

Interview Skills



Autism ONTARIO

see the potential voir le potentiel

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About Redpath Centre

- The Redpath Centre is a private mental health organization specializing in ASD and other neurodevelopmental conditions across the lifespan. In addition to providing a range of clinical services, we carry out research, educate stakeholders, and advocate for systems change.
- We offer psychological assessments, occupational therapy, speech assessment/therapy, individual, couple, family and group therapy, vocational and educational coaching.
- Main office located downtown Toronto and affiliates throughout the province



About Sarah Southey

- Undergraduate degree in Labour Studies and a Masters of Social Work
- Over 12 years experience directly counselling individuals with challenges finding and keeping work
- Provides counselling to youth and adults around employment, anxiety and social relationships
- Mom to three young boys and a dog
- www.sarahsouthey.com



Agenda

- How to Prepare for an Interview
- Interview Accommodations
- Types of Interview Questions
- Most Common Interview Questions and Answers



Feelings and Interviews

- Normal to feel nervous/anxious
- Individuals who relate to ASD are likely to report more concern with the interview process than others



Interview Preparation

- Test run the route to get to the interview
- Do not memorize responses
- Dress to impress
- Grooming is important
- Google “common interview questions” for your industry
- Use positive Self Talk prior and visualize success
- Remember to demonstrate professionalism upon arrival to the interview



Accommodations for Interviews

- Ask for interview questions and agenda in advance
- Inquire about the number of people on the interview panel and request smaller panel
- Request to opt out of group interviews
- Request for opportunity to demonstrate skills
- Scheduling during a time of day that is more optimal for sensory issues
- Consider job trials depending on the industry
- <https://hireautism.org/resource-center/interviewing-your-applicant-with-autism>



Communicating With Your Interviewer

- Handshake at beginning is typical practice
- Limiting “small talk” should be ok as the interviewer expects you to be nervous
- Acknowledging that interview make you nervous may be helpful
- Thank your interviewer at the end



Types of Interview Questions

- General Common Questions
- Behavioural/Situational
- Skill Testing



Illegal Interview Questions

- Country/place of origin and citizenship status
- Religion, faith or creed
- Age
- Gender or sexual orientation
- Race or ethnicity
- Family structure, children or marital status
- Mental or physical health and disability
- Appearance, height and weight
- Pardoned offences



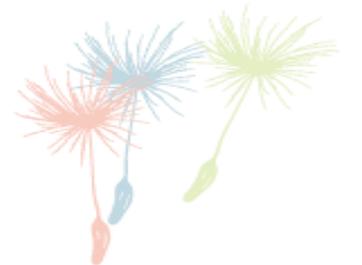
Most Common Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself
- Describe Your Strengths/Skills
- Tell me about a weakness
- Why do you want to work here?
- Describe a time where you handled a difficult situation
- Tell me about a time you worked on a team and had conflict



Tell Me About Yourself

- Keep it professional – not your whole life story
- Share about your most recent job and related education
- Keep it to a maximum of six sentences



Tell Me About Yourself Video

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7zc6Aiq58s>



[Job interview]

"What are ur strengths?"

Me: I fall in love easily.

"umm okay... what are ur weaknesses?"

Me: Those blue eyes of yours.



Describe your Strengths/Skills

- Choose relevant, accurate, related strengths
- Do not list more than five
- Avoid just listing strengths, add context to quantify that strength



Strengths Example

- *My greatest strength is my writing skills. I can also work to tight deadlines under pressure. For example, I was once asked to complete a project that fell through the cracks. My editor discovered the mistake two hours before the deadline. It was an important piece that gave our publication a scoop on the topic in question. Not only did the piece have to go out on time, but it had to be perfect. I hunkered down and wrote. The result? The article was on time and acclaimed.*



Tell me about a Weakness

- Remember weaknesses can be turned into strengths
- Talk about the strategies you use for dealing with that weakness, or its positive side e.g. taking time to make decisions may slow you down, but on the other hand you are not impulsive
- Listing too many weaknesses will type you as negative
- You may choose to admit that you do not have a particular type of experience called for however you may be able to build that skill
- Indicate a plan for working on your weakness



**INTERVIEWER : SO WHY
DO YOU WANT THIS JOB?**



**WELL, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN REALLY
PASSIONATE ABOUT NOT STARVING TO DEATH.**



Why Do You Want to Work Here

- Explain why you are interested in the organization – **RESEARCH COMPANY!**
- If you have had a long-term interest in them, say so
- If location is significant, you could mention this after talking about your interest in the firm
- Try not to focus on what you will get from the organization, but the qualities you will bring to them
- You could mention that you see the position as offering challenge, a chance to learn new things and to enhance and develop skills and abilities necessary for the position



Behavioural/Situational Questions

STAR METHOD

- **Situation:** Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.
- **Task:** What goal were you working toward?
- **Action:** Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail and keep the focus on YOU. What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution? Be careful that you don't describe what the team or group did when talking about a project, but what you actually did. Use the word "I," not "we" when describing actions.
- **Result:** Describe the outcome of your actions and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Make sure your answer contains multiple positive results.



Tell Me About a Time You Handled a Difficult Situation

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H25RnmslChI>



Tell Me About a Time You Worked On a Team and Had Conflict

- **Situation** - I was working as a project manager on an IT project, and one technician was constantly late finishing tasks.
- **Task** – I realized that I needed to talk to him directly first about the situation before escalating to management.
- **Action** - When I approached him about it, he reacted defensively. I kept calm and acknowledged that the deadlines were challenging and asked how I could assist him in improving his performance. He told me that he was involved in another project where he had to do tasks that were not in his job description.
- **Result** – After a meeting with the other project manager, we came to a resolution that alleviated the technician's workload. For the remainder of the project, the technician delivered great work.



Questions for the Interviewer

- Demonstrates interest in the company and position
- Examples:
 - What are the next steps from here in the hiring process?
 - What are some of the day-to-day responsibilities?
 - What does mentorship look like for new hires?
 - What is the training process look like?



Thank You Follow-up

Dear [Mr./Ms. Last Name]:

Thank you very much for your time today [or yesterday or the date] to interview me for the position of [job title]. I appreciate the opportunity to learn more about this job, to meet you and [names of other interviewers], and to see your facility [or offices, location, whatever is appropriate].

As we discussed, I have [months or years] of experience with [technology, tools, or qualification(s) you have that seemed most important in the interview]. With my background and experience, I believe that I could become a contributor to your team very quickly.

I am excited about this opportunity to join [organization name]. Please do not hesitate to email or call me if you have any questions or need any additional information.

I look forward to hearing from you [whenever they said they would be in touch or in 10 days if they didn't give you a date].

Best regards,

[Your name]

[Your job title or tag line, like "eCommerce Customer Support Specialist"]

[Phone number -- **not your work number** if you are employed]



Resources

- *The Complete Guide to Getting a Job for People with Asperger's Syndrome* by Barbara Bisonette (2012).
- What Colour is Your Parachute? By Richard Boyles (2020).
- Biginterview.com
- <https://www.recruitguelph.ca/cecs/sites/uoguelph.ca.cecs/files/public/Asperger%27s%20and%20ASD%20Job%20Interview%20Tips.pdf>
- <https://hireautism.org/resource-center/interviewing-your-applicant-with-autism>
- https://www.job-hunt.org/job_interviews/sample-interview-thank-you-email.shtml



Resources Continued

- <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/handle-conflict-in-workplace>
- <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/iv-human-rights-issues-all-stages-employment/5-interviewing-and-making-hiring-decisions>
- <https://www.kcyatlaw.ca/illegal-interview-questions/>
- <https://career.berkeley.edu/Tools/UsingMentalRehearsal>

