AUTISM TRAINING
and Technical Assistance Project

INTERVIEWING TIPS

An interview is an opportunity to convince an employer that you're the perfect person for the job. Interviewing well requires preparation and practice. Although some students may struggle with the social, conversational, and problem-solving skills needed for a job interview, it is important to reassure them that everyone feels nervous before an interview.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

1. **Do Your Homework.** Check out the company's website for the most useful information. Know the products and/or services the company offers. You should know the name of the company leader and how the company is organized. For example, how many departments are there and what are their major functions? Once the interviewer learns you have researched the company, he or she will know that you have invested your time and that will serve you both well if you are hired.

2. **Consider What It Will Be Like to Work for This Company.** Now that you have learned more about the company, consider how working there might change your life. Consider the time you will be spending commuting to and from the job site. How will you get there? What type of work environment and schedule would be a good match for you? Do you want to work part-time or full-time?

3. **Be Prepared.** An interview is an opportunity to make a good impression. Pay attention to details such as looking your best and arriving on time. Your personal appearance should be formal and neat (i.e., clothing style specific to match the job, clean, and ironed). When planning your arrival, leave extra time for potential travel and transportation problems. Also, arriving fifteen minutes early is a good idea to ensure that you will be on time. Bring a nice notebook and extra copies of your resume. Resources for writing your resume can be found by visiting your local library.

   Prepare answers for the following common questions:
   - Why do you want to work here?
   - What interests you about the position?
   - What makes you a good candidate for this job?
   - What would you like to be doing in five years?

   Practice your answers ahead of time with someone familiar with the interview process. You may find it helpful to have someone videotape your practice interview for your review.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

4. **Timing.** You may be asked to wait until the interviewer is ready. The interviewer can be on time or might be late for your appointment. If you have difficulty staying calm during these situations, practice ahead of time.

5. **Be Aware of Your Communication Style.** From the time you walk into the building, you will be expected to have professional behavior. For example, keep your voice volume moderate and speak clearly. You also may be expected to shake hands with one or more people. The conversation in the beginning may be what is called "small talk" about the weather and current events. While this is a more informal time of the interview, do not tell jokes.

   In addition to what you say, your facial expressions and body language send messages to your interviewer. For example, making eye contact, sitting up straight and posturing your body to face the interviewer are critical to giving a good impression. Also, match your facial expression with the tone of the conversation.

6. **Offer Compliments.** Offer some compliments about the company's accomplishments.

7. **Be Honest About Your Abilities.** When asked, talk about what you have learned and can do as a result of other job experiences. Provide a copy of your resume. If many aspects of this job are new to you, say so. Also, talk about your interests that match the job requirements and your ability to learn new things. Taking this approach tells the interviewer that you are honest and willing to learn new things.

8. **Answer Questions.** Answer the questions the interviewer asks. You can begin your answer by rephrasing the question. For example, if the interviewer asks why you would like to work at this company, you could say "I would like to work at this company because I am interested in…" (and state some aspect of the business). Do not provide additional information unrelated to the questions at this time.

9. **Ask Questions.** When it seems that the interviewer is done asking his or her questions, ask if you may ask a few questions. Usually, there is enough time for a few questions. This will show the interviewer that you are prepared and want to learn about the company if you decide to work there.

After the Interview

10. **Follow up with a thank you note to the interviewer.** State your appreciation for his or her time and how you are still interested in the position. Refer them to your contact information on your resume.

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