



remarks

Little Red Flags Your personal appearance and attitude in an interview are being evaluated as much as your medical credentials. Don't raise any flags with rumpled clothes or crass behavior.

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Wait—let me guess. You think that little things, like whether the soles of your shoes are worn down, if your fingernails are clean and clipped, or if you have bad breath, don't matter in an interview if you are a physician. After all, you've attended a prestigious medical school, you have impressive credentials, and you know all the right people. Right?

Wrong! Your experience,

education, and references mean a lot in an interview. But you need to remember, the physician who interviewed before you and the physician who interviews after you will most likely have "all the right stuff" too. It is important to pay attention to the details—to remember that the interviewing physician is also trying to see you from the

patient's perspective. Your interviewer will want to see how you communicate—do you come across as friendly and warm? Are your answers thoughtful, your responses articulate?

The interviewer also will be looking for clues regarding how you might interact with co-workers. How do you handle stress? Are you a team player? Since it is

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impossible to gauge your reaction to these situations during a job interview, the interviewer may use a method called behavioral screening—questions about actual past experiences you have had in relation to a situation. For instance, the interviewer may say: "Give me an example of a time when a crisis occurred and you had to act fast—what did you do and what were the results?" Take your time and think of a good example that demonstrates your ability to remain calm and think clearly during a crisis.

Remember that your interviewer is looking at the

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“overall package.” To leave a positive impression, you should remember that a polished appearance and great communication skills are often as essential as your credentials and experience.

You might want to refer to these tips regarding the little things that mean a lot before going to your next interview:

- Show up on time. In fact, it is a good idea to arrive 15 or 30 minutes early so you can “freshen up” and fill out any required paperwork, calm your nerves, and prepare mentally for the interview.
- Be prepared. Have all of your paperwork in order. Review your CV before your interview. Anticipate any questions that may arise from your CV, such as a period of time where you were not working or attending school.
- Wear clean, wrinkle-free clothes.
- Dress conservatively.
- Wear clean shoes in good condition.
- Don't overdo the aftershave or perfume.
- When in doubt, less is more. Be conservative with makeup, jewelry, colors, fabrics, etc.
- Make sure you have fresh breath.
- Make sure your fingernails are clipped, filed, and clean.
- Turn off your cell phone and beeper before your interview.
- Don't interrupt the interview to make a phone call, put coins in the parking meter, etc.
- Don't smoke!
- Don't use off-color language or tell inappropriate jokes regardless of how comfortable you may feel with the interviewer.

- Don't talk about traveling to Europe every month when the city doesn't have an airport. The interviewer will be trying to assess how good a fit you will be, not only in the practice, but in the community. He will want to hire a physician who will stay long term.
- Don't say negative things about the people you work with. In fact, don't say anything negative! A positive attitude is essential to not only getting the job you want, but in being successful in everything you do.
- Ask good questions. If you don't ask any questions they will think you are not really interested.
- Don't yawn! Your interviewer will be offended and think you aren't excited about the job. Make sure you are well rested prior to your interview.
- Don't chew gum.

As a physician, you're dealing with people every day, often under intimate circumstances. Interviewers want to hire physicians who not only have the experience and education to provide excellent medical services. They also want physicians who help patients feel calm and comfortable—little things do mean a lot! Don't overlook anything that can give you an edge. Be prepared. Be positive. And leave having made a great impression on the interviewer! ■

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