's healthcare
- Describe a time you went above and beyond for a patient
- What was your most rewarding moment during your job/experience/rotation/etc.?
- Tell me about a patient that had the greatest impact on you and your perception of pharmacy practice
- Tell me about a difficult patient and how you were able to make an impact on their health
- Tell me about your most memorable patient
- Tell me about a recommendation that was accepted by your team
- Describe a time you took on additional responsibilities and how you managed your workload

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"Trigger" Questions

- Tell me about a conflict you had with a colleague/preceptor/provider
- What was your least favorite rotation/preceptor and why?
- What is your least favorite aspect of your current position?
- Tell me about a time you felt overwhelmed and how did you handle it?
- Did you ever have a preceptor/attending disagree with a recommendation?
- Tell me about a time you missed a deadline
- Tell me about a situation you wish you had handled differently. What did you learn from your mistake? How do you wish you had handled the situation?

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Facility Tour/Lunch

- This is still part of your interview!
- May be with residents/staff/future colleagues
- May even be formally factored into the interview assessment/rankings
- Ask questions, be engaged, professional
- Be friendly with everyone you meet
- Be mindful of what and how you are eating (avoid messy food)

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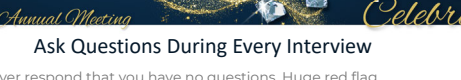
Interview Wrap Up

- Ask questions again
- Assess the timeline
 - Residency- match
 - Regular position- when are interviews complete? When will candidates be notified
- Thank everyone (in person and then via follow up email)

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Ask Questions During Every Interview

- You should never respond that you have no questions. Huge red flag
- It's ok to ask the same question in different rooms, but also have unique questions that you can ask
- Questions should not be easily answered via research (e.g.; on the website)
- Examples
 - What are some of your former residents doing now?
 - Are there any teaching/precepting opportunities?
 - What projects are the current residents working on?
 - What do you believe makes your program successful?
 - How flexible are rotation schedules? Do you tailor the rotations/residency to the residents' interests? Can I change rotations that have been scheduled in the spring?
 - What degree of research collaboration is there between the medical and pharmacy departments?
 - What is the current pharmacy model? Are there any changes for the future?
 - Have there been any significant changes in the residency program this year? Are there any changes planned for next year?

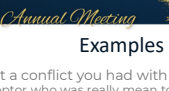
http://www.fshp.ca/media/assets/pharmacy_student/docs/Student-Residency-Guide/pdf-residency-interview-skills-packet-and-11-slides-8-14-16-63A90D5F-C0D0B-4B4BC-B9C2-5A18C402F8F1

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Examples of What Not to Do

- “Tell me about a conflict you had with a colleague or preceptor”
 - “I had a preceptor who was really mean to me..”
- “What do you consider your greatest weakness?”
 - “I’m a perfectionist- you’re so perfect you have no weaknesses
 - “I get easily stressed-” “I don’t like to work with other people.” – too honest, red flags
- Tell me about a situation that didn’t work out
 - “My preceptor didn’t tell me...” don’t blame others; take accountability
- Why are you leaving your current position?
 - “My boss wasn’t flexible”; “I went into an environment where I wasn’t trained and had to figure it out on my own- don’t talk poorly about people or the job
 - “I was asked to pick up a lot of extra work”; “I got burned out”- this may be a common expectation in any job
- Zoom interview
 - Taking interview from car (and/or while driving)
 - Wearing unprofessional clothing

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Pitfalls

- Poor preparation
 - No questions or questions which can easily be found online
 - Lack of knowledge about the institution
- Answers are illogical or confusing; do not address question asked
- Awkward interactions- too quiet, lack of eye contact, weird comments, rambling, overconfident/arrogant
- Poor examples (overly vague)
- Speaking poorly about others
- Saying something that is incorrect (don't guess)
- Lack of enthusiasm about program

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Red Flags

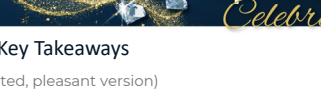
- “Do you have any questions for us?”
 - No.
- Cases
 - Confidently giving a wrong answer
 - Being so cautious that you are almost unable to give any answer
- Not being able to answer questions about:
 - Your presentation
 - Your CV
- Coming off arrogant/rude

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Key Takeaways

- Be yourself (the normal, caffeinated, pleasant version)
- Be positive, even when answering negative questions
- Come prepared
- Know your interviewers
- Ask questions and be engaged

- **Pharmacy is a small world and people talk- make a good impression every time**

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Slide 25 features a dark blue header with the FSHP logo, the text "60th Annual Meeting", and the slogan "Sparkle Shine Celebrate!". The main content area is white and titled "Resources". It lists two items: "ASHP Pharmacy Student Forum" and "Interview Skills Packet for Residency Candidates", both with links to PDF documents. The footer contains three URLs for ASHP resources.

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Resources

- ASHP Pharmacy Student Forum
 - [Interview Skills Packet for Residency Candidates](#)
 - [Comprehensive-Residency-Interview-Guidebook.pdf](#)

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Slide 26 features a dark blue header with the FSHP logo, the text "60th Annual Meeting", and the slogan "Sparkle Shine Celebrate!". The main content area is dark blue with white text. It includes the title "Talk the Talk: Strategies for Exceling in Pharmacy Interviews", the presenter's name "Karen Berger, PharmD, FASHP, FCCM, BCPS, BCCCP", and her email "kberger1@nova.edu". The slide concludes with "Thank you!" and a decorative graphic of sparkling stars in the bottom right corner.

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Talk the Talk: Strategies for Exceling in Pharmacy Interviews

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Thank you!

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