



# INTERVIEW SKILLS WORKSHOP

Presenter: Helen Ritchie 24 July 2003

## Introduction

### What attributes are the College looking for ? (Selection Criteria)

- **Sound clinical and technical skills** appropriate to the level of experience – objectively assessed through supervisory performance & REFEREE REPORTS
  - 1. Professional Referee Assessments (verbal) 55%
  - 2. Referee Reports (written) 10%
  - 65%
  
- **Demonstrated examples of an active pursuit towards a surgical career** and a high order of conscientiousness and depth and breadth of experience. Experience, presentations, publications, research, higher degrees, skills and achievements outside medicine – as outlined and highlighted in the CV
  - 10%
  
- **Effective interpersonal skills, integrity and compassion combined with realistic self awareness.** Assessed through INTERVIEW
  - 25%

### **Qualities specifically assessed through the interview:**

- Integrity – ethical, responsible and honest doctors and awareness of ethical behaviour
- Caring, sensitive attitude
- Enthusiasm, interest and willingness to learn
- Ability to work confidently and autonomously, but also ability to recognize limits and areas for development – self assessment
- Sound interpersonal & communication skills
- Ability to relate to communicate and relate to patients and families
- Ability to relate and work constructively with other professionals, as a team

#### ◆ **What is the purpose of the Interview ?**

Perhaps the most daunting aspect of going for any position is going for the interview.

In reality it is just an attempt by the selecting body to find out who you are, how you think, how you react and behave in certain situations, and what you have to offer.

#### ◆ **' Just be yourself. There is no benefit in preparing.' True or false?**

You only have, give or take, 30 minutes for the panel to know you and to be convinced that you and your attributes would add value to the pool of Surgeons in Australia. If unprepared you may waste half or more of that time. 30 minutes at an interview can have a dramatic effect upon your future.

Nervousness can have a negative impact upon our performance at interviews. It can create blocks in our thinking and also can cause us to think negatively about ourselves.

We start to doubt ourselves and fear that the panel will see only our weaknesses.

There is no one right answer to any question. In reality everyone has a unique background and variety of skills.

Your task is to convey an accurate picture of those strengths to the panel in a confident, articulate and succinct manner.

## ◆ **Behavioural Interviewing**

The premise of behavioral interviewing is past experience predicts future behaviour.

These are structured work based questions, focusing around the selection criteria, which try to link past experiences to specific job related competencies. They are designed to ascertain the degree to which you personally possess the attributes and apply them in practice.

“Can you give me an example of:

- ⇒ A time when your clinical skills were challenged, and how you handled this, or,
- ⇒ When you were faced with an ethical dilemma, or,
- ⇒ Your most noteworthy accomplishment in your last rotation ,or,
- ⇒ A situation where you contributed to the effectiveness of a project or a group in which you worked

Your answer can demonstrate your problem solving ability, clinical aptitude, ability to think through a problem and find solutions, resourcefulness, acknowledge and address learning needs etc..

Your answers should contain practical, tangible examples.

## STAR Approach to responding to behavioural interview questions

Situation that you were in	Task that was required	Actions that you took  Your skills and abilities are demonstrated	Result of your actions  Your insight and understanding of the issues surrounding this situation

### College assessment of your scenarios, is based upon :

- ◆ Authenticity of the example
- ◆ Relevance
- ◆ Degree to which you have insight into the principles
- ◆ Behaviour shaping effect the experience has had upon you

## **PREPARATION TIPS:**

- ◆ What is your **insight** like of yourself?
- ◆ Reflect on how others see view your **communication style**. Ask others around you.
- ◆ Check your **attitude**. What can I offer the College not what the College can do for me.
- ◆ Know your **skills**. Reflect on personal experiences that can demonstrate your insight, skills and attributes in a range of areas.

**Topics** that the College have covered in the past include:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Conflict management
- ◆ Ethical issues
- ◆ Teamwork
- ◆ Self correction, continuing improvement and learning

## **INTERVIEW TIPS**

### **THE PRACTICAL**

- ◆ Plan to arrive a little early to catch your breath and collect thoughts
- ◆ Positive first impression. The first 3 minutes are the most important. You can improve your initial impact by remembering the following :
  - ◆ Shake hands firmly; maintain eye contact at introductions, and during interviews.
  - ◆ Friendly manner and remember to smile.
  - ◆ An icebreaker question from the panel should be answered in a friendly manner without going on for too long.
- ◆ Dress professionally and conservatively.



- ◆ Never state a weakness and leave it there. If asked about your weaknesses, turn the question to your advantage. State a weakness that you worked hard to overcome to the degree that it is now one of your strengths!
- ◆ Questions relating to conflict in the workplace. Do not deny that you have ever experienced conflict. We are all human. Think of a minor conflict or interpersonal difficulty which you successfully worked through.

## **PRACTICE EXERCISE**

### **COMMUNICATION**

#### **BREADTH QUESTION**

All doctors should strive to be good communicators. Can you tell us what qualities in a surgeon would make them a good communicator? (2 mins)

#### **DEPTH QUESTION**

Can you give us an example from your past surgical experience where you have seen communication fail? (3-4 mins)

### **TEAM WORK**

#### **BREADTH QUESTION**

You have had the experience of working in a surgical team. Can you tell us what makes for a good surgical team? (2-3 mins)

#### **DEPTH QUESTION**

Can you give us an example from your past surgical experience where teamwork has been less than optimal? How could you (or did you) work to overcome some of the problems. (3-4 mins)