

## Suggestions for Structuring Your Answers at Interview

**Competency based questions** - e.g. Tell me about a time when you had to work under pressure, or use leadership skills, work in a team, etc.

You may already have developed a technique that will help you successfully answer these type of competency based questions. On the other hand if you find that you are struggling you may find it helpful to familiarise yourself with the 'STAR' technique described below. This particular technique has been used by many people for applying for jobs across a variety of professions and has proved to be an effective way of getting an answer across in a logical, efficient and effective way.

**Situation** - Provides the interviewer with the context for the action. Make your description concise and informative.

**Task** – give brief details of what you were required to do.

**Action** -This is where you demonstrate and highlight the skills and personal attributes that the question is testing. Explain what, how and why YOU did it.

**Result** - Explain the outcome of YOUR action. Describe what YOU accomplished. Reflect on the situation by stating what you have learnt - this adds the personal element and will show that you can think laterally and fully about a particular issue. Explain what you have done since e.g. implemented new procedures or protocols and mention their success.

Many interviewees spend too long talking about the situation and the task, what assessors are really looking for is more details on your actions and the results/reflection from this. So make sure you spend around 75% of the time on these two areas and set the situation and the action you took briefly.

**Questions on difficult colleagues or ethical/professional issues** e.g. What would you do if your FY2 was always late, your consultant was very rude to another member of your team, you find a list of patients'

The SPIES acronyms can be useful to help answer these types of questions and make sure you cover all main areas that will then ensure you are likely to score more points..

**Seek info** – What is the issue, is there actually a problem, is this a one off situation or is there a pattern

**Patient safety** – Critical that this is assessed, is patient care compromised , if so how can this be resolved quickly

**Initiative**- Can you do anything yourself before you escalate the situation

**Escalate**- Involve other colleagues as needed, who will you go to, who is the most appropriate person

**Support**-Can you support the individual or team

**Background and motivation questions e.g.** Tell me about yourself, why have you applied to this LETB?

These type of questions allow you to expand as you see appropriate. The following structure 'CAMP' can help you to give an all round answer and make sure you cover all areas that the panel may be interested in.

**Clinical** – Type of hospital experiences, specific skills you have, particular clinical interests and experiences

**Academic** – what research interests you have developed, teaching experience you have had, any particular education experiences you have had

**Management** – Any service development you have been involved with, educational supervision you have had experience of, positions of responsibility, leadership experience

**Personal** – Why you want to live in this LETB, your interests and activities etc.

### **Further resources**

#### **Books**

How to get a specialty training post – the insiders guide Danny C.G. Lim

Medical Interviews: a comprehensive guide to CT, ST and Registrar interview skills' Published by ISC Medical Picard, Oliver, Wood, Dan and Yuen, Sebastian

#### **Video**

AGCAS DVD Specialty Centres for Speciality Training - go to [http://www.agcas.co.uk](#) and sign in

#### **Specific for GP Assessment Centres**

Short listing questions for GPVTS: Olivier Picard, Published by ISC Medical

<http://www.medical-interviews.co.uk/GPClinBooks.htm>

<http://www.gpexams.com/gpvts/> – a website with example competency based questions

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