

CSTE Early Career Professionals Webinar: Interviewing for Epidemiology Jobs

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Objectives

By the end of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- Describe some key interviewing skills
- Identify some of the challenges to interviewing and how to address them
- Try out some tips and techniques to have better interviews

Types of interviews

In-person

Phone

Skype

One-one

Group

30 minutes

Full day

Traditional in-person with the hiring manager

Peer / team interviews

Panel interviews



Key Interviewing Skills

Aren't you glad you're an epi?



Image credit: <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/interview-questions/2015/5-questions-you-should-ask-in-every-job-interview>

PREPARE

- Find out about the organization
- Connect to something
- Be a job description detective
- Think about something you want to know more about

PREPARE

Brief Story of Me (3 to 5 minutes max)

Why Do I Want This Job (1 to 3 minutes max)

Why Am I Looking to Leave My Current Job (1 minute max)

PREPARE

Look for standard interview questions

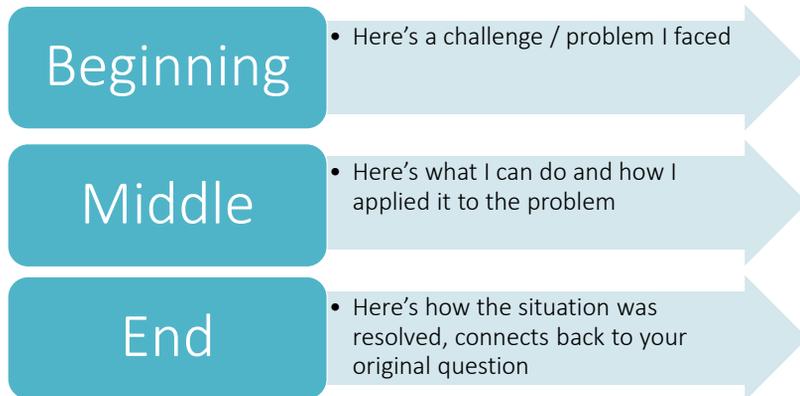
Both traditional (what experience do you have with...) and “behavioral” (tell me about a time when...)

Think about your own examples

PRACTICE

Try out your answers – ask a friend or mentor for help

Create a few concise “stories” about your projects and experiences



BE PRESENT

On-time or early, but not too early

Take in the questions – write key words, jot ideas

Bring handouts of your key information; resume / cover letter

Consider bringing examples of writing or a completed analysis – plan to leave these

REFLECT BACK

Continuous temperature of the room

Refer to your resume, cover letter, other supporting documents

Connect knowledge, skills, and experience to the job and organization

ASK QUESTIONS

Prep at least a few questions for the interviewers (3-5 should do)

Consider who you are talking to when you prep them

Think about...

- Project specific

- Office / site / team culture

- Support for work

- Manager / supervisor

SAY THANK YOU

Even if the interview is disastrous, don't forget to say thank you
Consider a handwritten note or an email to say thank you

Dear [Hiring Manager],

Thank you for taking the time to interview me for the [position name]. I enjoyed learning more about the organization and the opportunity. [If you have a specific detail you want to mention, share it here]. I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

[Your name]

Challenges & Solutions

Government Interview Processes

Can be very formal

May lack connection

Hard to read how your answers are being taken in

What do you do?

Keep calm and carry on



Image credit: <http://www.keepcalmandcarryon.com/keep-calm-and-carry-on/posters-artwork/keep-calm-carry-on-red-poster/>

Panel Interviews

A group of people who will take turns asking you questions

Panels may be used because:

- There are many people whose work the position touches

- There are many partners (especially for fellowships and other training-style opportunities)

- The organization wants a lot of feedback on each candidate

What do you do?

Find out who's on the panel ahead of time (if you can); if not, make note of who's here and why

Speak directly to the person who asked you the question

Look around the room for reactions / feedback

Phone Interviews

Used a lot as screener interviews and preliminary interviews if you are not local to the position and organization

Lack that interviewer feedback and non-verbal communication cues

What do you do?

Find a quiet place; set up your space

Respond like you would in person

Check back with your audience

Skype Interviews

Great for distance candidates

Technology can be a barrier

What do you do?

Make sure Skype is fully installed and you have all the info you need to connect with the interviewer before the interview

Test it – skype with a friend to make sure it's smooth, have good bandwidth

Treat it like an in-person interview

Nerves

It's OK to be nervous!

Be aware of what you are doing with your body as you respond

What do you do?

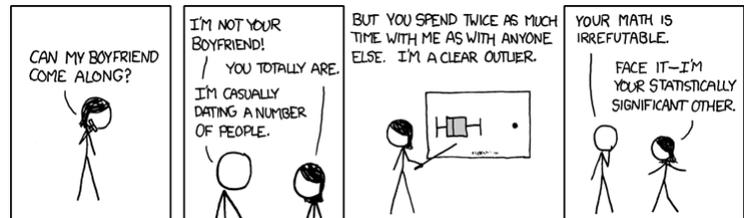
Have someone critique you only on what you do with your body

Ideas for how you might discontinue something distracting

Jargon!

Who's interviewing you?

What technical terms, acronyms, and other jargon do you use?



What do you do?

Keep jargon to a minimum

Define any acronyms you need to use

Practice explaining something technical to a “lay” person

I don't know

It's OK to say you don't know something if you truly don't

As a hiring manager, I don't expect any one candidate to know everything

There are some exceptions!

What do you do?

Anticipate the knowledge questions from the job description

Research terms that are not familiar

I need a moment

You get a question that just stops you in your tracks

It's OK to say you need a moment to gather your thoughts

What do you do?

Ask for what you need

In that "moment":

- Think back through your prepared examples

- Try to connect to a key term in the question

- Pull in a related skill or example (might not be perfect)

- Build off an example you've given already



Other Essentials

Talking about Epi Skills

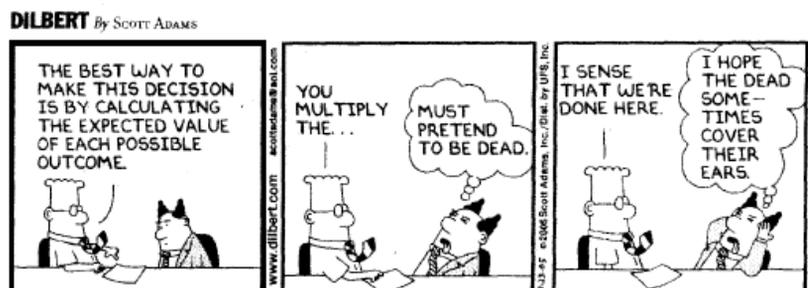
Who are you talking to? Is the manager a Epi / data person? Or are they more of a program/project admin?

What do you do?

Respond to who's asking

Use appropriate detail

Give examples



Talking about Epi Skills

Prep up to 3 analytic projects you can draw on

Mention methods used

Mention software and your proficiency in it

What are the most prevalent stat programs? Where should you spend your time on professional development?

Ask the organization – what types of professional development do you support?

Talking about Epi Skills

Highlight skills in analysis and software throughout your interview

If you get a chance to add at the end, take it

Things to note:

Mapping, Access, qualitative software, survey analysis methods, certifications or trainings completed

Attire

There's lots of guidance about what to wear to an interview, and most of it can be summed up as:



Image credit: <https://www.eposts.co/recommended-attire-successful-job-interview/>

References

Always have 2-3 people who can be references for you

Always ask first, before you list someone as a reference

Provide them with some information about the position and why you want it

Bring your references with you to an interview, just in case

Thank your references (even if you don't get the job)

Try it out

BASIC QUESTIONS

[Tell me about yourself.](#)

What are your [strengths](#)?

What are your [weaknesses](#)?

[Why do you want this job?](#)

[Where would you like to be in your career five years from now?](#)

[What's your ideal organization?](#)

[What attracted you to this organization?](#)

BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

[What was the last project you led, and what was its outcome?](#)

Give me an example of a time that you felt you went above and beyond the call of duty at work.

Can you describe a time when your work was criticized?

Have you ever been on a team where someone was not pulling their own weight? How did you handle it?

Tell me about a time when you had to give someone difficult feedback. How did you handle it?

<https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/100-potential-interview-questions>

Thank you!

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