WHAT IS A BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW?

- **An interview like any other!!!**
  - Show up early
  - Dress professionally
  - Body language (smile, firm handshake, confident & open posture, try not to cross legs or arms)
  - Turn your phone off
  - Treat everyone like an interviewer including the receptionist who greets you
  - There might be a panel, so don’t be surprised

- **Behavioral questions gather evidence about your past behavior so an employer can predict what your future behavior might be like**
  - Intended to determine how you handled situations in the past
  - Intended to determine what your skills, abilities and personality traits are like
  - Includes questions that require you to tell a story about a past situation you have been in

- **Behavioural questions often begin with “Tell us about a time when…” or “Share an example of a situation where…” or “Give an example of…”**. Here are some specific examples:
  - Tell us about a time you had a stressful situation at work and how you handled it
  - Give us an example of when you had a conflict with a peer or fellow employee and how you handled it
  - Share an example of when you went above and beyond your required responsibilities in a work or volunteer placement
  - Tell us about a time when you helped to foster a sense of teamwork and cooperation among your co-workers
  - Tell us about a time you had to make a difficult decision at work
  - Share an example of when you have made a mistake at work and how you handled it
  - Tell us about a time you had multiple competing priorities and how you managed that

- **Common non-behavioral questions:**
  - Why are you interested in working for our company?
  - Why are you interested in this position specifically?
  - Where do you see yourself in five years?
  - What are your educational and professional goals?
  - What do you consider to be your greatest strength and weakness? How do you manage this weakness?
  - Describe your ideal work environment?
  - How would you describe your learning style?
  - Do you have any questions for us? (this will almost always be asked- prepare at least two)
HOW DOES ONE PREPARE FOR BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS?

✓ Research the employer, spend time on their website, and learn what is important to them

✓ Identify a specific story for potential behavioral questions

✓ Refer to your resume, and:
  o think of an example of how you demonstrated each strength listed
  o think of times when you shined in each of your educational, employment and volunteer experiences.
  o Bring your resume into the interview with you, if you can, and refer to it in case you draw a blank after being asked a question

✓ Refer to the job posting and:
  o Beside the “roles and responsibilities”, “qualifications” and “assets” note any of your past experiences or responsibilities that show how you meet these

✓ Practice telling your stories using the S.T.A.R. acronym:
  o Situation: Briefly describe the context and the situation
  o Task(s): State the problem or issue, and the task(s) needed to be done
  o Action(s): Explain the action you took to complete the task or solve the problem
  o Result(s): Share the result/outcome of your actions and don’t be afraid to toot your horn!

REMEMBER

✓ Take your time, breathe, smile and don’t be afraid to share a laugh
✓ Choose specific stories where you are the protagonist (the problem solver, the hero, the star)
✓ Focus on your character in the story, and never speak negatively about others
✓ Choose the most relatable story to the question as possible, but don’t sweat it if don’t have a perfect match
✓ Always give an answer to ensure you score at least minimum points for each question. If you cannot think of an answer or are not satisfied with the one you’ve given, ask if you might be able to come back to it later.
✓ Maintain confidentiality of others and especially any clients you have worked with
✓ The way you handle a question and the interview situation is as important as the answers you give.
  o Employers are asking in the back of their minds, “does this person seem like they would be pleasant to work with?”
**EXAMPLE 1** *(Retrieved from https://careercenter.lehigh.edu/node/145)*

**QUESTION:** You indicated on your resume that leadership is one of your strengths. Please describe an experience in which you used your leadership abilities.

**Situation:**
During my third year of college, I was elected Vice President for Professional Programs for my student association. The duties of the position included securing speakers for our meetings, advertising the programs to the campus community, introducing speakers, and evaluating each program.

**Task:**
Previous attendance at meetings had decreased substantially due to a decrease in the overall student population. The goal was to implement programs to address the professional development of our association and increase attendance by 25% compared to the prior year's figures.

**Action:**
I assembled a team to help with the program design and speaker selection. I developed a survey to determine the members' professional interests and ideas for possible speakers and topics. My team and I had each member complete the survey. Then we randomly selected members for a focus group interview. I had learned about this research technique in my marketing class and thought it would help us identify why attendance had dropped.

**Result:**
Because of the information we gathered from the surveys and interviews, we selected speakers for the entire year, produced a brochure describing each program and the featured speaker. Under my leadership, attendance increased 150% over the previous year.

**EXAMPLES 2 & 3** *(Retrieved from https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-the-star-interview-response-technique-2061629)*

**QUESTION:** Tell me about a time you had to complete a task under a tight deadline. Describe the situation, and explain how you handled it.

**ANSWER:** Once at a former company, an employee left days before a big project of his was due. I was asked to take it over, with only a few days to learn about and complete the project. I created a task force, delegated work, and we all completed the assignment with a day to spare. I think I tend to thrive under tight deadlines.

**QUESTION:** Share a teamwork experience where one team member is not doing their portion of the work?

**ANSWER:** Once I was working on a team project, and two of the team members got into an argument, both refusing to complete their assignments. They were both dissatisfied with their workloads, so I arranged a team meeting where we rearranged the assignments for the team. This made everyone happier and more productive, and our project was a success.