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Social work interview question tell me about yourself

When you get behind the wheel of your car or truck and put it in gear, you expect it to move. Take a closer look at vehicle parts diagrams, and you see that the transmission plays a role in making this happen. It's a complex part with an important job. **Transmission Basics**Your car or truck's transmission is part of its drive train. Its purpose is to transfer power produced by the engine to the wheels. If you've ever been on a multi-speed bicycle and changed the gears, you know that putting it in the wrong gear for the speed you want to go makes it difficult to move. This is also true of a transmission. **Parts of a Transmission**Take a look at a transmission parts diagram and you see how complex this part is. There are clutches and bands, gears, a pump, sensors, a torque converter and valve body. All transmissions also have transmission fluid that lubricates the transmission and keeps it cool. These parts must be present and functioning properly for the transmission to do its job. As they age, they become less effective. That's when it's time to replace the worn parts during a transmission rebuild. **Gear Ratios**Transmissions have grooved gears that spin in tandem to create torque needed to move the vehicle. The input and output gears are different sizes, each transmission has several gear ratios. Gear ratios change along with the vehicle's speed, and the way the gears work together make it happen. Transmissions also have selectors that let you reverse direction, park or leave the vehicle running while in neutral. **Manual Transmissions**If you have a vehicle with a manual transmission, you choose the gear by pressing the clutch and moving the gearshift into the appropriate position. Driving a vehicle with a manual transmission requires more skill than those with automatic transmissions, but it gives the driver more control over the speed of the vehicle. Many people who like working on their own cars prefer manual transmissions because they are less complex than automatic transmissions and easier to repair. **Automatic Transmissions**An automatic transmission changes the gear ratios on its own. The automatic transmission fluid inside the case provides pressure that moves the clutches and bands to select the appropriate gear. These transmissions are popular because most people find them easier to drive since they don't have to learn how to engage the clutch to change gears. They're more complex parts, though, which can be more costly to repair when something goes wrong. **MORE FROM QUESTIONSANSWERED.NET** by Regina Praetorius, MSSW, GSW, and Laura Lawson, MSW, GSW Keep the focus on you. This is your goal in the job interview. In the American culture, we are taught at an early age not to brag on ourselves. The job interview is the one place you are not only allowed to brag, but required to do so! When does the interview start? The interview starts with your first communication with the organization. This is usually your résumé and cover letter, but may also include networking events like conferences and job fairs. Remember that with every contact you have, they are sizing you up. This includes: Neatness: Is your résumé pleasing to the eye? Is it organized? Timeliness: Did your résumé arrive on time or right before the deadline? Were you asleep when they called to schedule the interview? Did you screech into the parking lot one minute before the interview? Manners: Were you polite on the phone? Did you follow résumé etiquette? If you were not available to answer the phone, was your answering machine message appropriate and professional (no singing, barking puppies, or screaming children)? Is your e-mail address appropriate? (toocool4u@somewhere.com is not a good idea.) What should I wear? We've all heard the phrase, "Don't judge a book by its cover," yet the cover (how you present yourself) does make an impression. Dress professionally! Yes, this applies to all social workers. Just because you might be applying for a job with toddlers that will be primarily outdoors doesn't mean you should dress in shorts for the interview. Dress conservatively! Be careful of your color choices. Be careful not to wear loud colors that distract from you. You want the interviewer to pay attention to you. Clothes should fit well—not too big or too small. What should I do to prepare? You don't want to be caught off guard in a job interview. Be prepared! Research the organization (Web sites, funding agencies, organizational materials, colleagues who may be familiar with the organization). Make sure you know how to get there and where to park. It's not a bad idea to drive by prior to the day of the interview around the same time of the interview, so you can scope out parking and traffic. How do I deal with nervousness? The job interview can provoke anxiety, but there are some things you can do to reduce the stress. Prepare! Prepare! Prepare! Know your résumé and the organization. Arrive 15 minutes prior to the interview time. This allows for you to collect yourself in the parking lot or restroom. If you anticipate traffic, allow more time. Remember to breathe! Think about what techniques have worked for you in other tense situations and use them. What should I bring? There are a few tools that will help in the interview. Do NOT bring your cell phone! (Turn it off during the interview.) Extra copies of the résumé (for you to review and in case they ask you for more). List of references List of questions for the end of the interview. A portfolio to carry the above items. What should I do while I'm waiting? You don't want to appear too anxious (even if you are!). Don't hide in the bathroom or your car! Use the time in the lobby to your advantage. The receptionist and other staff members are watching you. Make sure you watch them, too! This is a great time to evaluate the agency. Is there an air of anxiety? Stress? Disorganization? Is it too loud? Too quiet? In the lobby, remember that they are checking you out. If there are clients in the waiting area, be friendly and personable. If not, chat with the receptionist. He or she is often a wealth of information. How should I sit/act? It has been said that actions speak louder than words. Use correct posture. Keep your hands fairly still. Only use them for emphasis while talking. Maintain eye contact. If there is more than one interviewer, make sure you engage everyone. Smile often! Don't fidget. Listen: if you are not sure you understand a question, do not be afraid to ask for clarification. Keep your portfolio handy—you might want to take notes or glance at your résumé. Speak clearly and confidently. Do not speak too loudly or too softly. Women: Cross your feet at the ankles (not at the knees). Don't play with your hair. Men: Do not cross your legs or prop your arms on the back of the chair. What do I say when they ask: Tell me about yourself This is NOT your opportunity to get personal. Keep things like pets, children, and significant others out of the picture. "Tell me about yourself" really means: Where did you go to school? What unique skills do you bring to the table? What are your most relevant experiences? Why should you get the job? For example: I recently graduated with a Master's in Social Work from XYZ University. During my time there, I completed a school social work internship and a family counseling internship. I also successfully undertook several electives on family and child therapy techniques. I was also active in the Social Work Student Association and the local chapter of NASW. Why did you choose social work? Be careful here! Don't talk too much about religious convictions (unless you're at a faith-based organization) or your own personal therapy experiences. Focus on your skills and how they match the social work profession. Another good focus area is the population the organization serves and why you want to work with them. Tell me about your most challenging (or rewarding) situation in your internship. A good technique to use is the STAR technique. S- Describe the situation. T-Describe your task to be completed in that situation. A- Describe the actions taken to accomplish the task in that situation. R- Describe the results of the actions you took to accomplish the task in that situation. For example: At XYZ agency, I had to coordinate coverage for our 24-hour hotline since the hotline coordinator was out sick. My first step was to review the volunteer phone counselor signup calendar. I saw that, for the week in question, there were two overnight shifts still open. I consulted the procedure manual and determined that I needed to call the volunteers who had not completed their six-month commitment with the agency first. I made a few phone calls and filled the shifts successfully. What are your strengths and weaknesses? With this question, remember not to bury yourself. Discuss weaknesses first and either turn them into strengths or address how you have overcome them. Follow up with your strengths and how they would benefit the organization. For example: One of my weaknesses is that I do not delegate well. I am a perfectionist, so I find it easier to do things myself to be sure they are done well. However, this is also a strength, because I work diligently for the best possible outcomes. Another strength would be my organizational skills. I have had to juggle various activities, school, work, internship, and extracurricular activities over the past few years. The only way I could do this was by being organized. This would be particularly beneficial to this position, since it requires managing a 40-client caseload. Where do you see yourself in 5 (or 10) years? This is a good time to mention licensure and certification goals. Also, if there are opportunities that you want to make sure the organization offers you (facilitating groups, for example), this could also be included here. It is not necessary to say you will be with the organization in question. What questions should I ask? The following are some suggestions. When will you make a decision? How many people will be directly under the person you hire? Do you support employees in receiving continuing education? Will you allow time for licensure supervision? What is the procedure for performance evaluations? What are the hours? Is travel required? Save salary questions for after you are offered the job. What do I do at the end of the interview? Thank the interviewer(s) for their time and let them know you look forward to hearing from them. What about after the interview? Send a thank you letter/ e-mail to the interviewer(s) within 24 hours of the interview. In the letter, again state your desire for the job and your qualifications. Make sure the letter/e-mail is headed the same way as your résumé and on the same paper. Write down the time they told you they would make the decision. If you haven't heard from them a week after this date, call and ask if a decision has been made. Remember, you are interviewing them, too. During your interview, don't forget to take the time to observe the surroundings and the interactions among employees. If offered a position at the end of the interview, it is a good idea to ask for time to decide. This will allow you the opportunity to leave and process not only the interview and job specifications, but also the environment, people, and attitude of the organization. Good luck! Regina Praetorius, MSSW, GSW, received her Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Texas at Austin, where she specialized in administration and planning. She served as a career counselor in the past, and is currently conducting research in the field of suicidology and pursuing her Ph.D. Laura Lawson, MSW, GSW, is a graduate of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, where she received her Master of Social Work and served as a career counselor. She is currently employed as a school social worker in southern Louisiana. Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the Summer 2004 issue of THE NEW SOCIAL WORKER magazine.

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