

Preparing for a Behavioral-Based Interview

Unless you are fortunate enough to be hired without an interview, you will likely be asked some behavioral-based interview questions.

In this type of interviewing, the hiring manager uses your past behavior to predict your future behavior. Instead of asking you to describe your skills or asking what you would do in a hypothetical situation, they ask what you've done in the past. Here are some examples:

- Describe a situation where you had to take a stand under pressure or speak up when something wasn't right.
- Give an example of a time when your schedule was interrupted and how you handled it.

How should you prepare for these questions? Review the job description of the position you're interviewing for and look for the skills they describe. Then think through your work and personal history to find stories that best illustrate how you've demonstrated those skills successfully in the past.

Think through the details of the specific situation, what you needed to do, what actions you took and how it turned out. Make sure you tie the story to the skill you're trying to convey.

If you do not have an experience related to the operating room, this is an opportunity to make your non-OR experience relevant. For example, if you worked as a waiter in the past, think back to when you stepped in to cover a second shift or easily handled that 12-top of hungry barbarians. Run through the details of that situation, how you managed it, and the outcome. Were you complimented by your supervisor or did you receive an extra-large tip?

Find examples for 10-15 relevant skills and practice those stories. You never know which skills the interviewer might ask about. And, don't forget to prepare answers to more traditional questions as well, such as "Why do you want to work for ABC Health," or "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"

During the interview, listen carefully to the question and ask for clarity if you need to. (Listening may be one of the skills they're looking for.)

Finally, be honest. Don't make up a story. If you must, tell the interviewer that you haven't been in that situation before, then go on to describe, step-by-step, what you would do in that situation.

Behavioral Based Interview Questions for the Surgical Technologist

- Tell me about a time when you anticipated potential problems with a case and the preventative steps you took to mitigate the problem.
- Talk about an occasion when you disagreed with a co-worker in the OR.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- Describe a time when you worked under pressure. What was going on and how did you get through it?
- Tell me about a time when you went over and above your job requirements. Why were you motivated to put forth that extra effort?

- Describe a time when you had a big change in your life. How did it impact you and how did you adapt?
- Tell me about your proudest accomplishment.
- Describe an incident when you didn't know the answer to something at work. How did you find the information you needed?
- Give me an example of how you have dealt with a failure in your past.
- Tell me about a time when you worked in a fast-paced environment. How did you prioritize the work? What steps did you take to maintain quality or accuracy during this period?
- Describe a time when you received negative feedback. How did you turn that into something positive?
- Talk about a time when you felt overwhelmed at work. What did you do?
- Give me an example of an important goal you set for yourself. How did you go about accomplishing that goal?
- Tell me about an occasion when you realized you hadn't communicated well. How did you correct the situation?