

Genetic Counseling Interview Preparation

Casey Ellis – University of Georgia's Pre-Professional Advising Office



Pre-Professional
Advising Office
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Agenda

- Ways to communicate
- STAR Method
- Rule of 3
- Questions (Typical, Tough, Your Own)
- Interview Etiquette
- Post Interview



The power of communication



Communication is shown Multiple Ways

- Dress well to show this is important to you and you are a good fit.
- Arrive early and calm
- Show up Prepared (Resume, and notepad)
- Encourage questions and provide thoughtful responses to enhance audience participation
- You want to show them you are a good fit, enthusiastic about the program, and that you can work well with the other applicants.

Overcoming nervousness

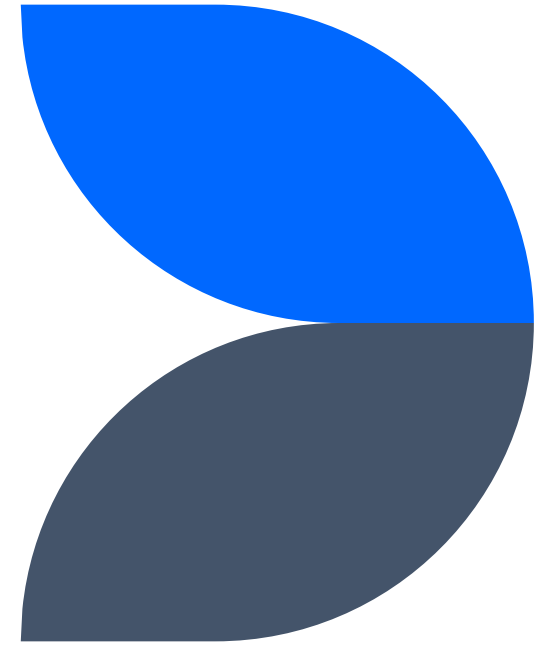


Strategies are your friend!

- “Tell Me About Yourself”
- Do not go in with a memorized monologue. Instead use the Power of 3 rule. Think about 3 things you want the interviewer to know about you with the last point relating to Genetic Counseling.
- Try and speak for 2.5-3 minutes. This is your chance to discuss things that are meaningful and have shaped you.
- Some students may cover their background and how they grew up, i.e. large family, oldest sibling, rural community, played sports, etc.
- The main thing is how you bridge them together & show reflection on how they have shaped you.

Strategies:

The STAR Method

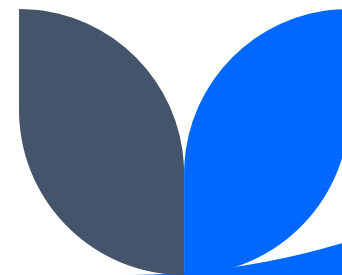


STAR

This method allows you to give an interviewer a complete perspective and gives you a pathway, so you do not ramble or lose track of your train of thought:

- **Situation (S):** Describe the situation you were in while being specific and not giving a generalized description. This could be from a previous job, volunteering, or even a relevant event such as working out a disagreement with your roommates.
- **Task (T):** What goal were you working towards?
- **Action (A):** Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail and keep the focus on YOU. What specific steps did YOU take and how did YOU contribute?
- **Result (R):** Describe the outcomes of your actions and don't shy away from taking credit for your behavior. What did you learn? What happened? How did the even end?

*STAR is a good method for open ended questions, i.e. "Tell me about the last time you failed," "Yell me about a time you compromised," "Tell me about the last time you felt proud of yourself," "Tell me the last time you had to have a difficult conversation."



Strategy: Rule of 3

The Rule of 3 allows you to have a well-rounded answer, that is easy to recall and gives you confidence in formatting your answer.

Rule of 3

- How to use the Rule of 3 with a brief backup:
- 1) Where you Practiced this Characteristic in your Application Experiences
 - Ex. RSVP, The Cottage, ESP, etc.
- 2) An example of this characteristic in action
 - Ex. Interaction with someone
- 3) Why this characteristic is important to you and the field of GC

Don't just list three aspects, make sure to discuss them, but the rule of 3 can help you format your answer and have placeholders for the details.

A Few Typical Questions

1. What are your greatest strengths & weaknesses?
2. What does diversity mean to you?
3. Why Genetic Counseling? (Rule of 3)
4. Where would you like to be 5, 10, 20 years from now?
5. When was the last time you overcame a challenge? (STAR)
6. Top Issues in your field/the way you see GC field evolving (Rule of 3)
7. How did you become interested in the field of genetic counseling?
8. How do you see yourself contributing to our program and community?
9. What do you hope to gain from this program?

Review before Interview:

- **Personal Inventory:** Your characteristics, interests and experiences
- **Application:** Questions asked on Application

Why Genetic Counseling?

- More than helping people, liking science and genetics, and working with people.
- Be more specific!
- Dig deep for your why. Why do you like about genetics?
- Helping people: Why, Who, How?

Tough Questions

- What will you do if not accepted into any GC School?
- Are we your top choice?
- “Left Field” Questions
- What is one thing we could do to improve our program?
- Why this program and this school?

Not Accepted: Have an answer ready. Show you have thought about it and aren't caught off guard, aka deer in the headlights.

Top Choice: Answer Diplomatically
“Left Field” – Don't get flustered. This is about attitude more than the answer.

Prepared Questions

Prepare questions to ask the program:

- Specific to their program (not answered on their website)
- Evaluate Student Support
- Follow up on topics addressed earlier

Tip: Have 3 Questions Prepared
It is okay to bring a notepad to take notes and write your questions on

Ethical Questions

- You may get 1 ethical question during each of your interviews. Not every school does ethical questions.
- You are not expected to know theory of medical ethics, but you do want to be aware of how your answer demonstrates your character, biases, and critical thinking skills.
- You want to show you understand the complexities of the ethical dilemma at hand., aka not black and white or just a simple fix.

Ethical Question Examples (Counseling)

- You are meeting with a family where one child has been diagnosed with a rare genetic condition. The parents are requesting information about the risk of recurrence in future pregnancies and are struggling to cope with the diagnosis. How would you provide support and guidance in this situation?
- You have a patient who is 2 years old and has severe epilepsy. She completes Genetic testing and is found to have an autosomal recessive condition, with two genetic changes, one on each copy of that specific gene of interest. Her young, unmarried, parents complete genetic testing as well, since their 2 year old daughter is their only child. The child's mother has the mutation but not the father. What does that mean to you and how would you counsel the family?

Ethical Question Tips

- Take a stance, not a side.
- Show you are thinking about everyone
- Talk about what you know and you don't know...if this, then this.
- Critical thinking skills.

Let's discuss this based on the previous 2 scenarios:

- Be fully present & be prepared. Have I met this patient before? Will I be delivering in person, telehealth, or phone? Make sure it's a good time for them to talk and have a longer conversation, possibly warn them unexpected news is coming. Would you like someone else called in from your support network? Give clear news. Patient Crying? Options? Specialists? Support network? Send resources?
- Ideally should have received pre-test counseling, which can sometimes uncover misattributed paternity. Explain the results were unexpected, and that could be multiple reasons (3), would not single in on non paternity unless asked to. Want the patient to understand the recurrence risk for the condition. Would you tell them at all or just focus on molly? Tell them – due to recurrence and doing job. GC is often not just for one patient, and think of each person as your patient in a way and give them the info they need.

Preparing for Virtual Interview

Check equipment – webcam, connection

Environment – avoid cluttered background, moving fans

Raise screen – avoid looking down

Set up workstation – take notes on paper, show ID

Wear your suit

Arrive early



During the Virtual Interview

- Maintain good posture and eye contact
 - TIP: raise computer camera to eye level
- Turn off cell phone
- Avoid distractions from pets and roommates
- Don't type notes
- Make sure others are not using bandwidth
- Take your turn in group interviews
- TIP: Book a room at the Career Center

Thank You Email After the Interview

- Send a thank you email
 - Within 24 hours of interview
 - General admissions email
- Greeting (ex: Hello Dr. Jones,), Closing (ex: Best Regards,), Your first and last name (under closing)
- Message Outline (about 100 words):
 - Say thank you for the interview
 - Tell them you are excited about the opportunity to attend
 - Tell why the school appeals to you
 - If personalized, mention a connection at interview

Preparing for an In-Person Interview

- Dress Well
- Show up Early
- Come prepared
- Well fed and a good night's rest

Campus Professional Closet

- Free professional clothing!
- [SGA Professional Clothing Closet](#)

Questions?