



# “Suggestions on Readyng for SLP Interviews: Being Prepared” — BLOG POST

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In this stage of the game, speech pathologists are readyng themselves for the interview process. The desired setting or settings have been identified, first contact has been made, and resumes have been sent. Now, it is time for the interview. It is time to be “readied” for the big day.

It is important to prepare for interviews and not walk in blindly. Preparations need to be made on many levels — so to give SLP job seekers the best possible chance of as many employment options as possible.

Items to ask or prepare for — prior to the interview date:

- CFY-Supervisor Details. If a CFY-candidate, SLP job seekers should ask if the potential CFY supervisor will be present at the interview. If this is not possible, ask if it could be arranged for a meeting to be scheduled (prior to the job offer being made or accepted, and not after the position has been filled).
- Location. Find the location of the interview in advance of the interview day. This way, there is no searching, no panicking, etc.
- Clothing. Pick out clothing that emits the feelings of being polished and professional, but at the same time, is also physically comfortable. Having clothing picked out prior to the interview day will allow for nerves to be at a lower level.
- Fresh Breath. Preparing the materials and time for toothbrushing directly prior to the interview, or at least having mints in place, will leave the SLP job-seeker feeling confident.
- Items to bring. A paper copy of your resumé, if it has already been sent electronically, can be beneficial. It also can be helpful to bring a copy of references, as well as a notebook to take light notes during the interview, if needed.
- Early, but not too early. Take care to ensure enough time to not be in a rush — by arriving a little early. Preparing enough time to be at the interview early, but being too early can result in awkwardness. Take into account traffic based on the time of the interview, weather conditions, possible construction, etc.



Arrive at the waiting area no earlier than 10-15 minutes of the interview start time. If arriving earlier than this, then go to a nearby coffee shop or store to kill time.

- Prepare Questions. Having two or three questions prepared for every interview is important, even if multiple jobs are being sought out at the same time. It shows the SLP job seeker has put thought into preparing questions; it shows interest. It also communicates that the job seeker is serious about the position, if offered. Having a few questions prepared also shows insight into how an SLP job seeker understands how the particular setting or location will operate. Save these questions for the end, when you are asked if you have any questions. Waiting to see if these areas are covered, rather than asking early, will suit the flow of the interview to an effective level. Ask questions in a manner that is respectful to the level that it isn't assumed the job has been offered or is "in the bag"; but ask confident enough that there is care about the answer. What is recommended is no more than three questions be prepared for the interview by the SLP job seeker; more than three questions could feel like the control of the interviewer would be in question. Be wise about which three questions to ask, and if there are more that would need to be asked, this could be followed-up on at a later time. Of course, if the flow of the interview would be as such that it would be appropriate to continue with more questions, that would be left up to SLP job seeker, based on the individual situation.

Some potential questions could involve:

- Productivity requirements.
  - "Please 'fill me in' on the expectations for productivity, and how to meet them."
- Caseload requirements.
  - "What is the typical caseload carried by the position?"
- Positives and negatives of the job.
  - "Could you please describe for me what are the most beneficial parts of this position, and what typically may be the most challenging aspects?"
- What can you do to prepare for this setting.
  - "If I were offered this position, what would you suggest I do to prepare between the job being accepted and the start date?"
- What you wish you knew when you started here.
  - "What would you say would be good information for an employee to have knowledge of prior to starting on day one?"
- Expectations of the job requirements.
  - "What are the major job expectations for this position?"



- "What are the productivity requirements?"
- CFY details.
  - "Can you please describe for me how it works as a CFY for this company? "
  - "Please describe how supervision works here, and once I get my CCCs, what will be impacted?"
  - "Will there be an opportunity for me to work some while I am waiting for my temporary CFY license to be approved by the state?"
  - "Would my CFY supervisor also be my employer supervisor?"
- Location specifics.
  - "Can you tell me please if this position covers more than one location?"
  - "Will drive time be covered in the hourly rate?"
  - "Will mileage be a benefit if I am asked to travel?"
  - "Will travel time be factored-in my productivity details?"
- Typical type of patients on the caseload.
  - "Please describe for me the caseload mix? What are the typical diagnoses?"

Once all of the above items are decided upon, what is left is to consider how to respond to questions during the interview process itself, and being ready for what is typically asked.

Review interview tips for answering most questions

- Pausing. Pause for a moment prior to answering questions to formulate thoughts. This will prevent accidentally interrupting in responding too quickly — if the interviewer had more to add after taking a breath. This will also allow for time to formulate a response that is the best answer that would be indicated for the question.
- Answering Tips. Answers should be concise, yet thorough. They should be direct, but descriptive. They should be informative, yet not continuing to an ad nauseam-state. It would be recommended to not repeat information, unless there is a specific purpose. Bring about fresh new content with every answer.
- Eye Contact, Non-Verbals & Rate of Speech. Although SLPs employ expertise and knowledge in these areas, this is still a good time to review these skills on a personal level. Keep in mind communication that occurs non-verbally, and pick-up on all message cues that are relayed in the interview. When nerves get to rising, sometimes, speech rates can increase. Take care to mindfully speak in a manner that is typical to the individual.



Be ready to answer the following questions from the interviewer:

- “What are your areas of strength?”
  - This is a question to be factual about, bringing up employment success stories and pertinent history that describes assets and strengths.
- “What are your areas of weakness?”
  - This is always a challenging question to answer. If possible, bring up a potential area to control that is in relation to a strength. For every positive there is a negative, for each negative, there is the other flip side of the coin. If a person’s strength is that they are a strong leader, then a potential downside is that knowing when to “rein it in” and let others take the lead, too, is an area to work on. Another example would be that a weakness is that there is a desire to have paperwork and documentation be “perfect,” – and this can be fashioned into a strength in the interview, because more often than not, under-documentation may be a concern for employers, rather than a person who takes care to be thorough.
- “What are your long-term goals?”
  - Employers care about hiring new employees that intend to stay at the job for an extended period of time. Companies lose money when they have to hire new employees and take the time in training and orientation. It would be recommended for an SLP job seeker, in answering this question, to describe long-term employment goals — as they would relate to the company. If a person is intending to move into management someday, this would be an opportunity to voice the desire to obtain a mentor for that purpose. This could open the door to helping-out in areas that the supervisor might find beneficial, in having the extra help. Another long-term employment goal could involve desiring to obtain certifications in certain areas, and this would communicate the desire to continue to grow in the profession in order to continue to improve quality care.
- “If offered the position, how long would you plan to stay in this position, and working for this company?”
  - Of course employers understand that it is difficult to make a promise of how long to remain at a position. However, it is important to consider that they are looking to fill the position not just on a temporary basis.
- “How important is improving quality of care to you?”
  - The priority of improving quality of care should be communicated. This is an opportunity to speak to the assistance that may be needed in finding balance. There are nuances in balancing documentation time vs. collaboration time that could be discussed. Employers want to know that new employees would do “what it takes” to improve the quality of care, and at the same time, find balance in all of the other little aspects of the job that are still necessary. Speaking to how quality of



care could be improved, or a reflection/analysis process would be a benefit in answering this question. “Out of the box” ideas could be shared in how to maximize potential for improvement.

Sometimes, employers at the end of the interview may want to discuss pay/compensation to “feel you out” to see if both of you are in the same page — in terms of pay expectations. It is best to not answer a question like “what are you expecting in terms of the hourly rate,” “What are your salary wishes?” It is best to communicate that you are new to the setting or the area, or that you have been in a different situation for some time now, and are not in a place to communicate an expectation. However, if they could please go ahead and make an offer, that would be best at this time, considering not all of the information is available right now.

Keep in mind what is desired by employers:

- Critical thinking skills
- Team-player qualities
- Problem-solving abilities
- Innovation
- Wisdom in knowing how to proceed in an effective manner

The “Go Ins”:

- Go in confident, but not cocky
- Go in inquisitive, but not only “questioning”
- Go in thankful, but not selling yourself short
- Go in interested, but not desperate

Good luck on your job interview.