

Feel free to share this link → <https://tinyurl.com/your-virtual-interview-friend>

Interested in paying it back and being involved next year and as an interviewer? Fill out this form! <https://forms.gle/Pi3G5mdrkSYygGUj7>

Can't commit right now and/or have advice you'd like to share? You can do so at this [form](#)!

Stay tuned for updates for the upcoming cycles - we are currently in the process of transitioning to [Prescribe it Forward!](#) In the meantime, you can check our notes and resources below! If you click on the webinar slides, you can find many extra practice questions too (along with our thoughts on how to approach each question) :)

INDEX of this (LIVING, GROWING) DOCUMENT:

[Welcome!](#)

[Advice](#)

[An often forgotten but important note: Take care of yourself. Check-in.](#)

[Advice on Logistics](#)

[Additional Resources with Advice:](#)

[Sample interview questions:](#)

[FAQs \(growing list - check back often!\):](#)

[Reading/Thinking List \(it's growing so check back often!\)](#)

[Short reads \(and some questions/reflections that these texts may inspire\):](#)

[Books](#)

[Where can I read more about ethics?](#)

[Med School Applicant \[Sign up Links\]\(#\) \(Webinars, Free Mock Interviews\)!](#)

[Mock Interviewer Bios:](#)

Welcome!

Hello!

Welcome. Take a deep breath, breathe in for four counts and then breathe out for eight. Take a moment to appreciate just how far you've come - submitting a whole application to med school means you've taken a bunch of hard classes, you've gone through the MCAT, you've gotten involved in activities and research and clinical work that interests you, you've reflected on your values and your dreams, and you've typed it all into a tedious lil form online. Sure, you've got some work left to do when it comes to the interview process but the truth is that for a career in medicine, there is ALWAYS going to be that next step. It's going to be an anatomy test, a licensing exam, an evaluation on a rotation, residency applications, fellowship apps or trying to find a job, that next promotion when you're finally an attending. For goal-oriented people, it's easy to be so focused on what we need to work on that we don't pause to celebrate how far we've come. We're proud of you and excited for you; we're here to help.

Interviews don't have to be scary. **Zoom interviews might actually have some advantages** - you can choose a familiar, comfortable environment that puts you at ease

off the bat AND you can practice in a way that really mirrors the real deal. You can record yourself on a zoom practice session and then play it back and watch what you actually look like in an interview, which is harder to do for in-person ones. Again, we don't pretend to know what zoom interviews will actually be like but we're reassured that no one really does. So let's make the most of them!

Your virtual med school interview friends,
Juhi and Natalia
(Twitter: @juhiette and @NRomanoSpica)

***disclaimer* We are two medical students who are volunteering our time to help aspiring doctors. We do NOT speak on behalf of any institution or medical school.** *If you have any specific questions about your application (e.g. stats, choices of extracurriculars, the degree path you have chosen) we encourage you to reach out to Admission Offices directly to ask your question - they know best! And if you are looking for 1:1 mentorship throughout the entirety of the application cycle, check out our friends at Prescribe It Forward - you can sign up for a mentor [here](#) (also for free!!). (And if you do, will you encourage your mentor to sign up as a mock interviewer for us? You can share the link to this doc - the sign up form for med students is at the top!)*

Advice

In our experience, you don't need to have a big personality or a lot of "charm" to have a successful interview. **You need two things to interview well - something meaningful to say and confidence.** You've already got the first one! You've been reflecting on your values and your involvement for a little while now, and you've got interesting, thoughtful experiences and wisdom to share with your interviewer. Maybe you need to talk through it or tighten it up or polish some things but the first part is there. The second comes with practice. Interviewing is a skill everyone works on, and the good news is that it can be practiced. Some people need more practice than others, and that's okay! Even if you feel comfortable about your interpersonal skills, don't let this diminish your willingness to practice. There can be a lot of nerves about the uncertainty and the thought of being judged by people who don't know you - a lot of things that are ultimately out of our control. As best as you can, focus on what IS in your sphere of influence and practice practice practice until answering questions about yourself and sharing your story feel like muscle memory.

Our first piece of advice is to **take everyone's advice with a grain of salt**, including ours obvi. While it's super helpful to talk to folks, especially current med students at places you're interviewing at, you don't always know people's life circumstances or that their worldview really matches up with your own. So listen, write it down, take what works for you and shed the rest.

The best interview advice I've gotten is to **decide on 3-5 things that your interviewer MUST know about you** by the end of your interview - and then find ways to work these into conversation in any way possible! *For example, I wanted my interviewers to know that I majored in women's studies, worked at a women's health clinic, and spent a lot of my time dancing.* -J For some it's helpful to think about generating a few "headlines" about themselves they want to leave their interviewer with (others think of a short Instagram caption for each major point they want to convey!).

Next, remember that **every question is a vehicle for you to tell your interviewer something important about yourself.** It doesn't have to be a "concrete accomplishment", it can be a personality trait or an interest but you want to use each question effectively, so that your interviewer learns something important about you after you've answered. As best as you can, include an example/experience/story to illustrate your point. If applicable, you can tie in what you've learned from it, and/or how this will translate to being a medical student/doctor. (It's helpful to imagine that you are helping the interviewer by saying out loud the conclusions you'd like them to draw about you - save them the extra mental work!

If they ask "what kind of shoe would you be?" - you could answer "oh I'd be a pair of birkenstocks" OR you can say "To me, birkenstocks are practical and comfortable which reflects my leadership style. As captain of my dance team, I have to be realistic about our goals given how little funding we get, and I'm always trying to find ways to creatively stretch our budget so that we can go to that extra competition or get that extra costume. It's important to me that my

teammates feel comfortable talking to me about what's on their mind and there's no shoe more comfortable than my birks. Also unpopular opinion but I think they're actually really cute and finding beauty in unexpected places has been a big part of my dance experience." See the difference! Don't @ me, I love my birks - J
If they ask you about how COVID has affected your plans this year, you could answer "I wasn't able to have [insert experience/opportunity]". OR you can also add why this experience/opportunity was important to you, what you had planned on learning from it, and - if applicable - mention how you were able to creatively make up for the learning experience / need that you had to address. - N

To make things harder, you need to show your substance and it's got to be succinct. **we recommend keeping your answers under 2 minutes.** The last thing you want is for your interviewer to zone out while you're talking to them which I think IS easier to do over zoom. (This will also give the interviewer the change to ask follow up questions if they would like). The only real way to work on this is practice - time yourself answering the [sample questions](#) you can find below. And then you HAVE to play it back and listen, decide what things you can cut and what's worth keeping. You might get to the point where you have an internal timer and can gauge if you've been talking for one minute or five. I'm not saying that you need to practice obsessively, just carve out a few times a week where you sit down and go through questions (on your own or with a friend). *I was a senior in college when I applied so I would talk into the voice memos app on my phone and then listen to my responses on my walks between classes! -J*

It's important to **practice with both people who know you well and ones who know you less well.** Friends and family may be able to provide feedback on whether your authentic self comes through; less familiar people may provide an experience that may more closely simulate an interview with someone who doesn't know you (to make sure you're not skipping on parts that may sound self-explanatory to you. *Some of the best interview advice I received was from individuals who didn't know me too well - they asked for explanations that helped me articulate even better what was important to me. For example, as I described my experiences on the board of my ballroom team, they helped me identify how much I prioritized mentorship and community building throughout my activities - N).*

Also **actually answer the question!** Sometimes the story you wanna share doesn't 100% match up with the question asked, that's okay, just make SURE when you wrap up that you connect back to the original question in some way.

At the very end of your interview, **you will probably be asked if you have questions!** This is another place to be strategic - what are things you're actually curious about that are hard to get a sense of from the website and the school's promotional materials? This is an opportunity for you to show your interviewer another side of you - what matters most to you? This time can also be an opportunity for you to slip in things your interviewer hasn't asked about!

Easy to go questions when you can't think of any:

How would you describe the community here? / How would you describe the medical students here?

What kinds of medical students do you see succeeding here?

What does wellness look like here?

What does mentorship look like here?

If you could change one thing what would it be?

What changes do you anticipate for the program/school in the next few years?

What are aspects of [school/institution name] that surprised you?

[This is a great question to ask med students as well - answers often give you info about the program that you won't find on the web.]

Why did you choose this school? (to both students and faculty)

What do you wish you knew on the interview trail? Questions you had asked? (ask students, especially first years. Also an indirect way to learn more about the school)

One question I really enjoyed asking was "What advice do you have for me? / What advice do you have for a first year student?" Not only did it start a meaningful conversation with my interviewers... by the end of interview season I had a wonderful collection of pearls and advice! I would usually save this one for the end, and it would make for a positive, solution-oriented, future-focused wrap-up. - N

We know we're asking for a tall order here- **you don't have to do all of these things or ANY of them if they don't work for you! We're trying to share what we've learned from our own experiences but the last thing we want is for you to feel overwhelmed okay!**

An often forgotten but important note: Take care of yourself. Check-in.

The interview process can be long and challenging. Check-in with yourself often. How are you feeling? When was the last time you ate? What's on your mind? What's the weather like inside? As you prepare for the interview trail, take a moment to reflect on who are the people you can count on. How will you take care of yourself? Who is your support system? Identify who you will tap on if you want to process any interview experience, presentation, or conversation. **It is important to acknowledge that telling and retelling (and thus, reliving) difficult experiences can be difficult.** Medical schools love to ask about "challenges you've overcome", "disadvantaged backgrounds" and "what inspired you to pursue medicine". For many applicants, the answer is full of experiences that are still a work-in-progress. Retelling these experiences can be traumatizing. Let's pause and acknowledge this for a second.

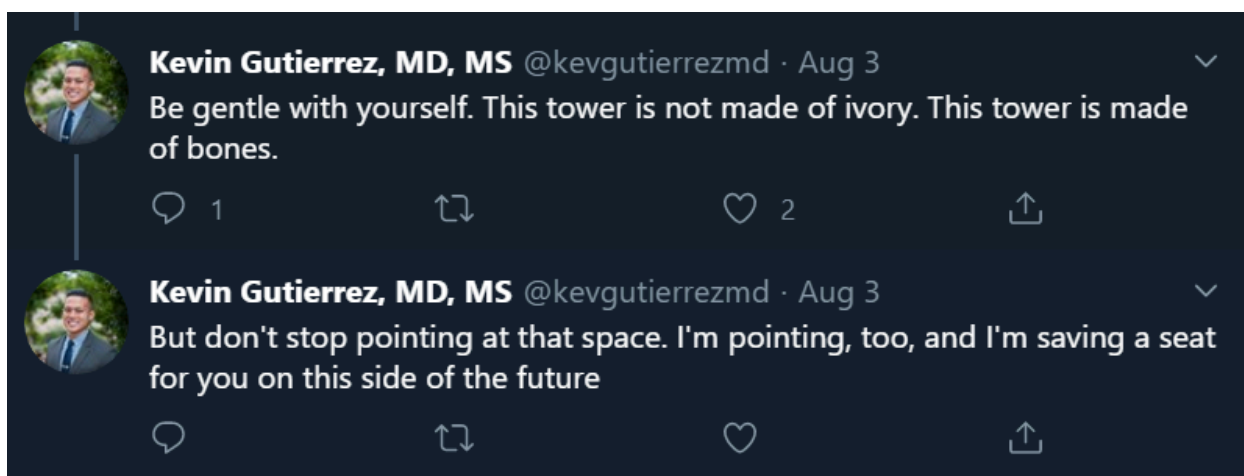
According to the AAMC, the [2018 breakdown](#) of active physicians by race/ethnicity is as follows: 56.2% identified as White, 17.1% identified as Asian, 5.8% identified as Hispanic, and 5.0% identified as Black or African American (13.7% was 'unknown'). Given the current demographics and background representation in medicine, many interviewers will be unfamiliar with the unique struggles of each applicant, and particularly those of URM applicants. They may ask inappropriate and possibly triggering questions and follow-ups. We are not writing this to discourage you (write this on a post it right now and put it in a place where you can see it: Medicine needs me! My future patients need me!). We want to warn you so that hopefully you can be aware, prepared as best you can. Many of the applicants we've talked to have plethora of stories, from

questions about marriage/childcare plans to unnecessary follow-up about family tragedies.

We wish we could have a magic wand to address and resolve this with just one twirly wave; true change will take years and hard work of systemic change. As we all try to do our part to make medicine a more welcoming and truly inclusive environment, let's commit to take care of each other and of ourselves. Get through the interview cycle. Hang in there.

We want to leave you with [this comic](#) from Dr. Shirlene Obuobi, M.D. (she is on IG & Twitter as: @shirlywhirlmd - highly recommend following her if you'd like to get more insider perspectives about medicine!). Whether or not you think this applies to you, it crystallizes an important conversation in medicine and beyond. So for the sake of your interview - and most importantly for your patients and future colleagues - make sure you are able to articulate your thoughts on the matter.

And finally, a link to Twitter thread [here](#) by a psychiatry intern looking back to the challenges of the medical school interview:



Advice on Logistics

REMEMBER: Your interview is happening the ENTIRE time you are logged on. It's not just about your 20,30-60 minutes with your assigned interviewer. It's about your interaction in any small groups, with the secretary welcoming you onto Zoom, with the presenters, the med students who may join the call at some point. You're always on!

Outfit: The best advice we got on what to wear was "your interviewer should not remember your outfit". YOU should be memorable but just stick to the script on the outfit. Yes professionalism is an arbitrary antiquated construct, we agree. But don't overthink this - hair pulled back, a neutral blazer, a nice blouse/button down (*I do recommend wearing pants - J*). You will get to shine your unique ray of light during your conversation, that's not something your clothes need to do! (*Try your interview clothes and wear them for a bit at some point before your interviews - are you comfortable? Is there anything you'll be adjusting or being distracted by? Do many dress rehearsals! - N*)

Eye contact: *You have a few choices here. I've heard mixed reviews. When I interview folks and they pick a spot on my background in gallery view, I think that it looks just*

fine. In a mock interview for residency for me, I was told to look at my webcam - looking at a green dot for 30 min is hard but you can shrink down your interviewer's face and drag it up to the webcam if you want to do both? I've realized that I like how my eye contact looks when I'm looking directly at my camera and when my laptop is propped up on a box. What's distracting is when people look all over the room or look down a lot - I say record yourself doing a few things, pick one focal point to stick to, and see what works for you! -J

Background: Keep it neutral. If you use a zoom background, find something simple and professional. Same as above, this is not where you want to be memorable. *I personally find natural lighting to be the most flattering but do you wanna set up where your internet connection is best. If there's no windows near by, get a little desk light or move a lamp behind your computer/tablet so that you're well lit. - J*

Ask for a tech check: UCSF is doing regular "tech checks" where applicants can pop in and practice logging in/how their internet connection would be on interview day/run through any technical issues. This is an easy thing for admissions offices to do and gives you only less thing to worry about on interview day!

Body language: Hiding self-view helps some people focus less on "performing" but also an interview IS kind of a performance so watching yourself could help - you've gotta practice and decide what works for you. Limit any fidgeting or playing with your hair or other actions that distract from what you're saying. *Watch out for any small actions you may do without noticing. Do you play with your hair? Do you touch your nose? Do you adjust your glasses? Do you bite your nails? Record yourself on a few Zoom calls with friends and during interview dress rehearsals, if you can. Pay attention to any body language that may be distracting. Try to keep these behaviors in check during every moment you are awake, so that not biting your nails becomes your normal MO! - N*

Thank you notes: This is truly up to you. Some schools request that you not email your interviewer after the interview so make sure you check their policy and follow their rules. *I do not think it makes any impact on how your interviewer or the admissions office feels about you. I'm a Southern gal so I grew up on hand written thank you notes (would write them at the end of the day and then drop them off with admissions before I left). - J*

Echoing Juhi. I too left handwritten notes; whenever I couldn't drop them off, I'd ask the Admissions Coordinator/staff about addresses where I could mail my card. Something that may also be helpful is having your interviewer's email. In a few circumstances, I was able to reconnect with my interviewer later in the cycle to renew my interest in the school or revive a connection. Last thought - please be kind and show your gratefulness to Admission Coordinators/staff. They put in a tremendous amount of work to make it all happen, and I've seen way too many applicants dismiss them or treat them less kindly because "obviously they aren't my interviewer". As a doctor, the environment you create around you matters. Keep that in mind, always. -N

Additional Resources with Advice:

The Free Guide to Medical School Admissions is full of wisdom (interview advice starts on page 112) → tiny.cc/MedAppGuide (also check out this [Twitter Thread!](#))

Check out the Uplift Guide as well for email templates and comprehensive advice on what to do after the interview! → <http://uplift.guide/staging/7585/our-guide/>

You're probably familiar with the AAMC's VITA but they've got [some helpful tips](#) online too!

Check out [Ideas for Virtual Medical School Interviews](#) by Students for Ethical Admissions

We talked to some experts on Student Doctor Network who recommended the following two links. SDN can be a stressful place sometimes, but there's lots of valuable knowledge passed down from the years too:

- [Essential SDN Wisdom for Pre-Meds Thread](#)
- [Interview Feedback by School](#)

Sample interview questions:

These three questions were by far the most commonly asked when we interviewed for med school!

- “Tell me about yourself”
 - This is your chance to set the agenda. Again, try to keep your answer to two minutes. Recommend not diving too deep into any one thing, rather sprinkling lots of breadcrumbs for your interviewer to follow up on.
 - *Mine went a lil something like this: I grew up in a small town in Georgia, and I’m a senior at the University of Georgia now studying biochemistry and women’s studies. I’m really interested in women’s health, and I’ve loved working at this local women’s health clinic in my hometown and I interned at Planned Parenthood NYC last summer - it was so fun and I want to keep doing this work. Growing up, Indian dance was a huge part of my life, I’m still dancing now and I’m actually a captain of my dance team. In my free time, I love baking and reading! I’m so excited to be here today, thank you for having me! -J*
 - *From Natalia* - We strongly recommend against having a script - it doesn’t do anyone any good to memorize chunks of text but we do think it’s helpful to know what your breadcrumbs are going to be (this is where the 3-5 items you reflected on earlier can come in handy) That said, here are a few points that you may want to touch upon (or not! depends on you and what you want to highlight) - in no particular order (you can go in chronological order or start from the present, or go by themes!):
 - Your upbringing / your family (I was raised... / I grew up... My upbringing was characterized by...)
 - In college I studied...
 - Now/im my gap time I...
 - The ways in which I explored my interest in medicine are....
 - A theme of my path to medicine so far has been...
 - In my free time / I enjoy...
 - A cause/issue I particularly care about is...
 - A cause I have dedicated myself to is...
 - What sparked my interest for medicine... (don’t give everything away though, save some for the why medicine question! That said, you are applying for medicine, so it may come across as odd that medicine didn’t show up at all in anything about you/your life so far)
 - Some of you asked us about how different people frame their why medicine/story to medicine. Leaving a few links below - take them with a grain of salt, these are not perfect models but rather possible stimuli to get you thinking about how you may frame your own story or your own “why”:
 - [‘Why I Became a Doctor’](#)
 - [Real-life stories - why I chose medicine](#)
 - [5 Reasons to Go to Medical School, and 5 to Not](#)
 - [Why to think carefully before pursuing a career in medicine](#)
 - [AMA blog](#)

- [Are you happy with your decision to go into medicine?](#)
- "Why medicine?"
 - Again, don't "memorize" your response to this, you KNOW the answer to this! Don't try to give them the answer that you think they want - that's never going to come out as well as what you feel in your heart. So be honest! Definitely discuss a meaningful experience (it can be clinical or service or a life experience whatever!) and use that to illustrate your point!
 - *From Natalia* - why medicine is one of the hardest questions, partly because there are so many different reasons as there are people (and the best answer is one that also adds something personal to the table)... and partly because as someone who's signing up to study medicine in the coming future you (reasonably!) do not have a full picture of what medicine is actually about. Have you had a chance to sign up for a mock interview yet? Your mock interviewer may be able to help you with feedback on your answer, especially in light of the rest of your application. Also check out the above links to different people's responses about what brought them to medicine. Take them with a grain of salt - they are there more to get you thinking than to provide you with an actual template. That said, in my experience the best answers tend to touch on at least a few of the following:
 - something personal - whether it is about a specific skill you possess that will make you a good medical student and then doctor and/or a particular experience that sparked your interest and/or "sealed the deal" for you & medicine, or anything else from your particular journey so far
 - a demonstration that you have tested your interest in medicine + that you have tried to learn what medicine is and what a life in medicine is like (it's less about the amount of hours you put in (though those do matter) and more about the level of maturity and thoughtfulness you demonstrate in your answer - e.g. when I was volunteering at ____, I learned ____ -> here is why I know this is what I learned about medicine and what I hope to continue doing as part of my future in medicine)
 - state what medicine is to the applicant and what is unique about it (can be tied to the point above)
 - include some sort of mission statement (doesn't have to be too specific - something about the kind of work you want to do, and/or the kinds of causes you care about and/or populations you want to serve... unless you actually know what specialty you want to go into and that is okay too but absolutely NOT a requirement!)
 - Tackle this question by approaching it from multiple angles - if you only talk about patient care, they could ask why not nursing; if you talk about research, then why not work in a wet lab? But if you talk about something clinical + research/scholarly + teaching/mentoring + a patient experience + a personal connection, then it really builds a case that medicine is right for you!

- Try to pick 3-4 experiences and articulate what about each one of them has led you to medicine
- “Why our school?”
 - Do your research. What drew you in about this school? Be strategic here.
 - For example - location is a big factor! But if you say location when you’re applying to a school in a big city with like 10 med schools... it can look like you don’t really care about THAT school. Be intentional - research the patient population that the school services and the neighborhood that it’s in if you wanna talk location
 - Schools have different strengths, sometimes it’s research or primary care or clinical training or global health opportunities or certain values. Honestly everyone’s websites kind of started to blur together for me but try to hone in on what the school’s got that lines up with your personal goals

Here are some other fun questions I sometimes asked when I interviewed (everyone’s interview style varies so this is really just me - J):

- Tell me about your family (whatever the word family means to you!).
- Is there a story behind your name?
- What’s the most interesting conversation you’ve had recently?
- What’s something I’d never think to ask but you’d want people to know?
- What do you do for fun?
- If you didn’t pick medicine what would you have done?
- What’s something that always makes you smile?
- If you could design a college course on anything what would it be and why?
- Tell me about a time you learned something about leadership/service/scholarship
- You can find additional questions [here](#) - we recommend that you create a document with each question and actually write down your own answers! (do a first round in which you just right your answer in, as if you were speaking... without going back to edit!)

And remember - if the questions you prepared for don’t show up, it’s OKAY! What you’ve really practiced all this time is how to convey meaningful experiences and lessons which you can tweak to work for ANY question you’re asked!

FAQs (growing list - check back often!):

Questions that you’ve asked us in our webinars!

What to do if you lack confidence in your communication skills ? / How to not freak out during interviews 😊

It’s all about practice - practice practice by yourself, with people who know you, with people who don’t. When you record yourself, play it back and keep an eye out for what you’re doing well so you can keep doing that and then piece apart the things you think you can do better. You might not feel 100% confident before interview day but we

believe practice is THE best way to boost your confidence and keep your cool.

How to recover a conversation when you think the interviewer is getting bored?

Ah yes - it's true. It is easier to zone out when you're on zoom. We recommend trying to engage your interviewer, ask them a question about something you're talking about ("that's been my experience at least, how does xyz play out in our school?" to get them actively involved in the conversation.

If you see something on their back wall or their background that might connect with what y'all have talked about, you could also mention it + ask them about the story behind that award/poster/book on their shelf.

Best resources to learn about COVID-19 and current health updates?

Check out some of the following Twitter accounts as well as the readings and links in the "[Reading/Thinking](#)" section in this document!

@Bob_Wachter: Chair of Medicine at UCSF, he compiles threads a few times a week with the most high yield updates + his expert commentary

~~@choo_ek: Politically active EM physician who drops lots of wisdom and anecdotes~~

Jeremy Faust's @Brief_19: Daily digest of COVID updates

<https://curriculum.covidstudentresponse.org/> (a COVID-19 curriculum for medical students compiled by Harvard Medical School students!)

How to best navigate expressing thoughts and opinions on critical topics such as anti-racism, structural racism, and the election that will be ongoing during the interview season.

"Professionalism" is tricky - it can make us feel like we can't talk about political issues in an environment like a med school interview. But there are ways to be strategic AND make your point. Some best practices include:

- Bringing it back to patient care - some people might think the protests right now are a real nuisance, but what if you've learned a lot by listening to the hurt and anger of Black folks in your community? You've realized that medicine might be another place they feel unsafe and you want your Black patients to have the best health, to get the best healthcare when they need it.
- Mention a good article/book you've read recently - Check our "[Reading/Thinking](#)" section below. We'd recommend reading the little blurb/question list we added next to each text. Try to answer the question first. Then read the article and retry rehearsing your answer to that question by integrating some of the knowledge/perspectives from the article. It can be great if you can quote what you've read during your interview, also it shows you are keeping up to date and educating yourself about issues that will inevitably affect your patients. Check out this [Tweet](#) featuring some reading material assigned to M1s at the University of Michigan to address ways in which medical education perpetuates disparities.
- Reflect on experiences you've had - of course, you don't need to relive old trauma for your interviewer's benefit but if there's an experience you've had or something that you've seen, you can reflect on that moment + what you learned + how it will make you a more thoughtful and kind medical student/doctor (esp for patients of xyz background)

- Look up if the school released statements about any current events

There's no real "right" way to do this. You don't owe it to your interviewer to talk about race or racism (esp if you come from an URM background). But if you feel passionate about an issue and it's shaped the way you see medicine then you should own it. Sign up for a 1:1 with us and we'll help you workshop your approach to these questions.

What are objectively wrong things people do in interviews?

Speaking from my interview experience, it usually bugs me when people don't actually answer the question. It's fine to go on a fun tangent but at least bring it back to what I asked - otherwise it feels like you weren't listening to me yknow? -J

Another thing that often comes off the wrong way is when someone has only negative things to say about their upbringing / all their schools / all their mentors. It is more than important, where appropriate, to demonstrate the shortcomings / inadequacies of your education / upbringing and mention why you think you hope that your patients will receive a more just, fairer, and appropriate treatment/education/upbringing. That said, in the mind of the interviewer, it is easy to equate all the negative things you mention with you. So when you do elaborate on the challenges / shortcomings of whatever it may be, try to show the interviewer that you have given it some reflection and are able to list takeaways and lessons learned. Or maybe even make out of this a mission statement of what you hope to do in the future? - N

Reading/Thinking List (it's growing daily so check back often!)

We've compiled some resources that we've enjoyed and might make for good reading, good food for thought, and good conversation with your interviewers :)

Where possible, we've added the author's Twitter handles so you can read more of their writings and their thoughts if you'd like. Enjoy!

[Have any recommendations for this Reading/Thinking List? Leave your links and recs [here](#)! Do share 1-2 sentences about why you think this text is important, and we will add them below!]

Short reads (and some questions/reflections that these texts may inspire):

- [Narrative Humility](#) by Sayantani DasGupta (Twitter: @Sayantani16) [2 page article]: there is a lot of talk in medicine about cultural competence. How can we do justice to the art of listening and taking care of another human, and the story they bring with them? (17 min TED Talk [here](#), highly recommended as well.)
- [Moral Determinants of Health](#) by Donald M. Berwick (Twitter: @donberwick) [2 page article]: "No scientific doubt exists that, mostly, circumstances outside health care nurture or impair health". We've heard a lot about 'social determinants of health'. So what should we be thinking about, as doctors? What is part of our

responsibilities as medical students and physicians? If you were to envision a perfect system for medicine, what would that look like?

- [Curiosity and What Equality Really Means](#) by Atul Gawande (Twitter: @Atul_Gawande) [2 page article]: medical school graduation speech transcript. How does equality play into the doctor's day-to-day?
- [The nature of suffering and the goals of medicine](#) by Eric Cassel [3 page article]: What is at the core of medicine? What role do you envision yourself playing within medicine?
- [The Nod](#) by Kimberly Manning (Twitter: @gradydoctor) [1.5 page article]: beautiful personal essay on the precious ways of connecting with patients: "We're in a different era now, but there are still many situations where it's easy to feel either invisible or like that speck of pepper". Can you think of a time in which you were able to connect with a patient because you spoke their same "language"? Why is diversity a crucial element of how we build our teams and serve our patients? What are ways in which you will be telling your patients "I see you and you aren't invisible"?
- [Why the United States failed to contain COVID-19](#) by Armin Nowroozpoor (Twitter: @nowroozpoor), Esther Choo (Twitter: @choo_ek), Jeremy Faust (Twitter: @jeremyfaust) [1.5 page article]: COVID-19 is bound to come up for many years to come. In 2020, many schools have added a "COVID essay". This is one expert opinion. Before you read this one, try to come up with your own answer. What is the role of the public health system? What is the role of the government? What do you think of the American healthcare system? (doi in case the link doesn't work: 10.1002/emp2.12155)
- [American Tragedy, And Comedy, Streaming on YouTube](#) by Alexandra Schwartz (Twitter: @Alex_Lily) [1.5 page article]: On art and reflecting in the era of COVID-19. Who are the heroes of our society? What professions are essential? How do we process what is going on in the world?
- [Beyond a Moment — Reckoning with Our History and Embracing Antiracism in Medicine](#) by Dereck Paul (Twitter: @dereckwpaul) et al [1 page article]: thoughts on the "complex social and structural determinants of health that intersect with politics and law". What is the role of medicine in antiracist efforts?
- [Why doesn't medical school prioritize social justice?](#) by LaShyra Nolen (Twitter: @LashNolen) [1.5 page article]: what does medical school admissions prioritize? What does it take to be a doctor? What do you envision for the future of medicine? (What do you think are 5 attributes a doctor should have?)
- [Why Black doctors like me are leaving faculty positions in academic medical centers](#) by Uché Blackstock (Twitter: @uche_blackstock) [2 page read]:
- [Personal Best](#) by Atul Gawande [9 page article]: medicine is a profession that involves a lot of "life-long learning". What does that entail? (And what does that mean to you?)
- [A Doctor's Touch](#) by Abraham Verghese [18 minute TED Talk]: the art of medicine includes the art of the physical exam. What do you envision for your relationships with your patients?
- <https://curriculum.covidstudentresponse.org/> (a COVID-19 curriculum for medical students, compiled by medical students - check out their lay public curriculum and pediatric curriculum as well!)
- [The Performance of "Antiracism" Curricula](#) by Kevin Gutierrez

(Twitter:@kevgutierrezmd) [2 page article]: "My eyes remain on what hides in the shadow of "antiracism" curricula and statements". What does anti-racism entail? What do we need to do to (un)learn and examine our institutions' practices, and specifically within medicine?

- [Growing Pains](#) by Maïté Van Hentenryck [2 page read]: "I didn't have the courage to tell one of the surgical fellows the reason I wasn't considering his field was not for lack of interest, but because I wouldn't let myself consider a career so dependent on my body." #DocsWithDisabilities
- [ON WITNESS AND RESPAIR: A PERSONAL TRAGEDY FOLLOWED BY PANDEMIC](#) [3-4 page read]: Jesmyn Ward is an author shares the aftermath of losing her 33 year-old husband to ARDS back in January, enduring the pandemic, grappling with racism - and she writes about this pain in a tender, compelling way. Sometimes it's hard to feel losses from abstract numbers but reading an individual story can be a powerful reminder of what our (future) patients might be facing every day so this feels like important perspective.
- [Anti-racism must be a priority for medical institutions](#) by Alex Coston (Twitter: @alex_coston) [1 page read]. Also a follow up [longer read]: ["Are you a doctor?" The unchecked racism faced by physicians of color](#) written by @vidyavis as a medical student)
- [When the World Isn't Designed for Our Bodies](#) by Katy Waldman [1.5ish page article]: about a new book arguing that disability is a social phenomenon, not a medical one. What can medicine do to address the challenges associated with disability? What domains need to be targeted?
- [Taking Back Our Voices — #HumanityIsOurLane](#) by Chase T.M. Anderson (Twitter: @ChaseTMAnderson):
- [The Silence & Sorrow of Miscarriage](#) by Altaf Saadi (Twitter: @AltafSaadiMD): [2 page read] A doctor visiting a detention center where mothers are separated from their children reflects on her miscarriage, the personal toll as well as the broader context of immigrant detention.
- ['I Am Tired': What Black Doctors Need You To Know Right Now](#) by Jessi Gold (Twitter: @drjessigold): a psychiatrist amplifies the voices of Black doctors telling us about the toll racial injustices and the current climate
- [Abolition medicine](#) by Sayantani DasGupta (Twitter: @Sayantani16) and Yoshiko Iwai and Zahra H Khan [~2 page article]: "The essential work of abolition medicine is to interrogate the upstream structures that enable downstream violence, like police brutality, in addition to reimagining the work of medicine altogether as an anti-racist practice."
- [The Nocturnists - Black Voices in Healthcare](#) [Podcast series]: "The American healthcare system is making doctors and other healthcare workers sick — physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Even before COVID-19, we faced a crisis of burnout, depression, and suicidality. Now the situation is worse. We aspire to transform the culture of medicine by shattering the myth of the physician hero, and revealing the truth: that doctors are human, just like everyone else, and that our humanity is our strength, not our weakness."
- [The Ideal Intern](#) by Meredith Bock [2 page article]: Intern year is your first year of training after you get an MD, and this article weaves through the contradictions and expectations of what it means to be a "good intern". If you're applying right now, you've got PLENTY of time before you get to this stage in your training but it's a lovely reflection on what really matters when it feels like your checklist for the day is just too long.
- [To first-generation college pre-medical students: Your future patients need you](#) by Jenny Ruiz (Twitter: @JennyRuizMD)
- <https://www.mededportal.org/anti-racism> - Collection of papers on the theme of

anti-racism in medicine

- [The case for desegregation](#) by Rhea W Boyd
- [The Path Forward — An Antiracist Approach to Academic Medicine](#) by Hisham Yousif, Nworah Ayogu (Twitter: @nworahayogu), and Taison Bell (Twitter: @TaisonBell)
- [Is death the great equalizer?](#) By the Boston Globe: Try to answer the question first in your own words (this could be such a fun and interesting MMI question! Unlikely but still worth the practice) "Death exposes in high relief the layers of inequities, in race and income, care and opportunity, that shape life down to its final hours. It is a truth the pandemic has only underscored — one hard to see, because it is so much easier to look away."
- [Structural Vulnerability: Operationalizing the Concept to Address Health Disparities in Clinical Care](#) by Philippe Bourgois, Seth M. Holmes, Kim Sue and James Quesada: we've talked a lot about social determinants of health and their impact on the health of our patients. How does knowledge of this important concept translate into daily practice?
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Books

(Occasionally, interviewers may ask what was the most recent book you read / what is your favorite book/ what book you would recommend they read this weekend. Before looking at the list below...What is your answer?)

- **The Beauty in Breaking** by Michele Harper: *A Black female emergency medicine doctor shares stories of her patients and her life, and each chapter ends with a lesson she's learned. She discusses the harsh realities of incarceration, bodily autonomy, gun violence, sexual assault, child abuse and manages to find glimmers of light, love, and hope each step of the way*
- **In Shock: My Journey from Death to Recovery and the Redemptive Power of Hope** by Rana Awdish: *A young critical care fellow becomes a critically ill patient in her own hospital. In writing about her journey, recovery, and life, she shares important reflections about doctoring, the culture(s) of medicine, the doctor-patient relationship and so much more.*
- **Sometimes Amazing Things Happen: Heartbreak and Hope on the Bellevue Hospital Psychiatric Prison Ward** by Elizabeth B. Ford: *Deeply moving memoir from the perspective of the Chief of Psychiatry for the Correctional Health Services in New York City, telling the stories of patients too often abandoned by society and by medicine alongside her own story as a young professional experiencing challenges, heartbreaks and joys as she cares for them (and for her mental health and wellbeing).*
- **Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present** by Harriet Washington: *When talking about the history of "health disparities", people often make a vague reference to Tuskegee and Henrietta Lacks and leave it at that - but phew after reading Medical Apartheid, it's so clear that the exploitation of Black bodies is foundational to almost every field of medicine. Washington tells some gruesome, necessary stories - this ought to be required reading for anyone who isn't sure that racism is alive and real in medicine today.*

- **A Beginner's Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living Life and Facing Death** by Dr. BJ Miller and Shoshana Berger:
- **Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World** by Vivek Murthy:
- **Dreamland: The True Tale of American's Opiate Epidemic** by Sam Quinones: *A sweeping saga of the epidemic that weaves stories of small town America with its declining economic prospects and the rise of corporations like big pharma and Walmart, clever drug cartels and the medical industry that allowed tragedy to unfold. The book is fast-paced, makes all kinds of unexpected connections, is thoroughly researched, and tells some really powerful narratives of families who have been affected.*
- **COVID-19: The Pandemic that Never Should Have Happened and How to Stop the Next One** by Deborah MacKenzie: *"MacKenzie's fascinating book gives us the scope and scale to be able to put this pandemic in perspective and, it begs the question, will we learn from this in time to prevent to next one?" -Molly Caldwell Crosby, Bestselling author of The American Plague*

More:

Direct Red, Gabriel Weston

With the End in Mind, @drkathrynmannix

Breaking & Mending, @JoannaCannon

Seven Signs of Life, @WhistlingDixie4

The Language of Kindness, by nurse @tinysunbird

Where can I read more about ethics?

- The [AMA's Journal of Ethics](#) has some great case studies. If you want to practice for an MMI, give yourself 2-3 minutes to read over the prompt and think about your response. Then record yourself for 4-5 minutes, then read the commentary on the case and compare what you said to the experts' take!
- The movie "[The Farewell](#)" raises an important question about health decision making in the context of culture and personal beliefs. It's a great watch for a movie night with friends (it's starring Aquafina!). The story is based on a true story featured in the podcast [This American Life](#) (27 minutes listen).
- The APHA has [great infographics about public health](#) - scroll through these for some extra foundation as you discuss the role of public health in medicine and our patients' health!

Med School Applicant Sign up Links (Webinars, Free Mock Interviews)!

So here's how we'd love to help you:

- **WEBINARS:** We're putting on regular "webinar" events where we'll bring in med students just to talk about general interview advice, you're welcome to register for as many sessions as you'd like! Here's the current calendar:
 - **UPCOMING SESSIONS (check back in early fall for the 2021-22 cycle!)**

- PAST SESSIONS

- Slides for webinar #1 [here](#) -- Interview Overview, Setting yourself up for success
- Slides for webinar #2 [here](#) -- A dive into challenging questions, Why Medicine, COVID-19, discussing politics, etc
- Slides for webinar #3 [here](#) -- The approach to MMI with practice cases
- Notes for webinar #4 [here](#) -- A conversation with Dean Wofsy (former Dean of Admissions at UCSF - **this was NOT an official UCSF event**)
- Slides for webinar #5 [here](#) -- Working through some hard questions submitted by you!
- Slides for webinar #6 [here](#) -- Learning about medical schools in preparation for your interview
- Slides for webinar #7 [here](#) -- Some more practice and hard questions + discussing strategies for inappropriate “illegal” questions
- Slides for webinar #8 [here](#) -- MMI practice!
- Slides for webinar #9 [here](#) -- more MMI practice + group interview practice!
- Slides for webinar #10 [here](#) -- your “hard” questions
- Slides for webinar #11 [here](#) -- more recap

- **MOCK-INTERVIEWS:** We’re offering 30 minute 1:1 mock interview sessions over zoom with a current medical student. We’ll ask you to send us in advance a copy of your Personal Statement / AMCAS 15 Activities (or resume and CV) so we can make sure you’re presenting yourself in the best light (and possibly match you with a medical student with a similar background). We’ll spend some time asking you practice questions and then we’ll give you our thoughts on how to polish and tighten.

- **Register for a mock-interview session [here!](#)** We ask that you only sign up for one of these right now but as we get a better sense of the demand, we might open this up for more sessions per person.
 - *1/11 Update: We are very behind on matching applicants up to interviewers and emailing y’all matches.... Please hang tight! We haven’t forgotten about you! If you fill out the form more than once, please note that for us. We’re med students trying to keep up with life too so we appreciate your patience <3*
- **The only requirement for these sessions is that you are applying to medical school in the 2020-2021 cycle.** These are open to nontraditional students, also happy to talk to IMGs (we definitely can’t speak to the residency interview experience, but if you think this would be helpful for you then go ahead and sign up!). It’s okay if you do NOT have any interviews lined up just yet!
- Consider doing a “dress rehearsal” with your outfit and your background if you want feedback on it or just want to try it out. If not a dry run in your sweats is totally fine too!
- All we ask in return is for you to complete [a short survey](#) after your session.

- These are FREE and accessible resources because we remember what it's like applying to medical school, and we want to support folks through the process.
 - *Mock interviewers have each selected an important cause that they're collecting donations for so if you feel so inclined, you could consider sending like \$5-10 their way but this is not an expectation!!*
- **NEWSLETTER:** We're sending resources, readings, and encouragement! We'll add you to the list if you sign up for a mock interview but if you haven't, you can add yourself to our list [here](#)!
- **PEER INTERVIEW PRACTICE:** Some of you have expressed interest in getting more practice in - we can't accommodate extra requests for mock interviewers but you can practice with each other! Fill [this form](#) out and we'll share the list of responses with you so you can find some folks to practice with (feel free to use the sample questions in this document or in webinar slides!)

MISC:

- A few thoughts about taking big tests - save for later!
<https://www.psychiatrypodcast.com/psychiatry-psychotherapy-podcast/episode-90-how-to-rock-the-usmle-step-1>

Mock Interviewer Bios:

Juhi Varshney (Twitter: @juhiette) is a fourth year medical student applying into emergency medicine. Her professional interests include admissions, social justice, and creative writing. She loves learning a new tiktok dance, trying a new vegan recipe, and reading a good book. Her favorite interview advice is: "Don't doubt that you belong here. If you were offered an interview, this school IS genuinely interested in you, and now is your chance to show them just how special you are!".

I've gotten multiple emails from folks interviewing at UCSF who want to do a quick phone call - I am SO excited for you (!!) and I wish I had time to talk to each one of y'all individually! But I recommend asking the Office of Admissions if they can put you in touch with a current student, you can also look up Synapse (our school newspaper) or some faculty on Twitter (Robert Wachter, Rupa Marya, Peter Chin Hong are a few that come to mind) to learn about the culture and community here. Sending you all the best interview vibes!! <3

Natalia Romano Spica (Twitter: @NRomanoSpica) is a first year medical student with a background in Classics, Medical Humanities and Narrative Medicine. She is trying to keep an open mind specialty-wise, but knows that medical education, humanities, social justice and community building will always be a part of her future in medicine. She loves the thrill of meal-prepping and baking, even when items from the ingredient list are missing. In her free time, she enjoys creating syllabi, and then methodically going through the readings. Her favorite interview advice is: "Remember you are currently interviewing for the position of "medical student". While that entails becoming a doctor, make sure you know the job description(s). Also, try your best to enjoy this crazy process along the way. Take notes before it all becomes a blur (because it will! There IS an end to it! Even if it doesn't sound possible!)".

Aaron Gilani is a first-generation medical student who aims to combine his entrepreneurial spirit with his love for medicine. Prior to medical school, he led consumer insights and product innovation at Procter & Gamble on the Old Spice and Aussie brands. He also co-founded HairCode (HairCode.com), an online "hair personality typing" program to determine the best products for consumers. As Program Lead for the National Institute of Aerospace's OPSPARC Program, he has mentorship program implementation experience.

Abby Thomas is a first year medical student. She graduated from The University of Georgia class of 2018 with Psychology and Biology degrees with a neuroscience emphasis (Go Dawgs!). Abby applied 3 times before finally being accepted, and is currently in the preclinical portion of what could potentially be a 3 year medical school program (she is still deciding on this new program...big decisions are hard). She lives with her black cat, Dexter, and enjoys their nightly game of fetch (yes, the cat plays fetch). Abby whole heartedly believes potatoes are a food group, and never passes up the opportunity to consume french fries. In her spare time, she enjoys being outdoors, visiting her family and boyfriend, and doing yoga/exercising. Although she has not decided on a specialty just yet, she is currently interested in Pediatric Emergency

Medicine, Neurosurgery, Orthopedic Surgery, and Trauma Surgery. Abby's best piece of interview advice is "Remain calm and stay your bubbly self. The interviewers genuinely want to see you succeed, and really aim to get a sense of your personality. If you show up, remain calm, and be personable you're all set!"

Alejandro Perez is a sports enthusiast, tabletop game lover, and surprisingly fast eater. He grew up and went to undergrad in the northeast, before heading to San Francisco for med school. He applied to med school twice (!) and did lots of interviews. His best advice: relax and be the pleasant and intelligent person you can be. Once you have an interview scheduled you've already done the hardest part.

Alex Houck (Twitter: @alexhouck) is an M2 who took a non-trad path to med school and worked as an archaeologist and teacher before getting a master's in public health. She might have more gray hairs than her classmates, but Alex cherishes her experiences that led her to medicine and still uses them when she meets new patients and their families. Alex is particularly passionate about family medicine in a rural setting and hopes to one day be a small town doctor in a Federally Qualified Health Center. In her free time, Alex enjoys long distance cycling, gardening, and spending time with her adorable partner and corgi.

Alice Ann Lever is a 1st year medical student. She attended undergraduate at Georgia Tech and went straight to medical school after graduating. Alice Ann is currently considering doing an internal medicine residency. In her free time, she likes to do ballet and cheer on the Atlanta Falcons.

Alli Jostes (Twitter: @AlliJostes) is an MS4 and aspiring pediatrician. She is a first-generation medical student, and is passionate about mentoring and medical education! In her free time, you can find Alli hiking, at a live music event (pre-COVID), obsessing over her houseplants or binge watching reality competition shows on Netflix.

Alyssa Ryan is a second year med student in Philadelphia, PA. She played NCAA division II soccer in college, and played semiprofessionally for a year. She spent the summer between first and second year doing a bit of research and lounging at the beach, but her favorite part of summer was getting her 8 week old puppy, Java. Alyssa's favorite activities outside of medicine are running, soccer, baking, and reading. If she had to choose a specialty right this second, it would be OB/GYN!

Anna-Sophia Boguraev is an M1 in the MD/PhD program, and is super duper interested in supporting critical care and disaster responses in low-resource environments — both on AND off of the planet! Yay global health and space medicine. Anna-Sophia is also queer, so if you want to chat about applying while LGBTQ+, hmu! Anna studied English and biochem in college, and loves reading, running, hiking, writing, and drawing in my spare time. Anna-Sophia's favourite piece of interview advice is don't listen to the people who tell you to "just calm down" — it's okay to be stressed, just do your best to embrace it and channel it into enthusiasm or excitement! Remember who/why/what you're doing this for :)

Ava Fan: Hi! I'm a current M1. I'm originally from Maryland and graduated from Cornell University in 2016. I took a couple of years off to work before going to medical school. In my free time I enjoy reading, jogging, and creative hobbies (pottery, drawing).

Ben Zuchelkowski (Twitter: @Zuchelkowski_B / email: bez13@pitt.edu) is a fourth year medical student applying into internal medicine. His professional interests include translational and clinical research, admissions, and teaching. He loves learning a new recipe and cooking it for friends, reading a book in a coffee shop, and jumpstarting his career as a TV critic. His favorite interview advice is: "Don't tell them what you think they want to hear; speak from the heart and remember they asked to interview YOU".

Brenna Espelien is a 4th year medical student. She majored in Biochemistry and minored in Spanish at the University of San Diego. Between undergraduate and medical school, she worked in a research lab for 4 years. She is applying to OBGYN residency and hopes to pursue a fellowship in gyn-onc. Her hobbies include houseplant collecting, hiking, trivia league, and traveling to national parks.

Best piece of interview advice: talk about what makes you unique - particularly your non-academic stuff. Everyone starts to sound the same after a while so differentiate yourself by talking about your unique hobby or extracurricular activity.

Bryant Boldt II is a first-year medical student who is pursuing a career in anesthesiology. He graduated from the University of Georgia Spring 2020 earning a bachelor's in biology. While at UGA, Mr. Boldt served on the E-board of LSAMP and volunteered as a Mind Blowers Tutor at the Boys and Girls club. His hobbies include athletics such as flag football, golf, and basketball as well as artistic endeavors such as music or painting. Mr. Boldt's interview advice is: "Remember you made it to this point for a reason. Be confident, pronounced, poised and prepared".

Camilo Pardo (Twitter: @camilojpardo) is a 3rd year medical student who enjoys a myriad of activities including playing guitar, drinking a good cup of coffee, addressing diversity in medicine, and focusing on improving Latinx health outcomes. He also enjoys any and all 90's music. His favorite piece of interview advice is to focus on body language during an interview, which can convey a lot more information about your confidence and focus than you would expect.

Candace Hayes is from the suburbs of Kansas City, Kansas and went to undergraduate in Memphis, TN. She is very passionate about volunteering and loves music, art and traveling. Candace recommends students to take the evening before your interview to do a prep/plan session (research interviewers, look on school's websites for keywords, etc.)

Carter Mixson is an MS1. He is undecided on specialty, but developed an interest in Critical Care while working in a CCU before medical school. In his spare time, he loves to read, listen to podcasts, and spend time with his puppy. The best interview advice that he can give is to remind yourself that the school chose to interview you for a reason so don't feel intimidated or like you don't belong.

Cayman Bickerstaff: I grew up as a Navy Brat so I say I'm from Seattle (go Hawks and Sounders!) but I lived in Maine most recently before Georgia. I graduated from the University of Georgia in 2019 with a BS in cellular biology (Go Dawgs!). I played Ultimate Frisbee in high school and college, I love playing my Guitar, and besides my wife, my Husky is the love of my life. I want to go into OB/GYN and women's reproductive health and sexual health are huge passions of mine.

Chidinma Nwakalor is a fourth year, their advice is "Be confident."

Christian Hidalgo (Twitter @ChristianRHid) is a third year MD/MA in Bioethics and Medical Humanities student interested in applying to pediatrics. He worked and volunteered in adaptive recreation before medical school and enjoys working with populations who aren't native English speakers. While it's important to advocate and use questions to tell some important details about yourself, some interviewers ask questions to initiate a conversation to get to know you because you might be working together someday. I really do want to know which Pixar movie's your favorite or what you do in your free time, and you don't have to have a specific reason for your answer.

Connor Hoge, fourth year med student, is an outgoing guy. Loves hanging out with friends, exploring the outdoors and grabbing a cold beer. Favorite piece of interview advice (besides yourself) is to try to control the interview. When they ask you questions, try to direct their questioning towards strengths of your application/personality. It's not easy to do but once you get the hang out it, most of your interviews will just feel like conversations!

David Kneiber is a fourth year student applying to Anesthesiology. He's originally from California and went to undergrad at UC San Diego. He likes biking, skateboarding, and talking about cars. His favorite advice is that interviews are bidirectional — you're there not only to leave a good impression, but to also determine if the school is where you want to go.

Diana Smith (Twitter: @Diana_MY_Smith) is a second year MD/PhD student. She's been doing lots of gardening and bread making over the last few months, but she's also interested in using population science to study mental illness. She moved across the country for med school so a lot of her interviews were spent trying to convince people that yes, she was actually trying to go far away from home. The main piece of advice she remembers was from that one student who told her to "wave your d**k around", as in, be more confident... Not sure whether she succeeded on that front, but hopefully she can still help you practice!

Diana Toro: I'm Romanian American, I played intramural volleyball in college, I worked at the CDC during my summer breaks starting from when I was 17 years old, I did research in the Biomolecular and Chemical Engineering department at Georgia Tech, I was part of the band and played my flute at retirement homes (pre-COVID), and my best interview advice is to prepare beforehand, get there early, relax, be yourself, and be confident in yourself.

Elissa Gadelha is in her 4th year of medical school and is a first-gen medical student. Born and raised in Florida and completing med school in NYC. She loves the outdoors, playing soccer and ultimate frisbee, and her dog! As a young kid, she was drawn to medicine and will be applying for residency in emergency medicine this year! Interviewing can be stressful, but it's important to be yourself, be confident, and research the program you're interviewing at.

Emra Bosnjak is a third year medical student from St. Louis. She is a first generation college student and majored in biochemistry at SLU. She loves her puppy who is an 8 year old German Shepherd and loves to travel. A tip for interviews is to know your resume well and to be relaxed—make it a conversation.

Emily Custer is a first generation college student who graduated from Arcadia University in 2019 and went straight into medical school. She played soccer growing up, in college, and even got to play professionally in New Zealand (sounds more impressive than it is). In her free time she likes to binge watch tv shows, crochet amigurumi, and play the mountain dulcimer.

Farhan Lakhani has a passion for wholesome human health and is always willing to acquire the knowledge and skills to stretch his capabilities and exceed assigned expectations. Farhan is an intelligent, result-oriented, resourceful fellow with a proven expertise in conducting scientific research, managing database programs, extracting and evaluating sophisticated data, and translating results into understandable terms to inform project objectives and facilitate improved human health. Farhan has excellent interpersonal skills in a variety of working environments, including clinical settings and research organizations. Interviews are a combination of preparation and authenticity. Prepare your answers for the most common questions and be able to explain anything on your CV, but be aware that you can be asked follow up questions you can't prepare for. For those questions, let your genuine interests and feelings about what they're asking about show through.

Francis Harrison is a fourth year generalist at heart, considering EM vs PCP vs Hospitalist. PREPARE for the interview AND the specific school. Sounds obvious, but my best interviews were always the ones I truly prepared for prior to interview day.

Gabby Brauner (Twitter: @Gabby_Brauner27) is a 3rd year (out of 5) MD/MPH student. She's from Long Island and went to undergrad in Boston and is back to Long Island for med school. She loves cycling, running, lifting, and yoga (she's a little peloton obsessed). She loves mentoring incoming/aspiring students. Interview advice: don't let the other students psych you out. We're all nervous!

Gha Young is an M1 in an MD program with a background in chemistry and physics. Having lived on both the west coast and the east coast, she'll try to give you an unbiased opinion on which coast is better. In all seriousness, she's happy to chat about anything -- navigating this mess of a process, deciding between MD and MD/PhD, helping pinpoint your strengths (which is always easier to see as an outsider than thinking of them yourself), etc. I wouldn't have been able to make it out alive without

my upperclassmen friends and mentors giving me pointers and mock-interviews, so I want to pay it forward!

Geena Zhou is a 4th year medical student in San Francisco applying into pediatrics. She is from San Diego, California and went straight through to medical school. She enjoyed teaching, volunteering in clinics, and doing clinical research in undergrad. Her interview advice would be to take the interview slow, breathe, and make sure you actually answer your interviewer's question!

Guillermo Polanco Serra is a current third year. First generation Dominican immigrant, passionate about research and public health. Former tour guide during interviews and interviewer. His biggest piece of advice is that ANYTHING you have done can be spin to fit your story and showcase your talents. Keep hustling.

Ha D.H. Le is a MS2 currently based in Salt Lake City. Like most SLC locals, she loves the great outdoors, be it hiking and running; unlike most SLC locals, she still hasn't figured out how to ski properly. She is passionate about social justice, medical humanities, mentorship, and education, but more often finds herself procrastinating from her medical school studies by brainstorming nerdy pick-up lines and puns. Her favorite advice to interviewees is to be honest and true to themselves and their experiences! Twitter: @hadh_le

Hailey Winstead (Twitter: @Haileswinwin) is a first year from Southport, North Carolina - a small town on the coast. She went to Columbia University, where she majored in psychology and spent too much time at Broadway shows. She just started medical school a few weeks ago, so the interview cycle is fresh in her mind. "During interviews it's important to take a deep breath and be yourself! Don't try to say what you think they are "looking" for and always remember why you started this journey."

Haley Varnum is a first year MD/PhD student interested in chemical biology and biophysics, refugee health, global infectious disease response, harm reduction, drug development, LBGT+ equity and women/adolescent sexual health. She ran cross country/track in college and is still quite involved in running, hiking, climbing, backpacking and bouldering pursuits, as well as painting and reading! Haley's favorite piece of interview advice is: "Experiment! It's okay to try out different responses to see how they feel, especially in mock interviews. Sometimes an answer will feel right for certain interviews and not with another, especially as it comes to more sensitive parts of your story."

Hannah Reiss is a third year medical student in Atlanta, GA, a brave three miles from her childhood home. She attended the University of Georgia for undergrad and took two gap years where she lived in Mumbai, India and worked with a global health nonprofit. She now purports to be interested in psychiatry, but this is probably a coping mechanism for her issues being vulnerable and sincere. A proud quarantine accomplishment was creating a TikTok account and making cloud bread.

Hannah Yemane is a Bay Area native, took 3 gap years before applying to med school & took a gap year during med school to get an MPH, she is UIM & interested in diversity, equity and inclusion work - interview advice: practice, practice, practice! record yourself, talk to yourself in the mirror, practice being vulnerable and honest, it goes a long way!

Hayden Faith is an M1 student who attended Auburn University for undergrad and took a gap year as a medical scribe before matriculating to medical school. He is interested in pursuing a career in Orthopedic Surgery. He is a lover of animals and all things sports. He is hardworking, but knows how to have a good time.

Hirel Patel is a 4th year medical student at MCG interested in Psychiatry. His interest in psychiatry really focuses on providing mental health access to underserved communities. In his free time he is a Le Croix connoisseur and documentary buff!

Ifrah Waris is probably running late for something as you read this, because she is mostly a hot mess (and a little dramatic). She attended Georgia Tech for undergrad, scribed at Atlanta Institute for ENT during her gap year, and is now an M1 - so she's also definitely got a thing for love/hate relationships. She enjoys reading, writing, watching shows with strong female leads, and eating unhealthy food at strange times of the day. Interview advice would be: Personalize your answers to interview questions!!!! They know that everyone applying to medical school is insanely qualified already - but how does your experience specifically speak for YOU? Think on that, friends.

Jackie Pimienta is a first year medical student. She is a NJ native and first generation American whose parents are from Colombia. She was a non-traditional applicant who started med school at 25. She worked full time in research after graduating from Boston University while studying for and taking the MCAT and completing an SMP (Master's of Biomedical Sciences with a concentration in stem cell biology) at Rutgers prior to started med school. She loves helping out pre meds who are URM!

Jen Hao is an MS4. She originally hails from the beautiful state of Vermont, and now calls San Francisco home. During quarantine times, she can frequently be found creating and consuming baked goods, trying to do home workouts in her tiny apartment, or watching reality TV with her roommates.

Jeremy Klein is a third-year medical student at Temple LKSOM: I'm from Chicago and went to undergrad at Occidental college, a small liberal arts school near Los Angeles. I majored in Biochemistry and played college golf. I love to play golf, tennis, and basketball (which is still possible in med school)! Their interview advice is to not let anyone intimidate you! Interviews are about showing faculty who you really are as a person, not just stats and numbers. Remain calm and confident like you are having a convo with a friend you haven't seen in a while.

Jessica Valdez: I'm a first-generation daughter of Mexican immigrants, and grew up in a small suburb of Los Angeles, CA. I graduated from the University of San Diego where I studied biology and chemistry, and took 4 years off before medical school to do work in healthcare and education; during that time I also spent time teaching yoga/mindfulness

classes to people living in transitional housing. I will be applying into the field of OB/GYN and am passionate about reproductive justice, violence prevention, and working with underserved communities.

Jordan Holler is a 4th year medical student currently taking a year off to pursue his MPH at Harvard. He did undergrad at the University of Illinois, and loves to spend his time hiking, traveling, spending time with his two cats, and making his own hot sauces. He's interested in becoming a surgeon, and is excited to help you along in your med school journey!

Karan Pandher is a fourth year student at the Chicago Medical School. He is a warm individual with an outgoing and amicable personality. He loves to play basketball any chance he gets. His favorite interview advice is to be yourself!

Kewa Jiang is an MS4 in NYC applying to emergency medicine this year! She likes digital and traditional art. Her favorite show on Netflix is "Zumbo's Just Desserts". And she loves baking desserts for her stressed out med school friends! She also loves board games and video games. She personally cares a lot about patients from underserved communities and immigrants who use the ED as a last resort. She wants everyone to know that it's important to know what your goals are and stick to them! Demonstrate passion during interviews!

Marc Hem Lee hails from New York City. A 3rd year, prior to medical school he navigated the NYC public school system as both a student and an educator. He enjoys telling the joke that by the time he graduates medical school, he will be almost old enough to retire. He tells stories for a living and sees the art of medicine as crafting the story of his patients. The best piece of advice he has ever been given about interviews is to read your personal statement the night before.

Marissa Savoie is a fourth year medical student who will be applying into Internal Medicine this fall. So she is in the same boat as you with preparing for zoom interviews. She's interested in the intersection of women's health and chronic disease and clinical research. Interview advice: if your voice cracks just keep going -happens to me all the time!

Mary Turocy is a 4th year medical student, originally from Pennsylvania and applying into family medicine. She is passionate about primary care, reproductive health, adolescent medicine, medical education and improving health equity. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, biking, camping and kayaking on the California coast, as well as reading, biking and podcasts.

Matt Onimus: I'm an MS4 from Philadelphia, PA and will be applying to radiology residencies in the fall. I went to Pitt for undergrad and did a gap year with AmeriCorps City Year Philadelphia before medical school. My hobbies are bowling, PC building, gaming, weightlifting, and reading. My interests include neuro/MSK radiology, medical education, online radiology education, and programming/web design. Best interview

advice is don't forget that you are also interviewing the medical school! It's a two way street, so come prepared with questions for the interviewer as well.

Max Ellithorpe (@maxellithorpe on twitter) is notorious in his med school class for drinking Diet Coke at 8am. He's a career changer and MS2 at the University of Illinois College of Medicine. Prior to medical school, Max worked for the Federal Reserve System in Washington, DC and NYC where he learned way too much about how wire transfers work. Max is interested in pursuing a career in psychiatry.

Miguel Miliare is a fourth year with prior military and an undergrad in Civil Engineering, therefore not at all your typical Pre-Med medical student. He's normally a very shy and introverted person so interviews (really the whole Interview day) were a bit of a challenge to get used to. The best advice he ever got was "you're already here which means the school wants you so just relax and be yourself"

Morgan Franklin is an M1 student. She previously attended Furman University where she played Division I lacrosse and graduated with a Molecular and Cellular Biology degree. Morgan is interested in pursuing emergency medicine and enjoys rock climbing and being outdoors in her free time.

Natalie Zink is a Wonder Woman wannabe who is so happily at her perfect fit of a school after 3 rounds of applying. In that time, she worked as a paramedic for 5 years in metro Detroit and Atlanta and slowly but surely lost every marble she had left. She's passionate about empowering others, cursing, and maintaining your sense of humor. The best advice is the most cliché, but be yourself. You want to make sure you end up at a good fit so you're not miserable for 4 years.

Natasha Ramaswamy is an M1 at the Medical College of Georgia who loves all things Marvel/DC/Star wars/anime/fun in general! She was a cell and molecular biology major in undergrad, but also was a TA/peer tutor for a wide variety of biology and some physics classes. She also enjoys gardening and drawing in her free time, and sings for fun! She is currently involved in research and a lot of pediatrics interest opportunities, as she wants to pursue a career in pediatric pulmonology. Finally, Natasha is super excited to help you prep to do amazing at your interview! She does not have a Twitter, but you can follow her on Instagram @nasha_._r

Nd Ekpa is a Houston, TX native born and raised who got kidnapped by Pennsylvania where he has been for the last 8 years. After completing undergrad at Franklin & Marshall in Lancaster, PA, he went on to med school and also got an MBA from State College, PA (you see). He is currently a 4th year with plans of going into Emergency Medicine. Favorite piece of advice (and most common): Be yourself, unless yourself is someone terrible, then be somebody else

Nick Campo (@nick_campo) is a 1st year medical student. He got his undergraduate degree from Rutgers in biology. He enjoys video games, bodybuilding and chess in his free time. Advice- Practice, Practice, Practice — no one gets it perfect the first time. The more you practice, the more likely you will nail it on interview day

Nick Janigian is a third year student who took a more nontraditional path to med school. After undergrad, he spent a year serving with AmeriCorps in Boston as an adult education teacher. He then work as a Genetic Counseling assistant at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia while he applied to med school. He has absolutely no idea what specialty he's interested in (he likes too many things). Outside of medical school, he loves to watch and play sports, enjoys a good book, and takes pleasure in cooking good meals (some say he makes a mean stuffed pepper). His number one interview advice is to try to be genuine and calm-- it's good to practice but don't be scripted!

Ophelia Okoh (@blackpalette) is an OSM-1 at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. When she's not studying, she's Facetiming friends and family, but if no one picks up, she'll watch Moesha or Sister Sister on Netflix. To relax, Ophelia enjoys doing calligraphy and working on her podcast, Hear Her Speak. Her interview advice: Be sure to display your confidence in a humble way!

Pasha Rahbari is currently in the process of applying to anesthesia residencies, and professionally has a special interest in LGBTQ+ health. His journey to applying to med school involved him taking two gap years as a scribe, and he loved it. In his free time he enjoys tennis, videogames, going to techno parties, and hanging with friends. Favorite piece of advice is to be genuine and have confidence in whatever you're saying, even if you feel like it is insignificant.

Qais Iqbal (Twitter: @qaisiqbal) is an MS3 who likes to stay active, read books, and get lots of sleep. He is interested in creating greater equity in medical education and is passionate about efficient learning. He struggled during medical school admissions and wished he had had more access to mentors to help him out - that's why he wants to be there for others. His favorite interview tip is to make small talk with anyone you can right until your interview, so that you are warmed up conversationally and not stiff when it's time for the interview. Qais is also a recovering plant hoarder.

Rachel Tenney is an MS4 going into internal medicine! She loves living in SF- mostly because of access to the beautiful beach sunsets! Her favorite piece of med-school admissions related advice is: YOU CAN DO IT, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise!

Rajeha (Jea) Butt is a non-traditional medical student who has a business degree and worked in Marketing for a year before overcoming her fear of chemistry and psychics to apply to medical school (as she originally wanted to do). She applied twice before getting in and has some great advice for reapplicants and non-trad students. Favorite piece of advice: be yourself but also try to feel out your interviewer & match their vibes!

Ricardo Paez: My name is Ricardo! I'm a Mexican-American cis-gender man. I am from Los Angeles, which I love > than SF.. I am a future radiologist.

Shelley Chen is a 4th year medical student with a strong interest in autoimmune disease, adolescent mental health, and learning disabilities as well as epidemiology and

data science. Can be found running in the trails or playing piano duets over Zoom these days.

Shiraz Mumtaz is a 25-year-old first year medical student who loves sports, particularly the Celtics, Patriots, Red Sox, and Bruins. He went to Union College where he played Division 3 NCAA basketball while majoring in Neuroscience. After graduating in 2017, he completed a Special Masters Program at Boston University from 2017-2019, and then worked as a research assistant for one year during the application process. While in graduate school he began working as an Emergency Department medical scribe, and continued that through medical school matriculation. The best piece of interview advice is to own your story; there is only one you. Highlight the uniqueness of your journey, how it has brought you here today, and why it continuously fuels you to pursue becoming a physician!

Somya Shankar is an MS1. She is keeping her mind open with regards to specialties at the moment, but has a special place in her heart for pediatrics after doing research at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia during her two gap years. In her spare time, she loves to read, listen to podcasts and pet all the good doggos on her walks to campus! The best interview advice that she can give is to ask meaningful and thoughtful questions - do not ask questions just for the sake of asking questions, interviewers can see through that very easily.

Sneha Somasekar (Twitter: @snehasomasekar) is a California native, non-trad MS4 DO student applying to Anesthesia. Interview advice - speak plainly and be yourself. They want to see the person behind the paper application and make sure that you are someone who can connect and communicate clearly.

Susan Wang is from the Bay Area, went to UC Berkeley, and then went straight through to med school. Took sort of the "typical" pre-med route and am now applying into family med. Favorite interview advice is to share your passions! Talking about whatever you're passionate about, even if it's cooking or baking, at least at some point during the interview will make you so much more energized.

Tram Nguyen is in her research year between 3rd and 4th year of med school and will apply to psychiatry residencies next year. A first-gen immigrant currently in NYC, she understands the unique challenges of figuring out life in a new country while navigating the complex med school application process. She enjoys weightlifting and exploring cuisines from different cultures. Med schools usually mention what their unique features are on their website, and it's important to highlight how your experiences and passions align with those features in the interview when the opportunity emerges.

Vid Reddy (Twitter: @ReddyVidhatha) is an MS4 from the Central Valley in CA and is passionate about the intersection of occupational health and the skin. He is applying to dermatology residency this year and hopes to collaborate with workers' unions in the future to better understand how exposures to chemicals, toxins, etc. in various industries affect dermatological outcomes. His favorite piece of interview advice, as cliché as it sounds, is to be your true, authentic self and always remember that the interview

process is about finding the right fit for you. This is a two way street so you should also be evaluating medical schools to see if you actually want to go there.


Zach Winchell is a fourth year! He was a student ambassador (like a tour guide but extra) for his preclinical years and a student in a PBL curriculum. His biggest piece of advice is that there are no such things as a pity interview. If you have an interview, you're smart enough to do med school at that institution. The most important thing at that point is showing them you're a human being who can meaningfully connect with other human beings.

(more to be updated soon!)

Welcome info from past cycle:

If you are...

...a med school applicant:

WELCOME! This document is for you. Keep reading, or navigate the  **Index** to reach directly whatever section you are looking for. Have any questions you'd like us to address? Any feedback? Help us help you! Leave all thoughts in this [form](#)!

SIGN UP LINKS for:

- o FREE 1:1 MOCK VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS [HERE!](#) (stay tuned for 2021-22, check back in July!)
- o WEBINAR SESSIONS w interview tips (scroll↓ for past sessions materials/slides!):
- o OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER [HERE!](#)
- o PEER INTERVIEW PRACTICE: Sign up [here](#) and we'll connect you to peer applicants who want someone to practice with!

...a current medical student:


Sign up [here](#) to be a med student mock interviewer! Can't commit right now and/or have advice you'd like to share? You can do so at this [form](#)!

...someone who is passionate about the next generation of doctors, who is passionate about creating an uplifting culture of mentorship and who loves the idea of having a med school process that isn't prohibitive, costly, and based on insider knowledge:

Thank you so much for stopping by! This document was created to help medical school applicants, in the hopes of easing the stresses of the application process and in particular to share advice and mentorship with students who can't count on much premed advising support along the way. We welcome your wisdom, feedback, ideas about how we can do this better! Interested in being a webinar speaker? Have recommendations on what aspiring medical students should familiarize themselves with? Leave all your thoughts in this [form](#)!

...“Hey I’ve heard you have a great collection of readings about health and medicine, where can I find them?”

Glad you asked! We compiled a list of texts and readings that we think should be recommended readings regardless of experience or profession. Skip right to the [reading/thinking](#) section to see them! If you have any recs on additions, will you leave them [here](#) so we can keep our list growing?

(this is a living document growing every day, so **check back** often! It's also fairly long, so feel free to use the below  **Index** to **navigate to sections** you're looking for.)