

Nailing the Face-to-Face Interview *Your Chance to Shine*

Your resume has been reviewed and you've gotten a response! You've been invited to take the next step in the hiring process - the face-to-face interview. Now you get to sell yourself and skills directly to a potential employer.

There are probably other highly qualified candidates going after this job, so it is important to make yourself stand out as someone special. Here's some practical tips:

Do online research Visit the company's website to learn its core values. Learn about the clients they serve; their niche in Social Work. What challenges are they facing and how can you help solve them? Being prepared with some thoughtful questions will show your demonstrate your credibility and desire to become part of the organization.

Do internal research Develop your answers to common interview questions, like
"what are your strengths and weaknesses?"
"why do you want to work here?"
"where do you see yourself in 5 years?"
"tell me about yourself"

Practice, practice! Conduct a mock interview with a trusted friend to practice your answers.

Dress for success You don't know the organization's culture, but you can never go wrong wearing neatly pressed, conservative, professional clothing.

Arrive early Strive to arrive at least 15 minutes early. Visit the restroom to check your appearance. Turn off your cell phone prior to the interview. Review your notes, instead of sending a last-minute text or making a Facebook status update.

Sell yourself! This is YOUR time. Develop a brief pitch that sings your praises. Include your strengths, abilities and what sets you apart from other applicants.

Ask questions From your initial research, ask how this position relates to the company's goals and plans for the future. On the other hand, not asking any questions implies that you are not interested in the job.

Know your references Be prepared with a printed list that you can present if you are asked for references. Give your references the heads up that they might be called.

Follow up Manners still impress, so sending a handwritten note or email thanking the hiring manager for his/her time and consideration, as well as re-stating your interest and commitment to the position is important.