



# Developing Interviewing Skills

Mazen Hamadeh, Master of Stong College  
and KAHSSO



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Stong College and Calumet College



# Agenda



- Timeline: Milestones and Goals
- Who are you?
- Why this profession.. and institution/company?
- Personal skills, strengths and weaknesses
- Working with others.. and Conflict/Resolution.
- Failure and Resilience
- Ethics

# Why is it important to make a personal timeline?

# Why a Personal Timeline?



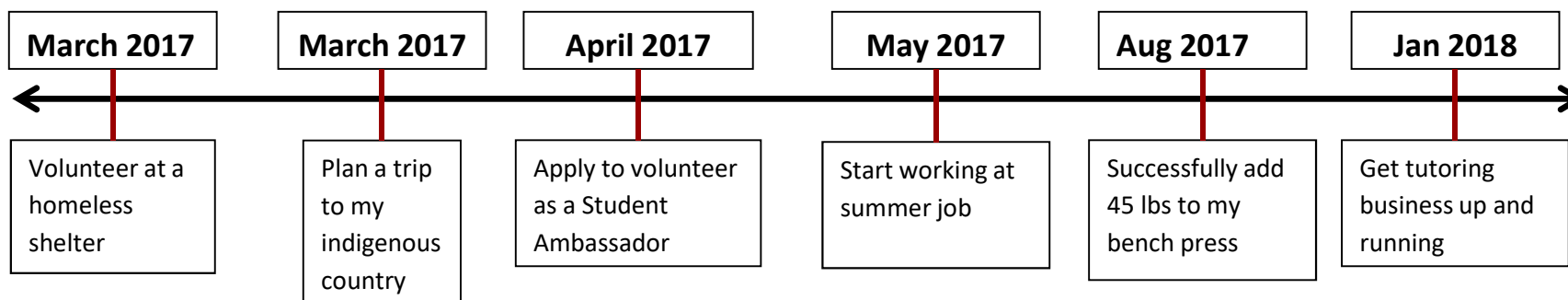
- Recognize and celebrate your past achievements
- Recognize how awesome you are
- Acknowledge where you are at currently
- Establish your goals
- Stay focused on the goals!
- Have a clear view of what you want to accomplish
- Put it in writing to make your objectives more concrete

# Timeline Example (Part 1 of 2)



## Past Accomplishments

*(What?)*



## Objectives

*(So What?)*

Short-term (next 6 months)

Medium-term (6 months-1.5 years)

Long-term (as far as the eye can see)

## Action Plan & Logistics

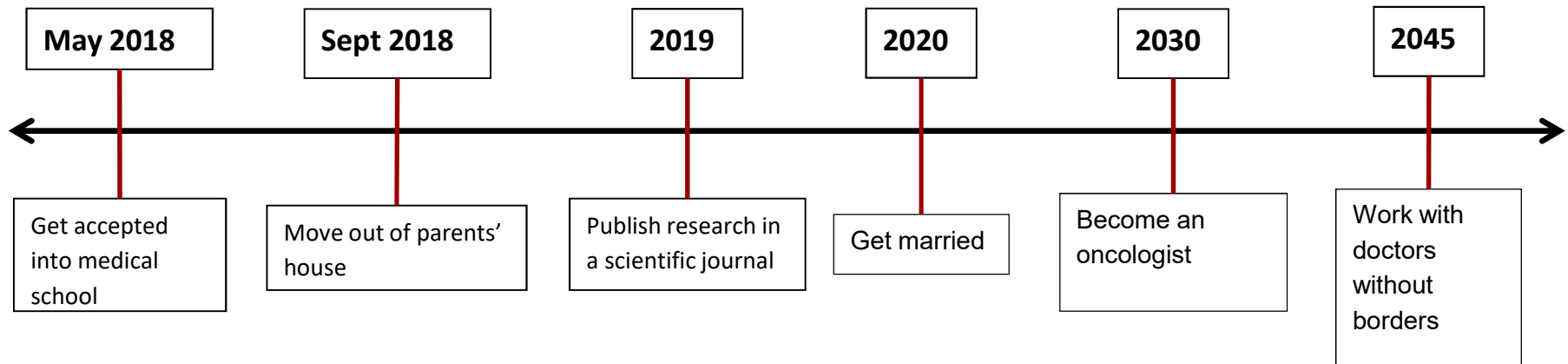
*(Now What?)*

# Timeline Example (Part 2 of 2)



## Past Accomplishments

*(What?)*



## Objectives

*(So What?)*

Short-term (next 6 months)

Medium-term (6 months-1.5 years)

Long-term (as far as the eye can see)

## Action Plan & Logistics

*(Now What?)*

# Completed Example (Part 2 of 2)

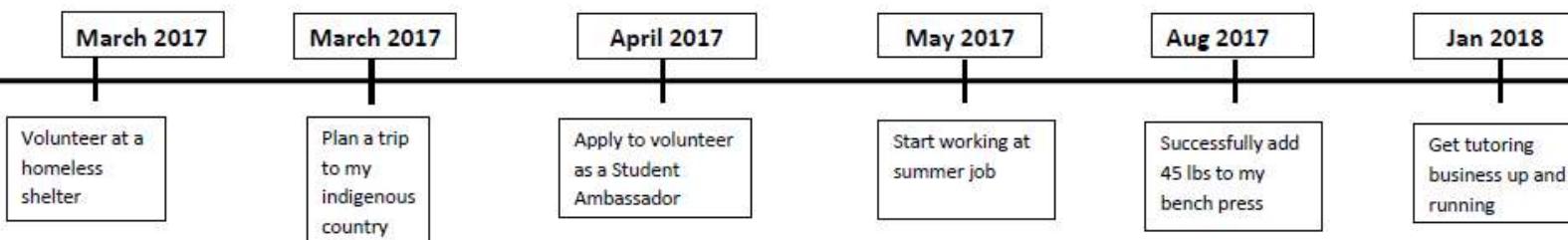


Timeline for: John Doe PAGE 1 OF 2

Date: February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017

## Past Accomplishments

- Sept 2011: President of high school student council
- June 2012: Became Valedictorian
- May 2013: Volunteered in Ecuador
- June 2014: Volunteered in a research lab
- August 2014: Danced with a lady at an elderly home
- Sept 2014: Donated blood for the first time
- Oct 2014: Coached kids' soccer
- Sept 2015: Started a student club on campus
- Oct 2015: Voted for the first time in the Canadian elections
- Jan 2016: Became a PASS Leader at Stong College
- Aug 2016: Attended a meditation ashram for 10 days
- Sept 2016: Volunteered at community centre to help refugees



## Objectives

### Short-term (next 6 months):

- Volunteer at a homeless shelter
- Plan a trip to go back to indigenous country
- Add 45 lbs to my bench press
- Maintain honor roll status
- Volunteer as a Faculty of Science Student Ambassador
- Get a summer job

### Medium-term (6 months-1.5 years):

- Get tutoring business up and running
- Get accepted into medical school
- Graduate from university
- Move out of parents' house
- Publish research in a scientific journal
- Volunteer in economically-challenged clinic located near medl school

### Long-term (as far as the eye can see):

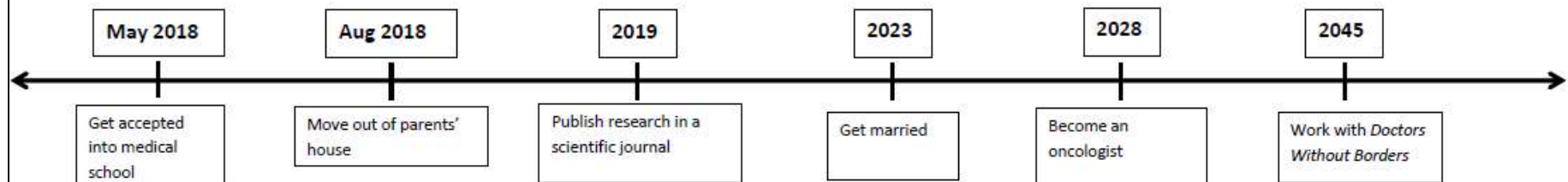
- Become an oncologist
- Get married
- Start a scholarship fund for student athletes
- Develop a new cancer screening test
- Work with doctors without borders
- Go to Disney world with grandkids

# Completed Example (Part 2 of 2)



Timeline for: John Doe PAGE 2 OF 2

Date: February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017



## Action Plan & Logistics

- Feb 2017: Sign up for a resume workshop at the Career Centre
- Feb 2017: Start looking online for open volunteer positions at the local homeless shelter
- Feb 2017: Modify my diet (more protein and less sugar) to help me reach my fitness goals
- Feb 2017: Attend PASS sessions for BIOL 2021 to help improve my chances at getting an A grade, and improving my GPA
- March 2017: Apply for summer jobs online
- March 2017: Buy a plane ticket for my summer trip
- May 2017: Start working at summer job
- May 2017: Work with colleagues to get funding for tutoring business
- June 2017: Summer trip to my indigenous country
- July 2017: Work on my medical school application
- July 2018: Start looking for my own apartment
- August 2018: Move into new apartment
- May 2019: Publish my research
- August 2020: Get engaged
- June 2022: Graduate as an MD
- September 2022: Start my oncology residency
- July 2023: Get married
- August 2023: Honeymoon in Istanbul
- 2024/25: Have my first child
- 2028: Become a specialist: oncologist
- 2029/30: Set up my own research lab
- 2029/30: Set up my own research lab
- 2040/42: Develop a new cancer screening test
- 2045/47: Work with *Doctors Without Borders*
- 2055/57: Go to Disney world with grandkids





**Take 10 min to map out your  
own personal timelines**



# Who are you?

# Who are you?

- Usually the first question in an interview
- Provides the interviewer with a multidimensional picture of who you are
- Tells the interviewer whether you are self-aware
- Sets the stage for the rest of the interview

(First impression!)

# Who are you?



- Tell a story... chronology!
- Personal (place of birth, when you immigrated, etc..)
- Family (e.g. siblings, parents, etc..)
- Academic (academic passion & highlights)
- Co-curricular (Peer Leadership related to school)
- Extra-curricular (sports, hobbies, friends, etc..)
- Diversity (ethnic, language, spiritual/meditation, etc..)
- Goals

# Role Playing



## Who are you?

- Groups of 2
- 4 min... Interview practice
- 1 min... self assessment
- 1 min... feedback by interviewer
- Switch roles

# Interviewing techniques

# SOARA



- **Situation**: a challenge/situation you found yourself in. The context/background to orient the interviewer.
- **Objective (or Task)**: what did you have to achieve? What did you try to achieve?
- **Action**: what did you do? What happened?
- **Results**: what was the outcome? Did you meet your objective? What did you achieve?
- **Aftermath**: what did you learn from this experience, and how did you implement that knowledge since?

# SOARA: Example (Part 1 of 2)



- **S**: In summer 2015, I was a research volunteer in a nutrition lab at York University etc..
- **O**: My supervisor assigned me the task to establish a new wet lab technique to measure muscle protein.
- **A**: After I conducted a PubMed search of all the papers that had reported this technique, I called the company that sells the antibodies and called other labs that have published on this technique. I tried the technique on practice samples for 2 mo, but faced challenges getting clean blots. I then etc.





# SOARA: Example (Part 2 of 2)



- **R**: By the end of the summer, I had established a new wet lab technique in the lab, and identified which high quality antibodies provided clean blots. I was co-author on a conference abstract in 2016.
- **Aftermath**: It was a challenging experience. I was left to my own devices without having had any prior experience with research. I researched the topic, persisted in trying to find why the blot did not work, and contacted other labs & companies. I became disciplined and developed work ethics that helped me prepare for my MCAT, etc..



# Interview questions

# Why this profession?



- Be honest.
- Try to put your passion into words
- Mention a personal experience
- Evolve the story with your own experience, exploration and discovery
- Be mindful that many professions “contribute to society”, “help others”, etc..
- Understand why this profession not a similar one
- Need to be convinced it is your decision

# Role Playing

## Why this Profession?



- Groups of 2
- 3 min... Interview practice
- 30 s... self assessment
- 30 s... feedback by interviewer
- Switch roles

# Why this institution/company?



- Research the institution/company: Google!
- What are their Vision, Mission and Values?
- What do they specialize in?
- What are their strengths?
- What achievements are they proud of?
- Does the above align with your values/goals?
- Which city are they in? How does the city influence their work?
- Do they contribute to the city? How?

# What skills do you have that will make you a successful professional? (hint: SOARA)

- Fall back on your personal history
- Ethnicity/diversity... Languages... Multicultural...
- Resiliency in overcoming challenges/difficulties
- Adaptability to new situations
- Responsible citizenship (contributing to community)
- Communication skills? Leadership?
- Prepare for at least 3 skills

# How would your friends describe you?

- Try to 'see' you through your friends' eyes
- Ask your friends what they think of you
- Focus on the positive aspects
- Identify the trait
- Give personal examples to strengthen your point
- Follow SOARA
- Practice for at least 3 traits

# Role Playing



## Friends describe you..

- Groups of 2
- 3 min... Interview practice  
(Practice 1 trait only now)
- 30 s... self assessment
- 30 s... feedback by interviewer
- Switch roles



# Tell us 2 weaknesses you have



- Be open and a bit vulnerable, but not too vulnerable
- Use a 'weakness' that is neutral or could be used as a strength
- Identify the trait
- Give personal examples to strengthen your point
- How are you working on yourself to improve?
- Follow SOARA
- Practice for at least 2 traits

# Role Playing



## Weaknesses..

- Groups of 2
- 3 min... Interview practice  
(Practice 1 weakness only now)
- 30 s... self assessment
- 30 s... feedback by interviewer
- Switch roles

# Tell us a time when you worked as a member of a team



- Use a personal experience
- Give credit to all members of the team
- Identify your role on the project
- Follow SOARA
- Identify what you contributed to the project
- Focus on the process of personal growth and the learning experience
- Be modest



# Have you ever been involved in a conflict? How did you address it?

- Identify a conflict that took place in a team
- Explain the potential impact on the project & team
- How the conflict influenced your performance
- Actions you took.. Remember institutional policies
- Ethical and legal limits... Hint: the 'greater good'
- Be modest
- Follow SOARA

# Role Playing

## Conflict and resolution..



- Groups of 2
- 3 min... Interview practice
- 30 s... self assessment
- 30 s... feedback by interviewer
- Switch roles

# Tell us a time when you failed, and how you overcame it



- Use a serious issue... Be genuine
- Explain why it was important/relevant to you
- How did it conflict with your values/beliefs?
- Your reaction/feelings
- Describe what behaviour/actions you took
- What you learned from the process?
- How you used these learnings in the future?
- Follow SOARA

# Role Playing



*Failed and overcame it..*

- Groups of 2
- 3 min... Interview practice
- 30 s... self assessment
- 30 s... feedback by interviewer
- Switch roles



# Are you in favour or against abortion? Explain your stance.

- Research the different issues reported in the news
- Research the ethical pros and cons for both sides
- Values/beliefs: individual, religious/spiritual, family, ethnic, rights of women, rights of the fetus (person?)
- Implication on healthcare system
- Implications on cost      -Implications on mental health
- Need to be genuine about your stance, and why
- Be modest and remain calm



# Role Playing



## Abortion... in favour or against?

- Groups of 2
- 4 min... Interview practice
- 1 min... self assessment
- 1 min... feedback by interviewer
- Switch roles

# Common sense guidelines



- Be over prepared
- Practice interviewing with your friends and family
- Provide self assessment
- Seek honest/genuine feedback from 'interviewer'
- Be open for criticism
- Dress professionally (clean and tidy)
- Brush your teeth
- Learn how to **shake hands** properly
- Do NOT chew a gum



# Know thyself

Diversity

Academia

Communication Skills

Emotional Intelligence

Research

Hobbies

Team work

Travelling

Leadership

Community Contribution

Volunteering

Ethics

Resilience

Professionalism

Work independently

Responsible Citizenship

Languages



# Resources – YU Career Centre



- Developing your Interview Skills

<http://careers.yorku.ca/students-and-new-grads/looking-for-a-job/develop-your-interview-skills/>

- Career Plan Checklist

<http://careers.yorku.ca/students-and-new-grads/my-career-plan/checklist/>

- Personal Statement

<http://careers.yorku.ca/students-and-new-grads/services-events/workshops/further-education/#get-started>

- Developing your Résumé

<http://careers.yorku.ca/students-and-new-grads/looking-for-a-job/write-a-resume-that-highlights-your-accomplishments/>

- Professional Etiquette Workshop

<http://careers.yorku.ca/students-and-new-grads/services-events/workshops/professional-etiquette/>

# Resources on internet



- Interview Simulator  
<http://myinterviewsimulator.com/>
- List of Potential Questions  
<https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/100-potential-interview-questions>
- Managing Interview Anxiety  
<https://biginterview.com/blog/2013/10/interview-anxiety.html>
- Dining Etiquette  
<http://dianegottsman.com/2013/04/university-manners-dining-etiquette-and-the-second-interview/>

# Next Steps

- Do your Research! (i.e. about the profession, institution, etc.)
- Practice with your friends and Family
- Prepare your Résumé
- Seek out further resources
- Good luck!



# Questions/Discussion

