

Careers and Employability Service

Interviews: Performing with confidence – some relaxation techniques

Introduction

Congratulations on being invited for interview. Make sure you give yourself enough time to prepare and practice, especially if you have had limited interview experience. Knowing what to expect and how to prepare will give you a head start and will also help you to feel more confident on the day.

It is natural to be a little nervous at interview. We all need some nerves to perform well on the day. The key is not to let them get the better of us, so that we can give our best during the interview.

To help develop your confidence you may find it helpful to explore and practice some of the relaxation techniques listed below. You may find that after exploring these different techniques, you prefer some over others.

- **Visualisation** - Many top athletes use visualisation techniques to reduce anxiety, improve concentration and enhance athletic performance. When interviewing for a job, as in sports, a high level of performance is required for a short period. Using visualization techniques can help build confidence and reduce anxiety.

The trick is to create a memory of a successful meeting. When interviewing, you'll feel a sense of déjà vu, as though you had the experience before. If you have not had an interview before, perhaps you could undertake a role-play practice and draw upon your performance in that to give you confidence.

For more information, see:

<https://litemind.com/how-to-develop-visualization-skill/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/careers/careers-blog/how-to-trick-your-mind-into-presentation-success>

- **Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)** - is an approach to communication, personal development, and psychotherapy created in the United States in the 1970s. NLP's creators claim there is a connection between neurological processes (neuro-), language (linguistic) and behavioural patterns learned through experience (programming), and that these can be changed to achieve specific goals in life.

For more information, see: <http://nlp-now.co.uk/nlp-techniques/>

http://www.businessnlpacademy.co.uk/blog/view/top_three_psychological_job_interview_tips/

- **Breathing exercises** – Many people find breathing exercises an effective way of relaxing. Since nobody can see these techniques, you can use them at any stage of the interview. Concentrate on breathing slower and taking full, deep breaths from low in your abdomen. Keep your breathing quiet and inhale and exhale through your nose.

For more information, see web links:

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/relaxation-techniques-for-stress-relief.htm>

<https://www.theguardian.com/careers/2015/aug/19/all>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEzbdLn2bJc> - a five minute mindfulness based video

- **Re-framing** - Over the years, we may tend to get into unhelpful thinking habits. Once you can identify your unhelpful thinking styles, you can start to notice them – they very often occur just before and during stressful situations. Once you can notice them, then you can begin to challenge or distance yourself from those thoughts, and see the situation in a different and more helpful way.

For more information, see:

<http://get.gg/docs/NOW.pdf>

<http://get.gg/docs/UnhelpfulThinkingHabitsWithAlternatives.pdf>

<https://www.theguardian.com/careers/careers-blog/the-psychology-of-interview-success>

- **Body Language** – The way in which you come across visually at interview can be as important as the way you come across verbally. Your body language can also affect your verbal communication. Projecting positive body language can help you to relax and give you greater confidence. Positive body language is defined as nonverbal movements and gestures that are communicating interest, enthusiasm, and positive reactions to what someone else is saying.

For more information, see:

The Careers and Employability e-books page:

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/students/Careers-e-books.page>

<https://jobs.theguardian.com/article/how-to-master-body-language-in-an-interview/>

<https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/interview-techniques/273703-tips-for-graduates-how-to-deal-with-job-interview-nerve>