



# NCI's Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics

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- National and international *population-based* research
- Study distribution, causes and natural history, and prevention of (most) cancer
- Approach questions through **multidisciplinary** and **collaborative** efforts
- Train scientists in cancer epidemiology, genetics/genomics, biostatistics, and related areas





## **Exposures**

- *diet*
- *hormones*
- *radiation*
- *viruses*
- *environment*
- *occupation-related*

## **Genetics**

- *germline*
- *somatic*

# Join Us!

- Summer Internships
- Postbaccalaureate Fellowships
- Graduate Partnerships
- Postdoctoral Fellowships
- Clinical Fellowships
  
- Faculty positions



# Interviewing in a Virtual World



# AGENDA

**1**

Preparing/Setting Up

**2**

Goal: Have a Conversation

**3**

What are They Looking for?

**4**

Image & Body Language -> Voice

**5**

Interview Questions & Answer Strategies

**6**

Final Tips

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# How to Prepare



Prepare so well that you feel overprepared

Remember:

The perfect interview – doesn't exist

Bad interviews – you can still learn a lot

Interviewing is a skill – you will get better with practice

You cannot be reticent on this day, you must participate!



Going virtual –  
things to  
consider

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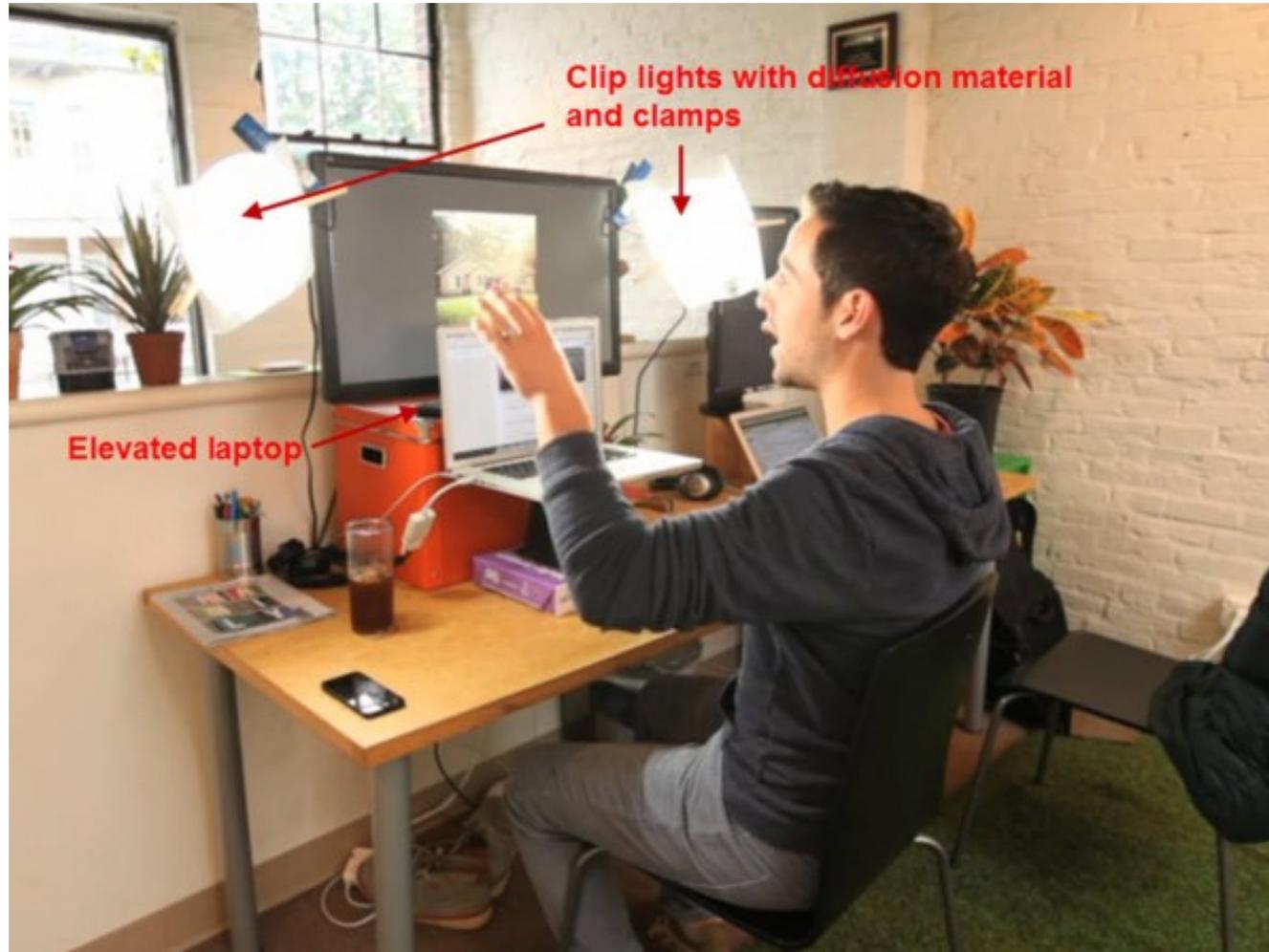


# What's in the Background

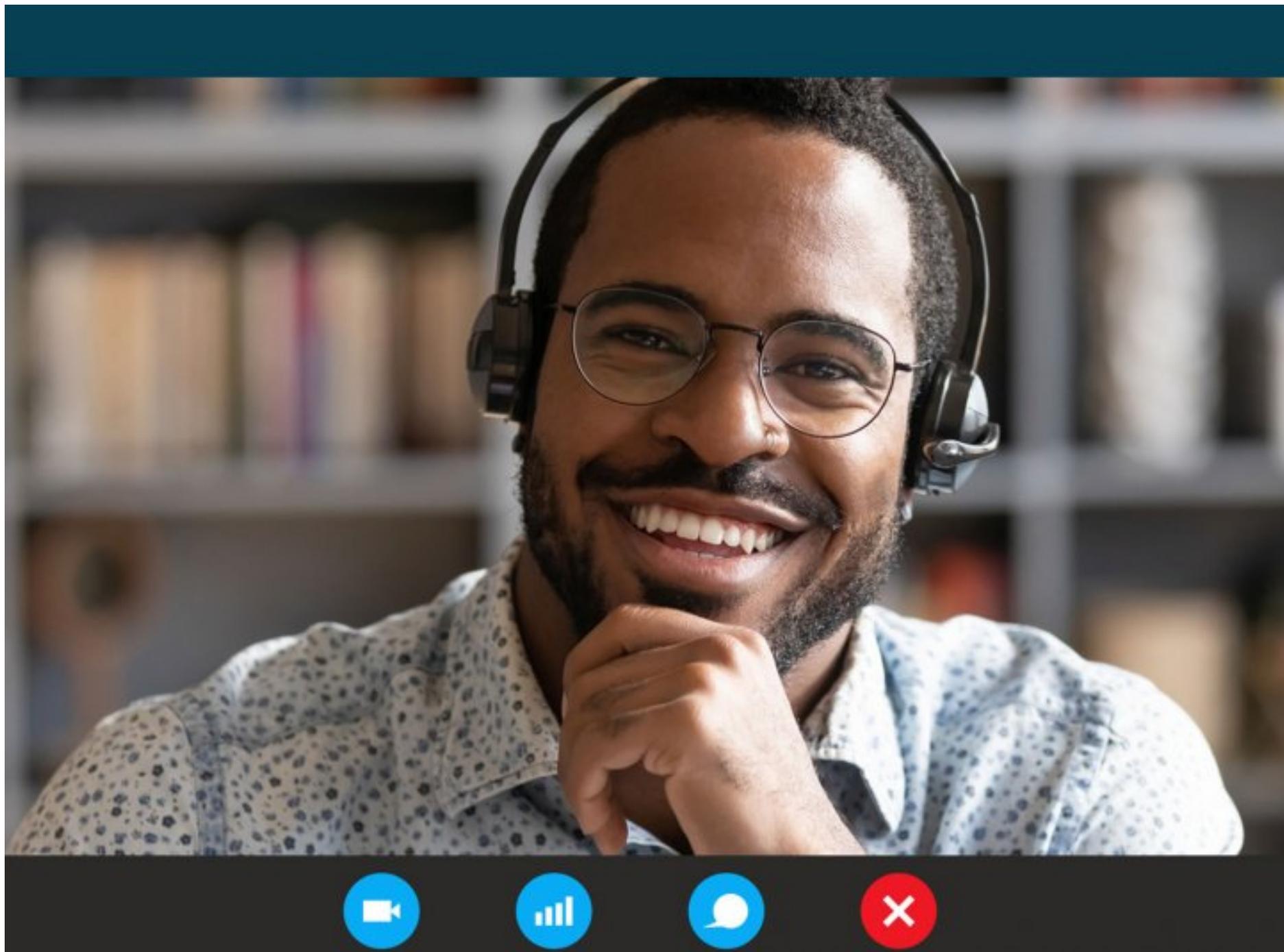




# Lights!



Camera!



# Action!



# Not quite yet – other issues to consider

## Internet connectivity

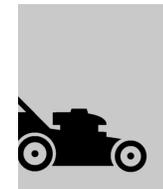
- Bandwidth issues?

best  
option



## Sound

- House noises
- Use head set/earbuds



Consider going into the office

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# A Conversation About You

## **Your abilities**

- Review skills in which they are interested
- Prepare examples of how and when you've used each skill

## **Your research**

- Be able to explain to experts and non-experts
- Know the **impact your work** has had

## **Your interests**

***Review possible questions;  
practice answering with  
examples***



## A Conversation About Them

You must convince them of your interest in doing the job



A Conversation About Them  
Have informed questions ready



## A Conversation About Them

**PREPARE** yourself by learning about the prospective employer/school



Department structure, mission, history, services/products

[research areas of faculty, courses offered, student population information, research/teaching ratio]

Learn more by

- Visiting employer/school's website; industry websites
- Talking to:
  - current employees/students; professionals
  - employer/school contacts (LinkedIn)
  - professionals in the field

## A Conversation About Them

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# What Do Employers Look For?

## Strong Skill Sets

Communication

Leadership

Technical

Analytical

Teamwork

Interpersonal

Problem Solving

## Personality Characteristics

Honesty/Integrity

Flexibility/Adaptability

Work Ethic

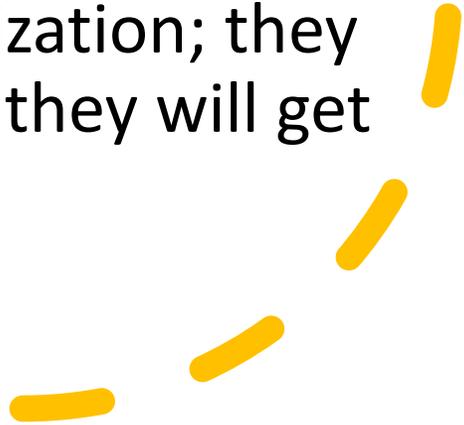
Motivation/Initiative

Academic Achievement

# *What They Really Look For: FIT*

- Does your **personality** fit their organization
- How **interested** are you in the work
- How long do you plan to **stay**
- Can you work in a **team** setting
- Can they count on you to **get the job done**

Conservative estimate → you will spend ≥ **2100 hrs/yr** working at an organization; they want to be sure they know what they will get out of you



# What *You* Should Look For: FIT!

## Ask about

- How long **people** stay
- Style of **management**
- Are they interested in your **career development**?
- Work **expectations** and **culture**
- **Resources** available
- Organization's **mission** and **goals**

Ask individuals what their **favorite** and **least favorite** things are about working there



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# The 1<sup>st</sup> Impression

60% = How you look

30% = Body Language

10% = What you have to say



Do



Don't





Look at the  
Camera



# Positive Body Language

Look pleased to be there

- **Smile!** It shows enthusiasm
- **Sit upright** and place feet firmly on the floor

**Speak clearly and confidently**



# Voice – super important!

## Pace

Conversational rate

## Pause

Allow audience to absorb meaning

## Pitch

Vary your voice

Aim for low

Avoid uptalk and vocal fry

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5VW5FMblho>



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# What WILL They Ask?



There are the “asked questions” and the “questions-behind-the-questions”

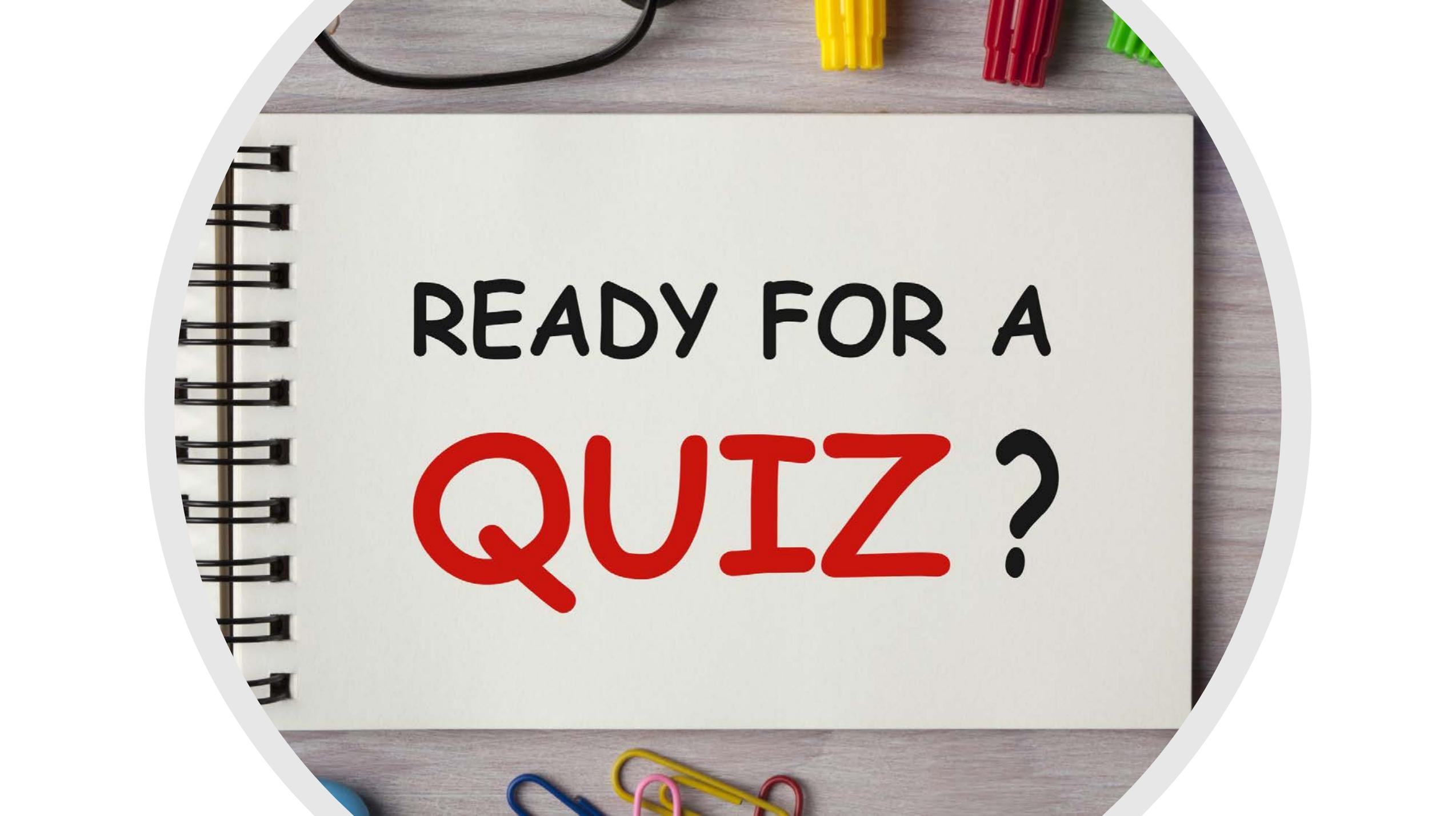


Remember, questions are not usually asked to make you look bad



# 10 Most Common Questions Ask About...

1. **Personal background**
2. **Academic background**
3. **Early motivation** (*Commitment + passion*)
4. **Current field motivation** (*Commitment + passion*)
5. **Current work** (*What do you share with current audience? Job talk.*)
6. **5-yr plan** (*Commitment*)
7. **Strong point** (*How well do you know yourself/maturity?*)
8. **Weak point:** (*Same as strong; what are you doing to address it?*)
9. **Why you?**
10. **Hypothetical or behavioral questions** (*Your transferable skills*)



READY FOR A

QUIZ ?

# Common Interview Questions - quiz

Tell me a little about yourself.



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# Common Interview Questions - quiz

Tell me a little about yourself.

What do you consider to be your greatest strength? Weakness?

What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?



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# Common Interview Questions - quiz

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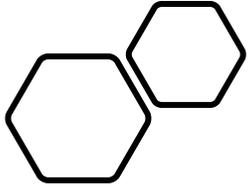
What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?

How do you think a friend, classmate, or professor, who knows you well would describe you?

When presented with a variety of tasks, how do you prioritize your activities?

If you had the luxury of creating the ideal work environment, what would it look like to you?

Why should I hire you?



# Answering Questions

✓ Your opportunity to highlight what's not on your CV

☹ Don't just use adjectives about yourself

💬 Tell a story

Step 1: Describe a vivid example- draw a picture (not a movie!)

Step 2- Say why it was meaningful

Stop when you have finished 1 and 2. Do not meander/ramble

Own your stories; Practice them (with someone who can give you feedback)



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# Behavioral (or Hypothetical) Questions

## Give an example of a time:

- When you could not finish a task because you did not have enough information.
- When you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
- When you had to use your spoken communications skills in order to get an important point across.

## Describe:

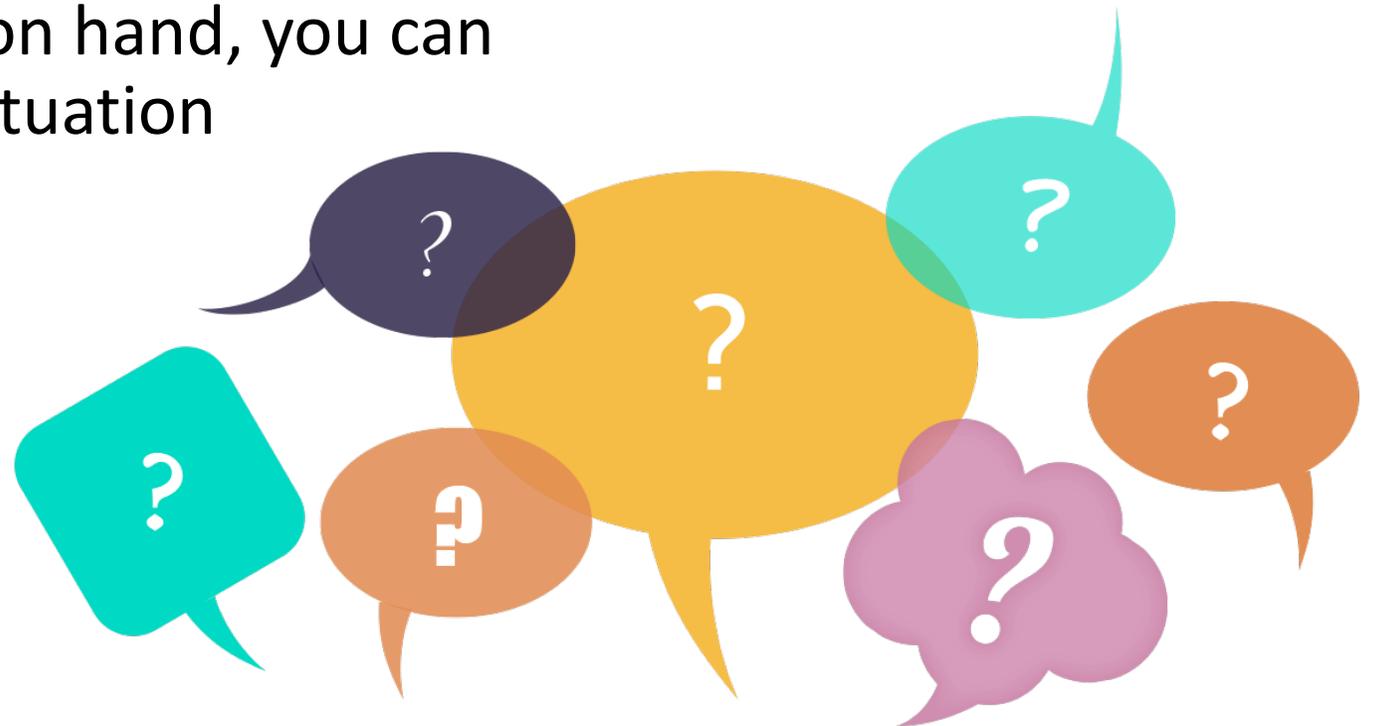
- An important goal you had set and tell me about your progress in reaching it.
- An example of a time when you used fact-finding skills to solve a problem; tell me how you analyzed the information and came to a decision.
- The most significant written document, report, or presentation that you've completed.
- A time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get the job done.

**Behavioral questions are used to show how previous behaviors can be predictors of your future performance**

**There are no wrong answers to these questions!!!!**

# Planning for Behavioral Questions

- Influence by the sector in which you are interviewing
- Plan ahead by reviewing the job announcement skills sought; think through how you've used them
- If you don't have an example on hand, you can respond with a hypothetical situation



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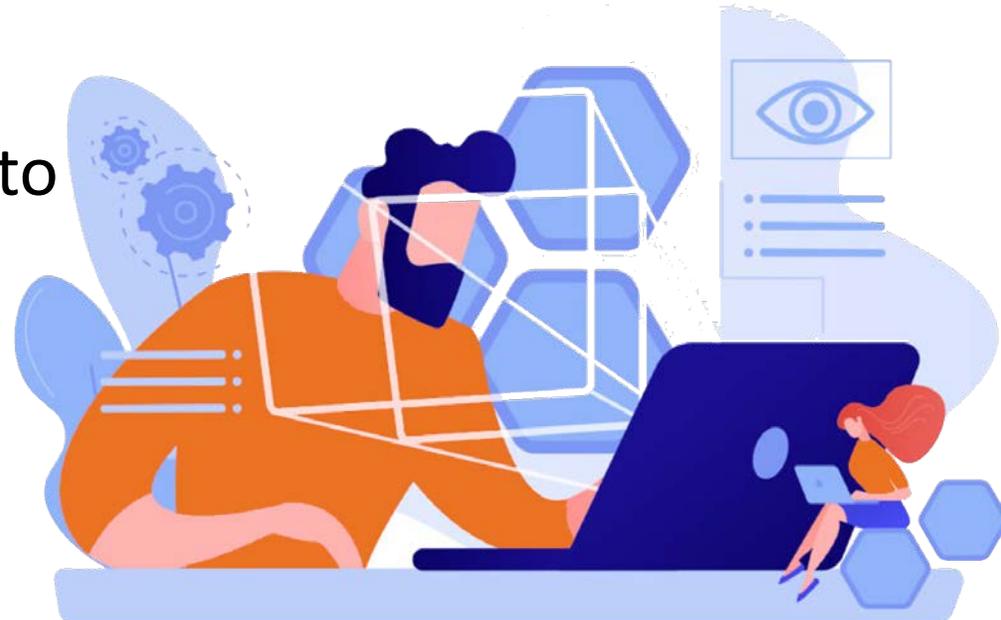
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# Answering Behavioral Questions

- STAR/CAR
  - Situation or context
  - Task, challenge or problem
  - Action (what you did - use “I” not “we”)
  - Result/Response (how did things change)
- Questions are usually open-ended and used to probe deeper into you as a person.



# Asking YOUR Questions

Have questions prepared;  
Your chance to interview  
them

Don't ask questions  
about things found  
easily on their  
website; dig deeper

Ask questions that  
shows your interest  
in them

What does a typical  
day look like?

What is your/supervisors  
management style?

Team vs. individual work

Next steps

Anticipated date to hear from group

Possible Questions?

**Field dependent**

**Plan Ahead!**

**Practice!**

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# Technical Issues

Something  
Went  
Wrong!

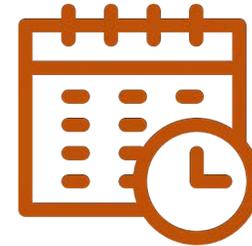
# Follow Up



Before you go,  
make sure to ask  
about next steps



Start writing thank  
you notes in <24h  
if possible



Follow up  
w/in ~two  
weeks



Salary questions  
plan ahead!

Can ask questions  
you forgot to ask  
during the interview

Email follow up is fine  
(collect business while there  
so that you have everyone's  
contact information)



**YOU  
GOT  
THIS**

# For More Information

- NCI-Shady Grove  
9609 Medical Center Drive, Rockville, MD
- Dr. Jackie Lavigne: [lavignej@nih.gov](mailto:lavignej@nih.gov)  
Ms. Diane Wigfield: [Diane.Wigfield@nih.gov](mailto:Diane.Wigfield@nih.gov)
- Visit **training.nih.gov** to learn about and apply for NIH summer internships and fellowships
- For DCEG apply online at **dceg.cancer.gov**, and DO contact investigators directly!

