



A 5-STEP GUIDE TO HELP INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM PREPARE FOR A JOB INTERVIEW

Created by Kiersten Cole



Superheroes social skills training,
Rethink Autism internet interventions, parent training, EBP classroom training, functional
behavior assessment: An autism spectrum disorder, evidence based (EBP) training track for
school psychologists

US Office of Education Personnel Preparation Project: H325K120306

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A man in a dark suit is seen from behind, pointing his right index finger at a central icon in a digital network. The network consists of a central icon connected to several other icons, all set against a dark blue background with a hexagonal shape. The icons are white and feature a person silhouette with the text 'ADD FRIEND' below it. The overall scene is overlaid on a white background.

**The 5-Steps to Impress
at a Job Interview:
A Job Interview Preparation
Guide Specifically Designed
for Individuals with Autism**



Job Interviews and Autism

Job interviews can be challenging for us all, but when you have autism, the job interview can easily be the hardest part about getting a job. A recent study from Canada found that individuals with autism were half as likely to be offered a second interview, mainly due to difficulties in communication (Mozes, 2015).

The purpose of a job interview is to get to know you and your skills as an applicant. Individuals with autism can struggle in communicating these things, but that doesn't mean they don't have the qualifications! This 5-step guide targets skills that can be particularly difficult for individuals with autism, such as perspective taking, preparation, dress, etc. Following this 5-step guide will give you what you need to really shine on interview day.



The 5-Steps to Interview Success!



Step 1: Learn about the organization

The first step to interview success is to learn about the organization.

Why is it important to learn about the organization?

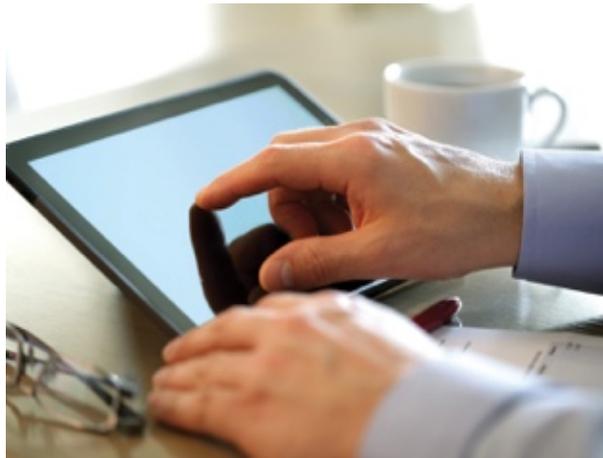
The first reason is so that you know if you agree with the organization and their goals. The second reason is because interviewers want to see that you care. If you don't know what the organization does and why, interviewers may assume you don't care enough about the position to do a good job.

The more you know, the better prepared you'll be for whatever questions they may ask.

How do you learn about an organization?

Search the internet (Google!) for information about where you are applying. Learn about the organization's "mission" or goals. Many times if you go to the organizations website, either at the top or bottom of the home page there is an "About Us" link where you can learn this information. Use the following questions to help guide your search.

1. What does the organization do? Some examples of what an organization does are: sell food, build software, clean buildings, etc.
_____.
2. What are their goals as an organization? An example of a company goal is: "Walmart strives to make the customer No.1. We believe that serving the customer's needs first, serves the company...."
_____.
3. How do you feel about what the organization does? Do you agree with the organization's goals? Does the organization suit you?
_____.



The 5-Steps to Interview Success!



Step 2: Identify the need

“ One of the most common mistakes for an entry-level job interview is to take the position: ‘What is this job going to do for me?’ You should be saying ‘here’s what I can do and here’s what I want to do to help you.’ ”

Norah O’Donnell

The second step to interview success is to identify what it is the organization needs help with.

If an organization has a job opening, it’s because they need help with something.

For example, if the job position is for a cashier, maybe the organization doesn’t have enough responsible cashiers to take their customer’s payments, resulting in customers having to wait longer, which makes the customer unhappy and hurts business. So in this example, the *need* is for someone honest who will help customers and keep them happy, which helps the company’s business.

To identify ‘the need’ of the organization you can follow these steps:

1. Read over the job description and think about the responsibilities of that position. What kind of employee are they looking for? Why?
2. Determine from the job description what you think the organization needs help with.
3. Ask yourself: “How can I help with that?”
What skills do you have that could help the organization?

Interviewers want to hire someone they can trust to help their organization.

By identifying an organization’s “need” beforehand, you will be able to answer questions in a way that shows you care and are ready to help. Focus on them and take advantage of every opportunity to tie your skills back to the knowledge and abilities required for the job. Show them YOU are what they need.



The 5-Steps to Interview Success!



Step 3: Practice the interview

The third step to interview success is to practice the interview. This is super important!

Practicing the interview will help you feel and act more confident!

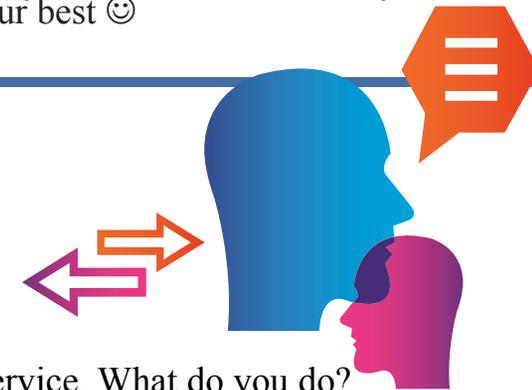
Here is your guide to practicing the interview:

1. Pick 3-4 of the practice questions below and rehearse answering them, out loud, with someone you trust (feel free to look up more). Try to make your answers more than a sentence long, and remember to tie your answers back to what they need!
2. Ask for feedback from the person you practice with. If you are able to, video record the practice session and have them give feedback as you watch it!
3. Make a list of 2-3 questions you have about the position and practice those as well. Some examples of questions to ask about the position are: “What is the best part about working here?” “What are the people like that work here?” “What would you hope for me to accomplish if I worked here?”

Be sure to also practice appropriate eye contact, facial expression, and tone of voice. Ask your helper how you do with these things in your feedback. Did they feel comfortable with you? It doesn't need to be perfect. Just do your best 😊

Practice Questions

- Tell me about yourself
- What are your three greatest strengths?
- Tell me your greatest successes in your previous jobs.
- Why do you want to work for our organization?
- What do you know about our organization?
- You have an angry customer at your work station complaining about poor service. What do you do?
- What has been your greatest challenge in life? Your greatest accomplishment?



The 5-Steps to Interview Success!



Step 4: Dress to impress

It is important to look neat and professional for a job interview. This means arriving clean and wearing clothes that are wrinkle-free. You want to impress by showing that you are presentable and professional. Below are examples of what to wear.

For financial assistance getting clothes you can visit these sites: Women:

www.dressforsuccess.org, Men: www.careergear.org

Showered with a simple, professional hairdo

Professional shirt underneath

Black or navy pants or skirt suit

Low heel, closed toe



Showered with a simple, professional hairdo

Professional looking tie

Black, gray, or navy suit.

Shoes are polished



If the interview is less formal, or you don't own a suit, slacks or dress pants and a collared, long-sleeve, shirt, with a tie, is acceptable.



If the interview is less formal or you don't own a skirt suit, a nice blouse and slacks or a skirt are acceptable.



The 5-Steps to Interview Success!



Step 5: Arrive early and prepared

The fifth step to interview success is to arrive early and prepared. Arriving late and unprepared gives a very bad impression. Interviewers want to hire someone they can trust to be on time and prepared.

To arrive early you should:

1. A day or two before the interview, travel to the location where you will be interviewed. Learn the best way to get there and familiarize yourself with the location. This way you'll know exactly where to go and how long it will take you on interview day. This is especially important if you'll be taking public transportation.
2. Arrive at least 15-30 mins early, to ensure you're not late and you give a good impression!

To be prepared for the interview be sure to bring the following:

1. Photo ID
2. Your phone number, address, and social number for potential job applications
3. Printed copy of two references and their contact info
4. Two, clean, printed copies of your up-to-date resume



The 5-Steps to Interview Success!

Step 1: Learn about the organization

Search the internet for information about where you are applying. Learn about the organization's "mission" or goals. Ask yourself: "What does this organization do?"

Step 2: Identify the need

Read over the job description and think about why the organization needs that position filled. What is it that the organization needs help with? For example, if the job position is for a cashier, maybe the organization doesn't have enough responsible cashiers to take their customer's payments. Ask yourself: "How can I help with that?"

Step 3: Practice interview questions

Practice the interview. This pamphlet lists some common interview questions. Pick 3-4 of these questions and rehearse answering them, out loud, with someone you trust. Try to make your answers more than a sentence long. Then make a list of 2-3 questions you have about the position and practice those as well. Lastly, be sure to practice: eye contact, tone of voice, and facial expressions.

Step 4: Dress to Impress

It is important to look neat and professional for a job interview. This means arriving clean and wearing clothes that are wrinkle-free. You want to impress by showing that you are presentable and professional. Flip to the other side of this pamphlet for examples of what to wear!

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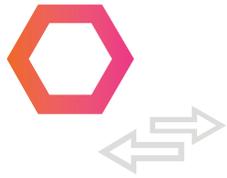
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So there you have it! Your 5-step guide to interview success. The most important part about all of this is to remember to still be yourself.



The job interview is important and you want to impress, but remember that your goal is to sell YOU. Be honest about who you are and your qualifications. Never lie, it will hurt more than help. Do your best and all you can to show your desire to help their organization.

Lastly, remember that the job market is a tough place for everyone. You'll have some successes and you'll have some failures, but don't give up.

You aren't alone and there are plenty of resources for you to get help if needed. A helpful resources and a few articles have been listed on this page, for further guidance and motivation.

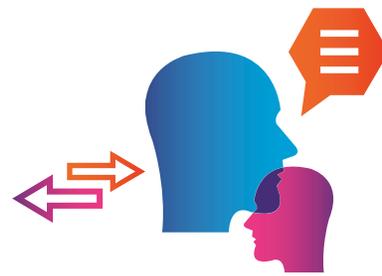
You're on your way now 😊

Additional Resources

- Autism Speaks: Employment Tool Kit
 - <https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/employment>
- Monster.com: Succeeding at Work with Autism
 - <http://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/succeeding-at-work-with-autism>
- USC Institute for Creative Technologies, Dan Marino Foundation partner on technology to improve social skills
 - <https://news.usc.edu/98577/virtual-job-interviews-prepare-students-with-autism-for-work/>



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 -Norah O’Donnel



Dress to Impress!



Women

- Pants or skirt suit
- Professional shirt underneath
- Low heel, closed-toe shoe
- If the interview is less formal or you don’t own a suit, a nice blouse and slacks are acceptable.
- For financial aid obtaining clothes:

www.dressforsuccess.org

Men

- Black, navy or gray suit
- Professional looking tie
- If the interview is less formal or you don’t own a suit, Slacks and a collared, long-sleeve, shirt are acceptable.
- For financial aid for clothes:

www.careergear.org

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Practice Questions

- **Tell me about yourself**
- **What are your three greatest strengths?**
- **Tell me your greatest successes in your previous jobs.**
- **Why do you want to work for our organization?**
- **What do you know about our organization?**
- **You have an angry customer at your work station complaining about poor service. What do you do?**
- **What has been your greatest challenge in life? Your greatest accomplishment?**

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