

Interview tips for healthcare courses at college and university by Ella Borchard

In advance:

- Dress smartly
- Hair tied back so you can't fiddle with it
- Have passport photos done just in case you need to provide one
- Take photocopies of your passport, ID, birth certificate, school certificates etc.
- Revise unit conversion and basic maths without a calculator eg. 74 x 368
- Drink plenty of water
- Get enough sleep the night before
- Look at recent NHS reports and reviews
- Look up health promotion and public health (I got caught out on this, they don't need you to know it inside out, just to be aware of them)

During the interview:

- Use personal experiences to make your answers come to life.
- Use open body language- healthcare professionals need to be approachable.
- Link things that don't seem to be linked- eg. I was on school council and have chaired meeting which would be useful on a ward handover or in a multi-disciplinary meeting.
- They don't believe you if you say you will go and do more work experience etc. actually go and do something before the interview, even if it is only volunteering for 2 hours in a care home.
- Take a pen and paper in case you have a service user video that you need to answer questions on. It is also useful in case someone makes a good point and you want to remember it for another interview.
- Ask a question at the end - my favourite, if they've covered everything, what is the best thing about being a(whatever the job is)? It is really nice to hear their answer and makes them think about it, so they might remember you more.

Common questions:

Why do you want to be a? You don't need a fancy answer; if you give the true reason they will believe in you. If you are applying because you like helping people, say! A little bit of selfishness is okay, if we didn't enjoy helping people then why are we going into healthcare? We should get satisfaction from helping to make someone better.

What do you think of..... someone posting about their placement on Facebook.... Someone posting a picture of themselves in the placement area.... Posting information about a patient.... Etc.

What have you seen in the media/ which current issues are you aware of? (Have something in mind you 'recently read about'. Eg. I drove past a dementia village on the way to the interview and remembered watching documentaries about the growing dementia and Alzheimer's population so talked about that and related it to myself and the clinical setting when I would be qualified.

How do you deal with stress? You are going into a stressful job so the need to know you'll be able to cope or have a way of trying to. Eg. I use lists and reminder notes, or I talk to someone whilst keeping everything anonymous.

How would you describe compassion? This came up a lot! It is very hard to describe but is very important. Come up with your own definition to show you understand what is expected of you.

How do people describe you? I always chose at least one bad point, eg. Takes on too much, but then turned it into a positive, eg. I want to help everyone and make sure I please people, this would be good in a care setting because it shows I'm caring and committed etc.

What is the role of a(whatever job it is)? It isn't just to perform clinical tasks- person centred care!

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

How to you work in a team? Listener or leader? Remember to give real examples.

What personal qualities do you have that are good for this role?

Case scenarios- eg. Someone needs a drink, someone is going to fall out of bed, someone really needs the toilet, what do you do? I tried to think about it logically and so that people didn't come to harm but the key is to **SHOUT FOR HELP**.

What would you do if a patient disclosed something to you and asked you to keep it a secret? Before they tell you, let them know that if it will affect their health and wellbeing that you'd have to tell your manager, so they can make an informed choice whether to tell you.

Why do you want to be specifically a child/ adult/ mental health/ disability nurse?

How would you cope with... someone dying (as long as the family members don't have to look after you and they don't see you upset you're fine to mourn) ... a challenging patient... etc.

Why have you chosen [specific uni]?

REMEMBER!

- RELAX
- Remember they are looking at you as a whole; not just a set of grades
- Treat it as a conversation
- Act professionally
- Have fun