



# Interview Preparation and Practice

# YMCA-YWCA Mission



Building healthy communities  
Plein de vies

- The National Capital Region YMCA-YWCA is a charitable, voluntary, community based association dedicated to improving the quality of life for children, youth, adults and families through programs that build spirit, mind and body.
- The National Capital Region YMCA-YWCA provides opportunities for personal growth and character development by providing unique and contemporary programs for everyone regardless of race, religion, creed, ability or economic circumstance.



# Y Employment Services

## Resource and Information Services

- ✓ Computer access and job search libraries
- ✓ One-on-one assistance from staff for resume and cover letter writing, job search strategies and interview techniques
- ✓ Information on training, apprenticeship, Labour market, community supports and job postings
- ✓ Participation in employer hiring events and career fairs

## Workshops

- ✓ Interactive workshops relating to career exploration and employment preparation

## Assisted Services

- ✓ Individualized one-on-one employment consultation to guide you through your search
- ✓ Support with all aspects of employment preparation
- ✓ Referral and access to funded programs such as Second Career and Job Creation Partnership
- ✓ Referral to Job Developers and programs such as Job Matching Placement Incentive and Youth Job Link

# Workshop Objectives:

## **By the end of this workshop you will:**

- ✓ Be able to identify the different kinds of interviews that you may encounter
- ✓ Understand how to prepare for your interview and develop strategies to successfully answer questions
- ✓ Identify what employers are looking for when interviewing a candidate and how to deliver on those things
- ✓ Understand the importance of the follow-up as part of the interview process



# Types of Interviews

Structured/non-structured

One-on-one/panel/group

Responsive/reactive (stress interview)

Phone

Informational

Traditional/Behavioral



# Before the Interview

## How to prepare for an interview:

1. Research
2. Plan for the interview
3. Practice
4. Make a good first impression

failing = prepare  
to prepare = to fail



# Research

**You should be able to answer these questions:**

Why do you want to work for our company?

What do you know about us?

What are your salary expectations?

Where:

Company website

 glassdoor®

Competitor websites

 interviewer profiles





# Plan for the interview

## Plan:

### How to get there

- Where will the interview be? Directions?
- Will you drive? Where will you park?
- What bus route will you take?

### Your time

- What time is the interview? What time do you need to arrive?
- What time will you need to leave to arrive in time?

### What to bring with you

- Portfolio, notes, pen and pencil
- Cover letter, resume and references for each interviewer
- Any other materials the employer asked for in advance
- Your research

### Answers to questions

- Research the kinds of questions to expect
- Prepare your answers in advance





# Practice for the interview

## Anticipate the kinds of questions you will be asked

- Practice answering potential questions

## Interview questions typically fall into 2 categories:

Traditional	vs.	Behavioural
Questions are hypothetical - Not focused on past events		Questions are probing and specific - Focused on past experience
<u>Example:</u> Tell me about yourself.  What would you do if...?		<u>Example:</u> Tell me about your greatest achievement.  Tell me about a time when...



# Types of Questions

## 1. Qualifications

- Educational background
- Work and volunteer experience
- Strengths and weaknesses

Honesty, confidence, relevant experience and skills

## 2. Motivation

- Interest in position
- What you have to offer
- Where you want to be

Realistic expectations, personal interest in position and employer

## 3. Teamwork

- How to work with other people

Cooperation, open-mindedness, respect

## 4. Problem Solving

- How you deal with conflict
- How you cope with pressure and stress

Good judgement, problem-solving skills, honesty

## 5. Knowledge of organization

- How you can contribute
- Related experience
- Fit within the organization

Knowledge of company, partners and competition



# STAR Technique for answering questions



**As best as possible, answer questions by telling a story, either in describing experience that you have or by telling the story of what you would do**

**Situation** – explain the situation, and the key players, set the scene for the story you are going to tell

**Task** – what’s the problem that has to be solved or overcome

**Action** – describe the steps that you took or would take

**Result** – describe the outcome



# First Impressions are lasting ones

**Remember:** Your assessment starts right from the time that you are invited for an interview

- Expect that everything you do from that moment forward will be scrutinized
- Be aware of how you present yourself over the phone and in correspondence
- Arrive at the interview prepared, don't prepare your resume packages in the lobby, someone will be watching



**You only get one chance to make a first impression:**

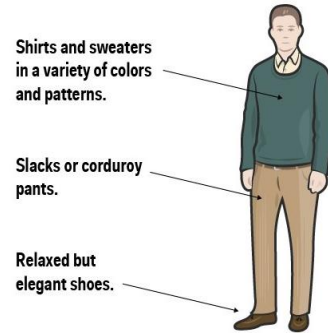
- Make sure you're presenting yourself in the best way
- It only takes someone *11 seconds* to form an impression of you



# Dress for Success

**Plan your outfit the day before** – make sure it is clean and pressed

- Dress appropriately for your sector or industry
- Wear solid colours
- Dress nicely, but don't allow your clothing to speak for you
- Don't neglect your shoes



- Limit jewelry
- Be fragrance free
- Have clean and tidy hair
- Wear light make-up
- Keep nails trimmed and clean
- Have fresh breath



# During the Interview

## Interview Format:

1. Pre-interview observation
2. Opening – rapport building
3. Skills and experience assessment
4. Questions to assess “fit”
5. Your questions
6. Closing – thank you, timelines, contact information
7. Follow-up



# During the Interview

## What you say is as important as how you say it.

- Research on non-verbal communication suggests that more than 90 percent of information taken in by the interviewer is non-verbal.
- Posture, gesture, facial expressions, tone of voice, appearance, composure are important

## Tips for success during an interview:

- Set yourself up for success
- Stay calm, confident and friendly
- Stay positive
- Turn OFF your cell phone



# Now it's your turn

## Questions you might ask:

What is the single largest problem facing your staff, would I be in a position to help you solve this problem?

What have you enjoyed most about working here?

Do you have any hesitations about my qualifications or experience?

Can you tell me a little bit more about the team I'll be working with

How will you define success in this position?

What is the next step in the process?





# After the Interview

## Reflection:

Take time to reflect on the interview

- Write down any questions
- What went well?
- How could you improve?
- Did you forget to say anything?



*Use this information to guide you when you write your follow-up email*



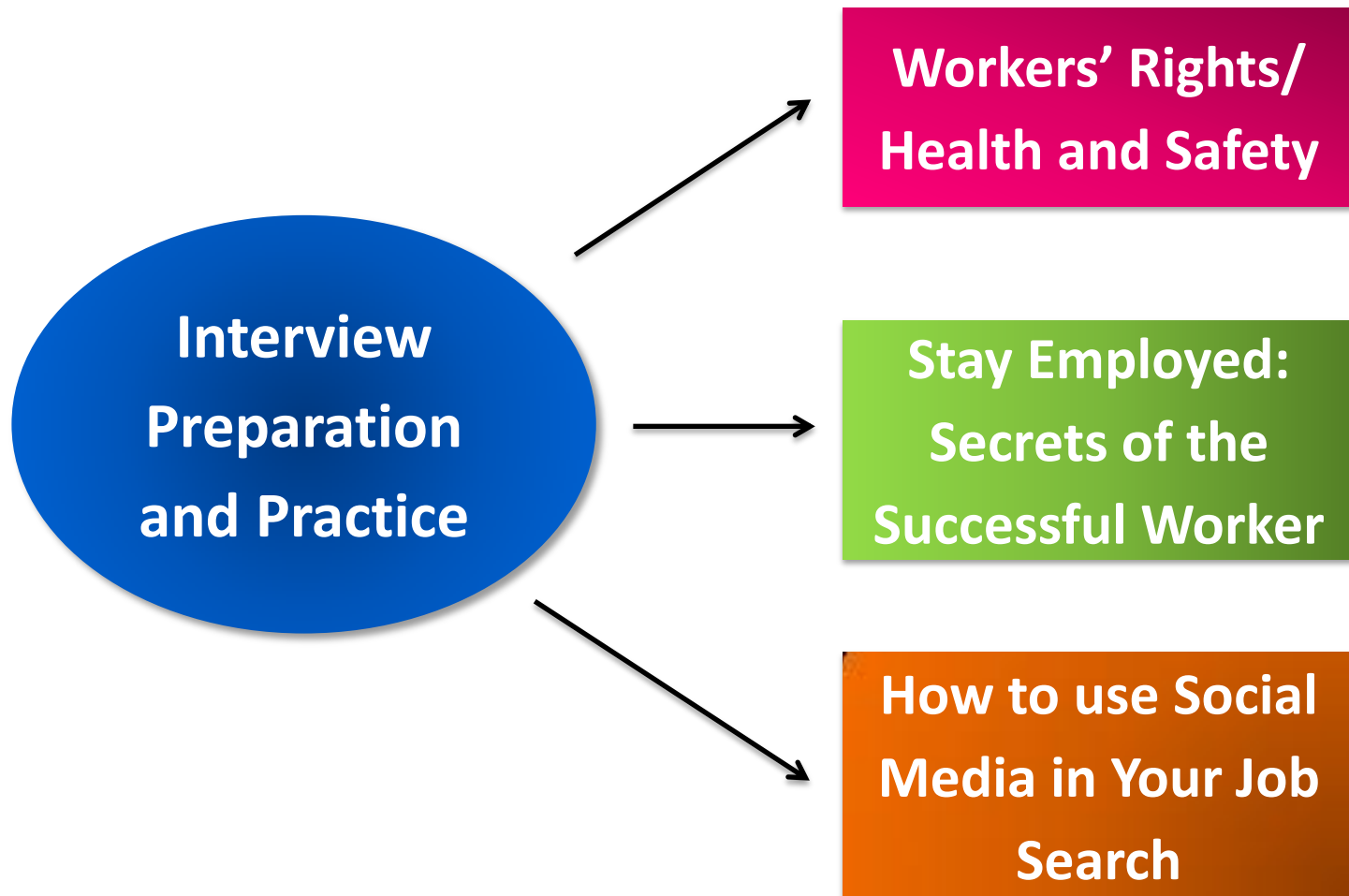
# After the Interview: The Follow-up

## What's up with the follow-up?

- Why**
- thank the interview team for their time
  - follow-up on any issues that came up during the interview
  - restate interest in the position
- How**
- by email
- When**
- within 24 hours



# Next Steps:



# Thank you!

Interviewing is a skill that can only be improved with practice.

*Don't forget, you can speak with your Employment Consultant or a Resource Centre Advisor about booking a mock interview.*

