PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

PRESENTED BY ELIZABETH HARTMAN, MFT

EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS FOR MFTs
SPONSORED BY AAMFT-CA DIVISION AND PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

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PROFESSIONALISM

- Ellen Gordon Reeves wrote a fantastic book called *Can I Wear My Nose Ring to the Interview?* Though it may seem like a silly title, this book is geared toward people seeking their first professional job. Ms. Reeves wrote that the level of professionalism an interviewee presents at the interview is essentially the best this person has to offer. Make sure you convey what you are capable of and dazzle prospective employers during the interview process.

- Proofread everything you send out! If you have typos in your email, cover letter, or resume, a potential employer may assume you do not pay attention to detail and are prone to making mistakes.

- Always research the organization and read the company website in detail. This will help you to ask more informed questions during the interview.

- Remember to have a professional email address and outgoing voicemail message.

- Be aware of how you are represented on the Internet. Google yourself and see what kind of content appears. If there is anything that shows you in a negative light, try to take steps to have it removed. Place privacy settings on your social networking sites and make a conscious choice about the photo that accompanies your profile page. Many employers check these sites to see if you will be a good fit for the image of their agency.

- When making phone calls, have a written outline of the information you want to cover in case your nerves get the best of you.

- When leaving messages, make sure to clearly state your name at the beginning and end of the message and say your phone number slowly and clearly.

- Make sure to include your phone number as a signature on each email. Interviewers are busy, and you need to make it as easy as possible for them to contact you.

- Maintain professionalism at all times whether it’s in an email or phone discussion. All contacts with the potential employer are opportunities to show your skills, not just at the interview.

- Prepare at least two interview outfits and have them clean, pressed and ready to go. Make sure clothing fits well and is appropriate for the setting.

- Make sure to print directions to the interview location, bring the contact information of the interviewer, and leave early! It’s better to sit in your car in the parking lot preparing for the interview than feeling stressed in traffic and possibly arriving late.
# Job Lead Tracker

**Agency Name:**

**Website:**

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**Email:**

**Lead Source:**

**Sent Resume On:**

**Followed Up On:**

**Notes:**

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**Interview Scheduled On:**

**Scheduling Details (Interviewer, Location, etc.):**

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**Second Interview Scheduled On:**

**Scheduling Details (Interviewer, Location, etc.):**

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**Thank You Note Send On:**

**Follow Up Notes:**

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*Job Hunting Essentials Workshop for MFT Interns*

*Elizabeth Hartman, MFT*

*www.calabasaspsychotherapy.com*

*(818) 224-4761*
COMMON JOB INTERVIEW MISTAKES  
By Karen Burns at Finance.Yahoo.com

• Arriving late
• Arriving too early (10-15 minutes early is best)
• Smelling like cigarettes
• Wearing heavy/inappropriate makeup
• Wild/provocative personal style (dyed hair, piercings, tattoos)
• Bad-mouthing your last boss
• Lying about your skills/experience/knowledge
• Wearing the wrong clothes
• Forgetting the name of the interviewer
• Wearing heavy perfume or aftershave
• Wearing sunglasses on face or as a headband
• Leaving your cell phone on or wearing your Bluetooth earpiece
• Failing to research the employer in advance
• Failing to demonstrate enthusiasm
• Inquiring about benefits too soon
• Talking about salary requirements too soon
• Being unable to explain how your strengths and abilities apply to the job in question
• Failing to make a strong case for why you are the best person for this job
• Forgetting to bring a copy of your resume (bring multiple copies)
• Failing to remember what you wrote on your own resume
• Asking too many questions
• Asking no questions at all
• Being unprepared to answer the standard questions
• Failing to listen carefully to what the interviewer is saying
• Interrupting your interviewer
• Yawning
• Slouching
• Chewing gum, tobacco, your pen, your hair
• Sounding too rehearsed
• Saying “you know,” “like,” “I guess,” and “um”
• Name-dropping or bragging or sounding like a know-it-all
• Asking to use the bathroom
• Being falsely or exaggeratedly modest
• Shaking hands too weakly or too firmly
• Failing to make eye contact (or making continuous eye contact)
• Becoming angry or defensive
• Complaining that you were kept waiting
• Complaining about anything!
• Speaking rudely to the receptionist
• Letting your nervousness show
• Over explaining why you lost your last job
• Being too familiar and jokey
• Sounding desperate, negative, or bitter
• Checking the time (allow for 2 hours in case you get a tour or are asked to meet with multiple interviewers)
• Not maintaining confidentiality when giving examples of your clinical experience
• Oversharing- demonstrating bad personal boundaries!

JOB HUNTING ESSENTIALS WORKSHOP FOR MFT INTERNS
ELIZABETH HARTMAN, MFT
WWW.CALABASASPSEUTHERAPY.COM
(818) 224-4761
INTERVIEW SKILLS

A job interview provides you with an opportunity to show a potential employer your:

- Personality
- Communication Style
- Professionalism
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Maturity Level

There are basic interview questions that you should be prepared to answer regardless of your industry. Creating an outline of how you intend to answer these questions will help you feel more centered and prepared.

There will also be questions that are specific to the job duties of a therapist that you need to anticipate. Consider the job requirements and potential issues that may arise with the specific population of the job you are seeking and prepare some answers.

Common Interview Questions

What brought you to this field? What made you decide to become a Marriage and Family Therapist?
- Maintain good personal boundaries- no oversharing!
- Show a passion for this work and a vision for how you intend to contribute to the field or help a particular population.
- Link your interests to the job you are applying for and how they fit with your personal mission/vision.

Tell me about yourself...
- Tell them about your professional self- don’t focus on your personal life.
- Show them a bit of your personality and express your dedication to pursuing your career goals.

What would you describe as your strengths?
- Think about the qualities that this employer would like to have their employees possess and highlight the ones that apply to you.
- You can say, “My supervisor has given me feedback that _______ is one of my strengths.” Or, “In my university evaluation, I was complimented on my_____."

What do you see as your weaknesses?
- Your pre-licensed status is a good weakness to identify. “Though I have received solid training, I would like to continue to develop my_____ skills to become a better clinician.”
- You can talk about a past weakness and how you have made progress in that area and are continuing to develop your competency.
Tell me about a mistake and how you handled it.
- Choose a minor mistake.
- Omit unnecessary details.
- Maintain client confidentiality.
- Explain how you consulted with supervisor.
- Show you can take responsibility for errors and take steps to fix them.
- Demonstrate insight about what you learned.

Tell me about a crisis you encountered and how you handled it.
- Choose a crisis that may apply to the population you hope to serve.
- Briefly describe the crisis.
- Maintain client confidentiality.
- Give specific examples of how you intervened and collaborated with supervisor and team.
- Discuss awareness of agency policies, documentation and follow-up support actions.
- If you have never managed a crisis, imagine one that may arise with this population and describe how you would handle it.

How do you manage stress?
- Share about your good organization skills.
- Share positive self-care habits and routines.
- Show you have an appropriate sense of humor.
- Discuss how you communicate your needs with supervisor to get support/advice to manage challenges.

How would you handle disagreements with your boss or co-workers?
- Discuss your positive communication skills.
- Share that you know how to choose your battles wisely.
- Accept the directives of the supervisor and follow through with a positive attitude.

How would your past supervisor/colleagues describe you?
- Focus on your strengths.
- You could say, “I received positive feedback about my_____.” I was known for _____.”

Tell me about a client you successfully treated.
- Choose a type of client that this agency serves.
- Be concise and clear.
- Focus on why you were effective- what actions did you take, what skills and interventions did you utilize?
- Express a caring, dedicated attitude but demonstrate clear boundaries.

What are your career goals?
- Share your vision for the future and discuss how this job fits with your plan.
- Don’t say that you just need the money or need the hours toward licensure.
Tell me about a difficult/challenging client.
- Choose a type of client that this agency serves.
- Be concise and clear.
- Focus on why you were effective - what actions did you take, what skills and interventions did you utilize?
- Discuss how you managed this difficult case and how you will translate this learning experience to future therapeutic relationships.

What would make you the best candidate for this job? Why does this position interest you?
- Highlight your strengths - don’t repeat ones you already discussed.
- Discuss how your previous experiences have prepared you for this position.
- Share your passion for the mission of the organization.
- Discuss what you can offer the agency (not what they can offer you).

Additional Tips

Qualities Valued by Employers:

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<th>Professionalism</th>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
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<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
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<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
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<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
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<td>Team Player Mentality</td>
<td>Written &amp; Oral Communication Skills</td>
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Elements to Mention When Asked Behavioral Questions and Vignettes:

- How you gathered the necessary information to make an accurate assessment.
- How you kept in mind the agency policies and legal/ethical requirements of the profession.
- How you consulted with your supervisor and collaborated with your team.
- How you were proactive and creative in your approach.
- How you documented the issues and followed up.
- How you made safety plans and collaborated with all involved parties to provide support.

Recommended Resources

Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology “Career Handbook” at http://gsep.pepperdine.edu

Can I Wear My Nose Ring to the Interview? by Ellen Gordon Reeves

The Job Hunter’s Survival Guide: How to Find a Rewarding Job “Even When There Are No Jobs” by Richard N. Bolles