

# POSSIBLE TOPICS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE TO ELICIT INFORMATION FROM APPLICANTS BEING INTERVIEWED

## TOPICS

### A. Compassion, humanism, recognition of societal needs (N.D. needs?), depth of commitment

- 1) Life experiences such as summer work or work during college or after. Jobs with responsibility? What degree of responsibility? How were responsibilities handled?
- 2) If a person has been involved in health services in the past, how did he/she relate to a patient?
- 3) In the person's general activity, have they tended to be individual-related, person-related, or were they object-related.
- 4) Have candidate discuss current medical issues and look for evidence of recognition of multiple points of view. Such questions might be asked on issues of abortion, child abuse, migrant farm workers, ghetto dwellers, etc.
- 5) Questions might be asked about future medical goals, looking specifically for people-oriented goals rather than object or non-people oriented goals.
- 6) Look for occasions where the applicant has been responsible for another person and, the applicant's assessment of that responsibility.
- 7) The applicant's selection of course work, such as Sociology, Philosophy, etc.
- 8) Has there been a history of any significant family illness and the applicant's response to that illness.
- 9) If a candidate states that one of his/her goals in becoming a physician is to, "help people", ask the applicant what has been done to show this concern.
- 10) Has your family ever needed you? This relates to a family illness, but also to other forms of family need.
- 11) Has the student been willing to sacrifice something (time, grades, social life) to help others?
- 12) Social service type activities and the student's reason for involvement and length of involvement.
- 13) Finally, as the applicant answers these questions, note not only the answers but also how they talk about their family or activities, etc.

### B. Ethical behavior and integrity

- 1) Ask the candidate how he or she might react if he noted, while under the honor system, that a classmate was cheating on examinations.
- 2) When acting as a dormitory manager, etc., what might the applicant do if he/she knew that a resident on his floor was using illegal drugs.

### C. Decision making and problem solving

- 1) Do you have plans or alternate goals should you not be able to get into medical school?
- 2) What is the toughest problem the applicant has dealt with as a dormitory counselor or in some other supervisory capacity?
- 3) Ask a tough question and see how the applicant deals with it. For instance, using human subjects (such as prisoners in experiments).

#### **D. Relating to others; sensitivity in interpersonal relationships**

- 1) To whom does the candidate turn when he or she has a problem; is the candidate a resource person within his family or among his peers?
- 2) Attitudes expressed in the interview itself should be helpful in this category. Does the candidate recognize the interviewer as a person rather than an object to be manipulated for good interview results? Does the candidate show empathy?
- 3) The student's perception of parent maturation and analysis of family organization and relationships within the family would be revealing in terms of perceptions and maturity and sensitivity.
- 4) Sensitivity can be looked for by raising controversial issues such as euthanasia, racism, abortion, and looking, for the affect of the student in dealing with the issues rather than the content.
- 5) Experiences with other ethnic groups, interpersonal relationships during summer jobs and/or other types of jobs, and exploration of the kind of relationships that the applicant seeks out might be useful.
- 6) Who is your best friend? Describe your relationship to this best friend and why you like this person.
- 7) Again, the point was made that the interviewer should not only listen to what but how the applicant says it. Look at facial expressions and listen for clues in the tone of the voice as well as other non-verbal clues.

#### **E. Coping capabilities, staying power**

- 1) Did you ever fail at anything? How did you feel about this failure?
- 2) Has the candidate ever run afoul of the "establishment" (for example, a problem with the University). If so, how did the applicant solve that?
- 3) Has the applicant felt physically disadvantaged in a situation and how did the applicant deal with that?
- 4) What does the applicant do when under pressure?
- 5) Is the person solution-oriented or problem-oriented?
- 6) Is the person optimistic in the face of problems? Does the person know his/her own limits?
- 7) Inquire about the most significant support person the applicant would turn to if needed.

8) Again, questions on what the applicant would do if not accepted to medical school. How has the applicant dealt with failure and disappointment in the past?

9) Look for evidence of long-range goals as opposed to short-range satisfaction, such as a dishwashing job in college for three years because that job paid more money to prepare for medical school even though the job was hated.

10) Evidence of lifestyle planning and follow through, including planning of summer jobs, college attendance, career choice, and application to medical schools.

#### **F. Ability to communicate**

1) Does the applicant appear self-confident? How does he/she communicate this self-confidence?

2) Is he/she fluent, clear, decisive?

3) Can he/she think on his/her feet? Pursue an item of interest in depth.

4) Does the applicant appear manipulative?

#### **G. Approach to learning - continuing education**

1) If the candidate has had a job over a period of time, how has he or she learned to do it, has he been promoted or given extra responsibility within it, and has he shown any tendency to develop his own skills?

2) Has the person taken many non-required courses in college versus the typical premed program?

3) How does the applicant find out things that he or she doesn't know?

4) Does the applicant have a hobby, and if so has the applicant shown a continuing interest in developing that hobby or extracurricular activity over a period of time?

#### **H. External interests versus overachieving and narrowness**

1) Depth and numbers of external interests, hobbies, etc.

2) Study habits for premed years.

3) Social life, types of leisure activity.

4) Sources of gratification; can applicant learn without external coercion or re-enforcement.

#### **I. Self concept, emotional stability, what strengths could be brought to medicine**

1) Has applicant ever failed? How have they felt with failure?

2) Realistic assessment of career.

3) Ability to evaluate their own emotional reactions. Has there been a death in the family. How did the applicant deal with the death? How did they feel about it?

4) Sense of humor, etc.

## **J. General goals in medicine**

1) How they see themselves in 10 years with respect to profession and family.

2) How do their goals mesh with the needs of North Dakota?

## TYPES OF QUESTIONS

1. What are some of your hobbies?
2. What do you do in your spare time for enjoyment?
3. Have you achieved some goals that you set for yourself?
4. Have you persevered at something other than medicine?
5. Why do you feel medicine and you could have a good marriage?
6. What are some of your weak points?
7. How are you working on them?
8. Can you give me the pros and cons of a current medical issue without making a decision as to which side you believe in?
9. What were your feelings the first time you saw a person die?
10. How would you calm a frightened patient?
11. Have you had much contact with old people?
12. Give an itinerary of your average day.
13. What one thing has happened in your life that made you a better person?
14. If you "got in over your head" in something, what would you do?
15. Have you considered other career choices besides medicine?
16. What do you think plays a more important role in medicine, the art or the science?
17. What was the last novel you read? Or favorite novel?
18. What have you done to improve yourself? (If not 1st application)

19. Have you ever overcome any of your weak points? (If not 1st application)
20. What went through your mind when you found out you were rejected? (If not 1st application)
21. What will you do if you do not get into medical school this year?
22. What do you see yourself doing ten years from now?
23. What would you do with a 9 year old patient who you just found out has terminal cancer?
24. What do you feel are the pros and cons of medicine as a career?
25. Has there been any one person that has influenced you most.
26. Describe your best friend.
27. How would your best friend describe you?
28. What magazines do you read regularly?
29. How do you define (terms in autobiography that are ambiguous?)
30. Go into more detail on experiences related in autobiography.
31. What are some of your strong points?
32. Is there a person you know that you can't stand?
33. Relate a crisis in your life and how you overcame it.
34. What role do you plan to have in your community?
35. How will you improve next year's freshmen class?
36. Have you noticed any problems in hospitals in which you have worked?
37. Can you tell us how you have helped a person?
38. Have you had much time to talk to patients?
39. Give three adjectives that describe yourself?
40. What made you choose medicine as a career?