



# Lloyds HR Consultancy

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## Handling Interview Stress and Anxiety



Even thinking about your upcoming interview has you on edge. Practicing for it stresses you out. Getting dressed and ready to go for it makes you want to go back to bed. In actually beginning the interview, you want to look for a place to hide. You have a bad case of **interview anxiety**. You know what this stress is all about. It whacks you right upside the head plus you know what bad things it can do to your chances of having a successful interview....tons of bad things!

## The Facts About Interview Stress

It's reassuring and powerful to realize these essential truths about what scares you. **The first step to getting this fear response under your control is to demystify it.**

- Interview stress is normal. If you're human, you're going to get it.
- Interview stress hits most people, even experienced performers.
- You will never completely conquer interview stress, yet you can manage it.
- The more mind tools you have to beat interview stress, the better you will perform.
- People interview fine all the time--even though they are suffering from interview stress during the actual interview.
- Beating interview stress is not about being perfect or about being fear-free. It's about adjusting and managing your anxiety and using it to fuel your performances.

## Conquering Stage Fright

You want to create a mental training system that gives you powers of self-regulation under extreme stress. You should have these mind game skills:

- Learn a relaxation system.
- Devise a pre-program psych-up system
- Learn how to adjust mentally in your performance.
- Set your attitude so you place less pressure on yourself.
- Discover approaches that will get you into the zone.
- Develop an in-performance mistake-management system.
- Learn how to stay positive under pressure.
- Find ways to enjoy yourself when you perform.
- Use performing as a way to discover yourself.
- Devise ways to connect with your audience.
- Learn to rise above stress control to inspire yourself.
- Create the conditions to perform to your potential.
- Your Next Steps In Controlling Interview Stress.
- Find a coach who is an expert in this area.
- Make sure there is chemistry with you and the coach.
- Take the 75 item self-assessment test above to be aware of your symptoms.
- Begin keeping an interview stress performance journal.
- Continue performing to learn about performance psychology and you.
- Become a student of peak performance psychology.

**Finally, don't give up.** The only people who fail to conquer interview stress are those who quit interviewing. Even the most severe cases of interview stress can be helped. Hang in there. There is hope!



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## **Managing Interview Stress: Six Quick Tips to Keep You Cool In Conference**

Here are some tips to put your mind at ease and equalize the playing field so you don't feel as though you're in the glare of the spotlight.

### **1. Wear your favourite clothes**

- ▶ The suit that fits well and shows off your professional sense of style. The one you like best. Your lucky suit or the one in which you're most comfortable.
- ▶ Same with shoes. Go for comfort. The next thing you know, you're getting a lengthy tour of the facilities while breaking in a new pair of wingtips. Ouch!
- ▶ If the job isn't a "suit" job, wear your most comfortable clothes that are appropriate for a job interview. Not blue jeans, a torn Amy Winehouse t-shirt and a Yankee cap on backward. If you look nice – clean, pressed and shined – it shows a potential employer you're serious about a job.
- ▶ Be as comfortable as you can in the clothes you choose for an interview. It's probably not a good time to experiment with a new look.

### **2. Start preparations early**

- ▶ Your interview is at 11:00 AM. Get up at 8:00 and give yourself some slow motion time. You don't want to be rushed this morning. You want to be relaxed.
- ▶ Try meditating for 20 minutes. Get in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and block out the world. Let your mind go blank and give yourself a few positive affirmations. There is something to be said for this "power of positive thinking" thing.
- ▶ Keep your pace slow from wake up to arrival at the interview location. The stress of rushing to get there on time will have you vibrating like a tuning fork, and a good interviewer is looking for signs of stress. A hectic morning is not a good start for a job interview.

### **3. Skip the caffeine**

- ▶ Or at least cut down. If you're a five-cup-a-day latte junkie, try cutting back to one on the morning of your interview. Caffeine is a stimulant. It gets you jagged and, remember, you're presenting the cool, calm and collected you to the interviewer so get comfortable and show them the real, decaf you.

### **4. Put your materials together**

- ▶ Bring a copy of your cover letter, resume, recommendations, licenses, certifications, awards and other information that might be useful during an interview.
- ▶ Place these materials in an organized fashion in an attaché case, even if you have to borrow one from your brother-in-law.

### **5. Use the interview as a give and take**

- ▶ This kind of equalizes the playing field and takes the spotlight off of you. An interview isn't an interrogation (though it may feel that way at times); it's an exchange of information.
- ▶ Prepare a list of questions that you want to ask – questions about job responsibilities, chain of command, daily responsibilities, required skill set and other information you need to know to determine if this is a good fit for you. (You don't have to take the job just because it's offered to you, unless things are really bleak when you look at the checkbook.)
- ▶ Asking appropriate questions shows you're interested in the company, it gives the interviewer an opportunity to talk and it gives the both of you an opportunity to connect on some level. That's important – especially if the HR interviewer is doing 20 different interviews that day. You'll stick out as the one who asked some good questions and told a funny joke.



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## 6. Follow Through

- ▶ The biggest mistake interviewees make is no follow-through. If you spoke to the manager who told you to give her a call in a week, mark it on your calendar and make that call. If the shift supervisor tells you to come back in the morning, be there early.
- ▶ And if the head of HR invites you to meet her at an industry conference, take her up on the offer. It's a good sign that you're in the running.
- ▶ Send a thank you note ASAP after the interview – while your face and personality are still familiar. It doesn't have to be long but send it on professional, high quality, watermarked stationery (it really counts). Some HR coaches will tell you to send a hand-written card. It's one of those "play-it-by-ear" things.

**Even if yourself advocacy is through the roof, you can benefit even more from properly preparing for your interview. Here is a checklist with things to keep in mind:**

- Practice answers to the most typical questions. Think of examples you can use to describe yourself and what you can do.
- Get information about your potential new employer. Whenever possible, link what you have found to the answers you are giving.
- Prepare an attire you will use for the interview way ahead of time. Take extra copies of your curriculum and bring a pen and a notepad for note taking.
- Stay calm and take your time. You do yourself a disservice by trying to answer too quickly or to fill silences in the conversation. If you need time to think, then do so.
- Show what you know. Talk about what your work accomplished for your previous employer or what your skills could improve for your new potential one.
- Follow up on the interview with a small thank you note and reiterate your interest in the position.



**Please check out Lloyds's Facebook page and website (below) for more career support tools; especially on interview tips and techniques.**

[adeline@lloydsHR.com.au](mailto:adeline@lloydsHR.com.au) | Contact No: 0406 675 758

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