Title: Finding Fit: Preparing for the Interview

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[Garth Fowler] Welcome everyone my name is Garth Fowler and I want to thank you for joining us for today's webinar which is, "Interviewing Isn't Everything, It's the

Only Thing." This is part of our ongoing "Finding Fit" series of webinars

which are designed to help you strategically think about the

application and submission and interviewing process to get into

graduate school. Before I introduce today's speaker, I want to cover just a

couple house cleaning items. One, if you're having any technical

difficulties during the webinar -- if the video slows down or your sound seems

bad we suggest that you leave the webinar and then join

back in using the link that was sent to you via email. This will be the easiest

way to solve any problems that you have. We also recommend that you shut down any

other program that you're running that uses internet resources -- a web browser

except for this one to keep the webinar going but also your email and other things

that might be taking up bandwidth. If you're just really using the GoToMeeting

application you'll get the best experience. If you have any questions

during the presentation we ask you to submit them in the questions box which

you can find in your control panel. During the presentation I'll be looking

at those and we'll be able to cover and go through as many as we have time

for. They will also be a recording of the webinar and

we'll send you a link with recording the webinar within a couple weeks after its

conclusion. This will come via email to the same email that you used to register with.

Keep your eyes open for that. And you'll be able to get a copy of the webinar recording for you to review over and over again. The last thing is, at the end of this webinar

there will be a quick one-minute survey that pops up on your screen. We really

ask you to take the time to fill this out. We appreciate your feedback and it's

from your feedback that we are able to continue modifying, improving and working

on our webinars to make sure that we're giving you the resources that

you really need. With all that I'm going to turn other presentation over to Dr. Greg Niemeyer, a colleague of mine here at the APA. He's the Director of the Office of Continuing

Education. Greg thank you for being here and take it away.

[Dr. Greg Niemeyer] Delighted to be here, thank you Garth. Today we're going to be talking all about interviewing. I want to emphasize to folks that I come

to this with a variety of experience -- about 30 years as a graduate coordinator

and director of training at the University of Florida and an APA

approved doctoral training program so I quite literally have reviewed thousands

upon thousands of graduate applications and have done hundreds and hundreds of

graduate interviews. In a very real way, what I'd like to do today is to be

able to impart to you some percentage of that apperceptive mass of knowledge that

I've accumulated across decades so that you can engage in the one thing that is

even more effective and overall learning that is vicarious learning. You don't

have to go through trial and error on your own but you can learn

instead from the experience of other people. Today we're going to talk all

about interviewing isn't everything it's the only thing. There are two senses

in which I mean interviewing isn't everything it's the only thing. The first

is that by the time you do your graduate interview it's the only thing that's

left. You've already taken your GRE and submitted those scores. You've

accumulated and collected your letters of recommendation. You've written your

personal statement and submitted that. Likewise, with your Vita

and with your graduate application. At this point that you're doing the

graduate interview, it quite literally is the only thing that's left for you to do.

There's a second sense in which interviewing isn't everything it's the

only thing and that is that the personal interview is a pre potent factor in the

selection of a graduate student and admission into a graduate program. What

do I mean by a pre potent factor? I mean that by the time you're invited in for

an interview the admission committee has already made a

decision that you are a qualified candidate. They wouldn't be taking the

time to review you if they didn't and invite you for an interview

didn't see you as having their credentials and qualifications that

would make you suitable for graduate study. Now they want to get a sense of

you as a person so in a sense by the time you interview sort of the slate is

wiped clean, the field is level and you as a person will pop off the page. You're

no longer a number, you are now a walking talking real live breathing human being

and your personhood becomes such a powerful tappable element that it is in

a sense eclipses the paper trail that precedes it. We're going to talk about

how you can utilize your personhood to maximize the potency of this prepotent

factor the graduate interview. It's important to recognize in a graduate

interview like every other component of your graduate application it has a

unique purpose. Every single element every single component of the graduate

application has a specific distinctive unique purpose by knowing that purpose

you're hugely advantaged. Let me tell you a graduate admissions committee would

not ask for a Vita if it didn't have value, they wouldn't ask for a GPA if it

didn't have value, they wouldn't ask for letters recommendation if they didn't

have distinctive value. The same is true of the graduate interview it offers

distinctive value. Well what is the purpose of the graduate interview that

is distinctive? Well the purpose is to be personable it's the one piece it's the

only piece that represents you as a human. What you are like as a person and what

you would be like to work with. Yes, I know your GPA. Yes, I know your GRE. Yes, I

know your laboratory experience. Yes, I know your prior experience. Yes, I know

your goals and objectives but what are you like as a walking talking breathing

human being? So, your goal is quite simple: to be personable. It's very important to

emphasize that by the time you are interviewing for graduate study you are

no longer needing to prove yourself. The program is already determined that

you're qualified. That does not mean that they're going to be able to accept

everyone they're interviewing, but it does mean they are interviewing in all likelihood only people who they believe are really good reasonable candidates to complete a graduate study. Otherwise they simply would not be taking the time to conduct those interviews. So, you don't

actually, have to prove yourself. You don't have to talk about your GPA, you

don't have to talk to about your GRE. You don't need to be in

self-promotion mode. You need to be in comfortable, relaxed, informative, informed,

and inquisitive mode. And we're going to talk about how to position you in

exactly that space. Three important considerations I want to emphasize:

number one graduate programs all differ. They differ in many respects. They

differ in relation to the programs to which you're applying, maybe you're

applying to a neuroscience program, maybe you're applying to a PsyD clinical

program, maybe you're applying to a social, a developmental program. Each of

those is different. Graduate programs differ in their climates. I don't mean

the number of sunny days they have in that location, what I mean is some

contexts are more buttoned up and professional. If you're in Boston for

example chances are it's going to be a relatively formal relatively tight kind

of context. If you're in Berkeley it's going to be a relatively relaxed sort of

Birkenstock environment. So, in fact environments very, faculty very. Well some

people are more formal, less formal, more accessible, less accessible, more

directive, more non-directive. Students very. You see wide variability in the

students in various programs. And of course, with all that variability the

same is true for interviews. Interviews are going to vary. So, while we're going

to be talking about modal things that you can expect in relation to a graduate

interview, please be aware that the rule of thumb is variation. There is variation

from place to place. And you will see that you'll see some continuity across

the graduate interview and you'll see some variability from place

one, to place two, to place three. So please expect the unexpected there will

be variability. But that being said we're going to talk about the common

denominators that you can anticipate. And I want to emphasize lastly here that I

want you to be sure that as we talk today in the short period of time we have,

sort of 30-40 minutes. And then I'll open it up for questions and answers. I want to

be sure that you ask every single question you have. Whether it's a

question that you had coming into today's webinar or a question that

emerges as a function of our discussion. I want you to email in at any time

beginning immediately right now any and every question you have, and we will

address as many of those as we can at the end. Again, I'm going to try to run

short so we have an opportunity to maximize our time for discussion. All

right, so let's say something about the three major things we want to

cover today. I want to say something about getting oriented in relation to what

to expect in relation to a graduate interview. I'll give you samples of

questions that you are likely to be asked in various domains and questions

that you may want to ask faculty and students in the current graduate

programs. As well so we'll look at specific questions and then I want to go

over a 10-point performance check. Step by step by step what you should look for

what you should plan on doing in order to maximize your performance. There is no

reason going into a graduate interview that you should not have complete

confidence about how you will perform. You should know going in how you are

going to be coming out. And that's what we're going to cover in detail. Okay, I

want to emphasize that at the end of the day when the dust settles when the

graduate interviews are done your objective is exactly the same as the

objective of the Graduate School. In both cases your case and the school's case

the goal is to determine a goodness of fit between your interests and

experiences and what the graduate program has to offer. They want to know

what does he or she bring and how does that fit with what we do? And you want to

know exactly the same thing. So, you can kind of think of it this way:

imagine the graduate program on one side of a wall, you on the other side of the

wall, and each of you leans a big ladder up against that wall and

at the base at the first rung you're pretty far apart. You know they are

the Graduate School, you want to get into that Graduate school. But as you

climb the rungs of that ladder you come closer and closer and closer together

until at the top you shake hands and you are on the exact

same page. Your objectives are the same as their objectives. To determine how

well you fit with the program that you're applying to. A good fit is what

you're looking for a good fit is what they're looking for.

Of course, you're invested in getting an offer and the same is true of

the graduate program itself. They're invested in the same thing that you are.

A way to think about it is this: you very much want to get an offer to every

single place that you're applying so that you can reject all of the places except one.

Similarly, they very much want to be sure that every candidate who applies to

them will accept their position so they can reject all of them except the ones

they want. So, in a real way both you and the graduate program are trying to work

hard to reserve the right to reject everyone they don't want. Another way of

saying that, is you and the graduate program both are invested in putting

your best feet forward. You should be aware of that because even as you are

trying to sort of sell yourself and very much wanting to garner a letter

of acceptance they are also trying to sell you on the program. And be aware

that there is an aspect of self-presentation and sort of self-promotion

because the goals are in both cases the same, they want to be sure if it offers

extended it will be accepted. The interview is of course a two-way street

you should not expect a tribunal, you should not expect an interrogation, you

should expect a discussion. You should expect that they will have questions of

you and they will expect that you have questions of them. They're learning about

you and critically you as well are learning about them. It's going to be

important for their decision-making, it's going to be important for your

decision-making. The interview is not a one-way street, it is a two-way street.

For this reason, it's very important that you make sure that you

collect information over the course of each and every one of your interviews.

In order to inform your subsequent decision-making. And that you take notes

as you go along so that you can sort of capture the information that you're

getting. On interview, very common experience is people might feel like

they are trying to get a sip of water out of a fire hydrant. So much is coming

at you so if you take notes, you'll be able to sort out,

capture, and sort out and curate that information after the fact. So, I

encourage you to take notes. Maybe you can just take notes on your iPhone, if

you have a laptop take notes on that. Scratch down some notes after each of

your interviews. Just keep some notes so you know what's going on and

you could recall your experience so that a week or a month later when you have to

engage in some decision-making you don't get the programs and the various things

confused. Because, they otherwise will very much become muddled. Let's say

something about the structure of what you can expect for an interview. A very

common approach, it's not the only approach is a one-day visit by an

interview day or what they've sometimes will call a campus visit. Where you go

and you have an opportunity to meet with people, maybe the primary faculty

member that you're going to work with. Talk with them, review their lab, meet

some of the graduate students, maybe meet some of the other faculty and so forth. Very commonly in structured as a single day visit. Well how does this single day

visit work? Well very commonly they'll ask you to come in and maybe the night

before if they're bringing in a number of people, they may have you get

together informally with graduate students. They may simply have you come

in and knowing that you're going to start coming into the building the next

day in the morning and things will start then. But the official start is very

common commonly a morning kind of group meeting. Where faculty members will come

in and maybe they'll be 5 or 10 or 20 prospective graduate students. Certainly

if you're applying to a professional program, certainly if you're applying to

our PsyD or a clinical or counseling program you are probably going to be any

group setting. Where there'll be multiple other people and faculty will come in

and they'll talk a bit about the overall program, might give you a sense of its

structure, and its objectives, and their orientation and things they regard as

particularly as their hallmarks of the program. They'll give you an opportunity

to ask questions. This group orientation meeting is a way of kind of leveling the

playing field, making you comfortable, giving you some general information

before you break off into individual interviews. They will give you an

opportunity for questions and answer and this is a good time to ask

questions. But be aware that you are in fact on stage. Even the

night before that if you are interacting with graduate students at an informal

social where faculty are either allowed or disallowed, you're nonetheless on stage.

From the moment you touch down, to the moment you leave, you are never never

never never never never never never never off stage. Everything you say can

and will be used in relation to a graduate admissions decision. That

includes the group orientation meeting. And you will see occasionally people

will have some challenges in that meeting. You'll see as you do in some

classrooms people who ask too many questions. About the fourth or fifth

question into it you will see the group has a collective eye role when the person

asks the ninth question. Some people feel the need to be impressive, so they ask

challenging questions, they interrogate the faculty, they ask critical questions.

These are not good ideas; you are not trying to prove yourself. If you have

legitimate questions, you want clarification, you'd like more information, those are completely reasonable questions. But be aware you're on stage and that's part of the parcel of the overall interviewing experience. They want to know in part how well do you interact with other people? How would you get along with your future peers? Oftentimes that's followed by a series

of individual interviews. Certainly, you're going interview if you're

applying to a doctoral program with the faculty one individual or more with whom

you think you would be most likely to work. This would be your mentor or your

adviser. He or she may well introduce you to the lab, walk you through the lab,

introduce you to some graduate students, take some time to sit down maybe a half an

hour or so interact with you. And we will talk about what that interview is going

to look like. That's a very common kind of structure and you may meet with two

or three certainly again if you're applying on the professional side clinical

counseling, PhD or PsyD. Chances are very good you're going interview with two

or three or four different faculty members because they're going to be

making some collective decisions about their admissions. And you want of course

to have as broad of experience as you possibly can.

They're typically brief, you're not likely to be you know be sitting down

with somebody and be grilled for hours on end. They're gonna be pretty informal,

they're gonna be designed to be informative and to not in any way shape

or form be intimidating or interrogating. They're not asking you to

prove yourself in any way shape or form. It is not a tribunal, it is not

an interrogation. Oftentimes they'll break for lunch, they'll take you to

lunch oftentimes the schedule is tight so it may be right on campus. They may

invite graduate students to join you, which would be great gives you a chance

to meet some of your future senior peers. Sometimes other faculty will chime in

but you'll have a relatively informal time where you can talk about you

know anything and everything. But be aware you were never never never never

never never never off stage. Things you say things you do during that lunch time

will factor into people's appraisals of you. Even if it is only other graduate

students. I assure you once the dust settles the interviews are over the

faculty will turn to their current graduate students and say "what did you

think about Jamila what do you think about Paul?" So, they are going to be

canvassed for their impressions of you and that's including impressions that

they form during social or informal types of interaction with you. And then

often times there may be some more additional interviews, individual faculty

to meet or whatever and then sometimes closing with a reception or just a final

session. How did your day go? Do you have further questions? Anything we can do to

help you? You know learn more about the program or address any questions you may

have and then the day is done. And you take off either that evening or the next

day. But in the meantime, in that one day you have learned a ton they have learned a ton.

And both of you go back and make some deliberations. Okay, let's turn to talk

number two about questions that are going to help structure the interview

itself. We'll talk about general questions that you're likely to be asked,

we'll talk about questions that might be specific to research, and we'll talk

about the kinds of questions if you're applying to a professional side

program. Well, what are some questions that you may be asked? Well very

reasonable to ask you know why are you thinking about wanting to inflict a PhD

on yourself? Why do you want a PsyD? Why do you want a master's degree? What

has motivated you to pursue graduate study in psychology? And so, you should

have a one-minute sort of elevator speech that speaks in a fairly eloquent

way about your desire. What is it that you are interested in, why this degree

and perhaps what are you aiming to do. And then they're gonna want to know

something's more specific. What about our program in particular you said you want

to be trained at the highest level to psychology has to offer

and you want a PhD you want a PhD and you're interested in neuroscience and

you are pursuing our program really because you see it as an excellent

program, but what about our program specifically attracts you as opposed to

one of the other six PhD programs in neuroscience? So, they're going to want to

know that goodness of fit. That you have made a determination that there is

something distinctive about their program that nominates it for

distinction from your perspective. So, is it the particular faculty? Is it

specialty training in the area or you know while whatever neuro neuroethics? Is

it the opportunity to join a certain research team? Is it the fact that

they're well-known for training outstanding scientists? Is it the fact

that they are well-funded, and you can see this training grant that they have

is something you would fit into nicely? What is it about our program that

specifically appeals to you? What do you see yourself doing after graduation? They're

not asking this idly they're asking it to determine a goodness of fit. If you

are interested in doing pursuing a private practice and they are training

the next generation of research scientists that's not a good fit. You

would not be a good fit with them, they would not be a good fit for you. They

don't want to utilize their resources to train you as a practitioner, you don't

want to be in a context where all of your colleagues are going to be

scientists or vice versa. So, what do you see yourself doing? And is it consistent

with what they train people to do? You should know going in how good of a fit

you are with what they do. Get an idea of what they graduate what their students

do when they graduate and whether that's consistent with the kind of thing you

want to be doing. Well what about research kind of

questions. What are you know I can be asking this way? Well probably they're

going to be open ended questions. Like tell me a little bit about your research

interests and experiences. I see that you did a senior thesis I see that you're

interested in disordered eating, I see that you're interested in

new hippocampal malfunction, I see that you're interested in the bystander

effect. Tell me a little bit about your research interest how did you become

interested in X? And so, you again want to have a one or two minutes or the

elevator speech about your research interest in where you see them going and

how you see them fitting in with the program that you're interviewing with.

And they may ask you, gosh who on our faculty to you see yourself as working

with? You could say well Dr. Brown has worked in neurobiology and ethics and it's

really encouraging to me, I can see a good fit. What I've done in my senior

thesis in some ways is preliminary to some of the work that Dr. Brown has been

doing. I would love to have that opportunity. So, they're looking to see

how much you've done your homework about the goodness of fit between what you are

interested in and what they provide. Let me ask you something specific like

tell me a little bit about a research project that you did and what you

enjoyed about it, or what you found frustrating about it, what you found,

what pleasures, joys, satisfactions you found and perhaps what challenges or

frustrations or difficulties. Of course, this is an opportunity to share with

them the joys that you experience in in doing research but it's also an

opportunity for you to be candid, you can certainly say "I learned the value of

delayed gratification." Every academic will understand that because the work

you're doing now is actually not going to see fruition for a couple of years so

you have to learn to be good at delayed gratification. That will elicit a smile

and you will have a warmed their heart. So, they're interested in how genuinely

interested are you in research and are you informed about directions you would

like to be taking. So, they may ask you both about pleasures they may ask

you as well about frustrations. Well if you are applying to a professional

program this would be any PsyD program or it would be a clinical or counseling

a PhD program you may be asking questions like, "tell me about experiences

you had that would be volunteer or social service or counseling like

experiences." Maybe you've served as a peer counselor whatever, "what kind of

people have you worked with, what kind of people do you enjoy working with, what

kind of characteristics do you see in yourself that you think would enable you

to become an effective counselor or psychotherapist?" They're asking you to be

mindful about the qualities that you might bring to bear to be effective in the work that you are anticipating doing. Of course, not only will they be asking questions of you, but it is critical that you also ask faculty questions. Why? Because, that signals your interest. Think about it this way: if you have no questions, you have a problem. Imagine you give a talk and you leave 15

minutes at the end for Question and Answer you talk for 30 minutes and then

you say, "okay now I'm opening the floor for questions, anybody have any questions?"

And what you hear in response is a thundering silence. You clearly are going

to take that as an indication that your talk was not remarkably scintillating, it

was not remarkably productive. You're going to take that as a lack of interest.

Faculty are going to take your lack of questions precisely the same way. If

you're interested, you're going to be showing that with questions you may ask.

And so you want to go in with a preformed set of questions. Even if it's just three

or four questions that you recycle when you talk with each faculty member that's

completely fine. Well what would that be? Well it could be things like:

tell me a little bit about your program, what would you see as its greatest

strengths. Notice I am NOT saying tell me about the greatest strengths and the

horrible pitfalls of your program, because again you are putting your best

foot forward. But what do you see in the in a profile of strengths and weaknesses,

what do you see is the greatest strengths, or distinctive features of

this program that distinguishes it from other similarly outstanding programs at

other universities. Can you tell me about the kind of practica that are available.

Again if this is relevant and you’re on the professional side. Can you tell me about

whether undergraduates are available to help serve as research assistants, how

does that process work, would I be able to have an undergraduate research

assistant or assistants. How would I recruit those, do graduate students

typically enjoy that kind of support, can you tell me about supervisor or adviser

appointments or relationships how are those made, are they appointed, do we

select them and do we know in advance. Do those determinations get made

after we come on board, I'm just interested in how I would have an

opportunity to connect up with faculty to work. What do students in the program

do after graduation? What do your students do? Can you give me some examples of jobs

that they have taken in positions that they've held

upon graduation? Of course, you're looking for a determination of goodness-of-fit.

Are these students doing what you would be interested in. If they're all doing

what you would covet doing, fabulous. If on the other hand they're all doing

something that is anathema to you, then you probably don't have a ideal goodness of fit.

Do I have opportunities to teach? How would that work? And then what opportunities would I have for doing research? Faculty will love to hear this question because again you're sending

signals with your questions. So, these are very reasonable questions it would

easily sustain 30 minutes of interaction and you can use them across multiple

different interviews to talk to different faculty asked the same

questions and look for points of consensus and dissensus. Points where

they agree and points where they disagree, both are useful bits of

information both are informative. Well how about students, what kinds of

questions can you ask the current graduate students? Well you can ask them a

lot of the same things but you can ask them some things like: "tell me about

your experience in the program, how is it similar to or different from what you

would expect it when you first came in?" That's good for 30 minutes right

there. "I thought this, but I expected this but." Maybe it's better, maybe it's worse, maybe

there's some of both but if it's a nice rounded open-ended question like that

you are sure to elicit a lot of very useful information. "What would you see is

the greatest strengths of this program? And how does that compare with what

you'd anticipated coming in? What do you see yourself doing when you

graduate? When having your friend’s colleagues what kinds of directions did

they see themselves heading? Has that changed over the course of your being

here? Have you become more committed or less committed to a certain angle or a certain perspective or a certain career trajectory? I'm interested in what people do when they finish this program. How would you describe the relationships with faculty? Are they accessible, are

they available, are they interactive, do you have an opportunity to do research

with a number of people? Do you work primarily with one person how research

productive are most students? What could I reasonably expect would be my experience

in working with particular faculty members? what do you see your level of

training? Do you feel like you're developing the skills and competencies that you had hoped in order to be independent faculty member or independent

practitioner that you hope to be upon graduation? What opportunities are

there to teach? What opportunities to do research? Do students take part in

the overall citizenry of the department, are they part and parcel of the

decision-making around the department, and are there student groups? Advisory

groups? And do you have input into departmental policies? Do I participate

in some way shape or form." That's important to know particularly if

you're going to go into a faculty position you want to be able to have

honed your skills and citizenry so you can contribute importantly in that

regard. "What kind of careers to other people pursue after graduation?" So, these

are very typical kinds of questions that you can ask that well help you determine

whether this program is a good fit for you. Three tips for the interviews

themselves: number one again the interview is a two-way street it's not

them asking you questions, it is as much as possible an informal discussion then

the more you can position it as a dialogue, the more you can position it as

a conversation, the more comfortable the more casual it is, the better. Because,

your experience will be greater comfort and their experience will be greater

comfort. And it will feel as if you are sort of more mature or balanced it won't

feel like an interrogation in any way shape or form. And it'll be easier for

the faculty member at the end of the day you want them to leave feeling as if

they have had a good experience talking with you. Remember that your questions

send signals. If all the questions you have are about practica and about your

professional training and you don't say anything about the science side, a

science practice program is going to cock an eyebrow. They’re going to look askance

because all your questions are on the professional side and not a research

side or vice versa. So, you just want to be aware that you have a balanced blend

of questions that's consistent with the kind of program that you're applying to.

If you are applying to a neuroscience program, it's very reasonable your

questions would be about: research interests, about laboratory availability

and space, about productivity, about ways that you can be what you could

expect in terms of productivity, the kinds of resources that are available

for you, your computer in services in laboratory space and so forth. Those all

send signals. They say, "this person wants to do research."

And if that's what you want to be doing, perfect. You want your questions to send

the right signals. And of course, be aware that when it comes to interviewing,

practice makes perfect. If you think about it probably the first time you did

anything was not the best time you did anything.

Probably you got better as you practiced. Your first time a playing tennis was

probably not your best time at playing tennis, your first time giving a speech

was probably not the very best speech you ever gave, the first date you went on

was probably not the high-water mark in your dating career. So practice makes

perfect. This means that you do not want to go into your interview without having

practiced. So, let's practice. I'm gonna tell you a ten-point performance

check, how you can rehearse, and how you can practice in advance of going into

your first graduate interview. And here are the ten points we're going to talk

about: Dress for Success, being comfortable talking about

yourself, the key of communication, which is critical, what I call the four I's

which is demonstrating that you are interested, informed, inquisitive, and

interactive with other people. Eight that you are likable, nine establishing

goodness of fit, and then ten is an overall performance evaluation. So, let's

say a word or two about each of these ten points. Number one, dress for success.

Well the dress is probably your dress during the interview is probably the

most conspicuous, but the least significant element of the graduate

interview. In general, you want to dress for success, but not to impress. What I

mean by that is all you really need to do is avoid the extremes. On the one hand

you do not need to be in a three-piece Armani suit, or you don't need to be in

a dress that you would go clubbing in. On the other hand, you don't need to have

cut off shorts shirts and Birkenstocks. In general, if you are in the business

casual, a nice casual or business casual kind of corridor you are absolutely fine.

In general, you do not want to be remembered for your dress because, if you

are remembered for your dress probably it is a little extreme in one direction or the other. So you want something that's comfortable for you that is reasonably professional. Again nice

casual or business attire. For women this might mean a comfortable dress or a

business suit or pants suit. For men it means maybe dress pants and a

long-sleeve shirt you may put a jacket on you may put a tie in your pocket and

take a look and see if other people have ties or not and you can put one on or

take one off. But you're not looking to actually be impressive in your dress

you're looking to be comfortable. And if you are buying a tie, if you are buying

something to go into your interview, which is absolutely fine I would

encourage you to wear it several times before you do your first interview. So

that it feels comfortable you feel comfortable in that attire. And you also

pull the tags off before you go into the interview. So new clothes is are

absolutely fine but make sure you're comfortable in those in your clothes

because ultimately comfort is king. The more comfortable you are the more

relaxed you will be and more relaxed you'll be the more probably you will be

able to perform in a way that fairly represents you as a person. Comfort is

king. Number two: be comfortable talking about yourself. By this I mean somebody

may just say you gosh tell me a little bit about yourself you want to be able

to have a one-minute elevator speech it says something about your interests, past

time, future directions, and goals. And then maybe something about your

strengths or weaknesses or maybe just your strengths and not your weaknesses.

But you want to be able to speak you know how would you describe yourself, "I

see myself is a really dedicated person, I'm pretty diligent I'm pretty good at

self-initiating, but I'm responsive to feedback, see myself as pretty

interactive, people enjoy working with me in general, and I see myself is really

responsible. I mean I like to move ahead, I'm achievement oriented, but on the other

hand I'm not a remarkably competitive person. I gauge my success against my

markers and what I want to be doing and accomplishing." There it is, you said all

that needs to be said. Being able to talk about your professional or research

interests we've talked about that already. People will approach this in

different ways in an interview and let me give you the two extremes when people

ask you to about yourself they might do something super super super open-ended and they might do something super super super restricted. This is dilating the field or restricting the field on the dilating the field sometimes people will say something like tell me a little bit

about yourself well if you don't have a one-minute elevator speech and somebody

says tell me little bit about yourself your natural reaction is to go: \*gibberish\*

"What do you want to know? like tell you what about myself?" So you don't want to be in that position. Be prepared for somebody to ask you this really awful wide-open question. "Tell me a little bit about yourself. Well you know I'm one three kids born in Ohio we've gone to Florida when we were about 10 became interested in psychology really as a high school

student" and so on from there. Okay so just be prepared for an open-ended

question about yourself. Sometimes people will do just the opposite they'll ask

you a close ended question, "if that were a close friend or somebody knew you well

what three words would I use to describe you as a person?" Whoa. If you don't think

about that pointed kind of question it could really throw you off but if you're

thinking about it now you've come up with probably three words and you can

use those three words if they ask you that question. So just be prepared that

people may ask you about yourself in somewhat different ways. Number three:

communication skills. It really is important in doing your interviews that

you listen and respond listen and respond. I know this sounds basic, it

sounds elementary but I can't tell you how many times in an interview when

you're anxious, you're nervous, you are feeling some apprehension performance

evaluation and apprehension, it's easy to not be able to listen and if you can't

listen you can't respond. So take a nice breath hold it for a second exhale

listen to what they're asking you and then respond to that question. It is

important that because you don't want to respond you know either to miss the

question altogether or to respond to something that isn't the question so

just be aware that you want to be attentive and you want to be able to

respond to whatever it is the person is asking. You're looking for reciprocity, you're

looking to not talk too much and you're looking to not talk too little. If the

faculty member says you know, "Do you like to cook?" "No" Well, that's a

challenge, "Do you like to do any recreation?" "No" "Do you read much?" "Not really" This from an interview standpoint gets to be a challenge or pulling teeth. So you want to develop reciprocity. They talk you talk they talk you talk it's a back and forth

it's a seesaw reciprocity you don't want to be talking ninety percent of the time

and you don't want them to be talking ninety percent. You want sort of a 50/50,

60/40, 70/30 a comfortable exchange. In general, the more they talk the better

because that means nobody likes anything more than talking about themselves or

their interests. So, if you've engaged them and they are talking chances are very

good that they're comfortable and they are enjoying themselves you should feel

free to ask questions and probably at the end of every interview they're going

to say gosh do you have any questions for us and again the last thing the

world you want to do is say no not really. You want to say yeah thanks

thanks very much for asking that I do have a couple questions and they have to

do with just what we were talking about and you go ahead and ask your questions.

You're again trying to approximate a conversation rather than a formal

interview or an interrogation help your interviewer out the more conversational

you are the more you both will enjoy your time together. Number four:

this is now one of the four I's. You want to demonstrate that you're

interested. Now of course you say gosh I came for the interview of course I'm

interested they know I'm interested. But Oh, contraire Mon frère I can't tell you

how many times after graduate interviews are completed a faculty member will

stick around sit around and they'll say you know I think I love Jamila I think

she's fabulous but to be honest with you I don't know how interested she is in us

and then people were like shrug their shoulders yeah. So, make sure you

indicate to them that you are I am so interested; gosh I can't tell you as

interested as I was coming in, I'm even more interested after I've been here

and had a chance to talk to people, I can easily imagine myself being here at the

University of Akron the University of Ohio whatever it may be. I would love to

have an offer I would love to have an opportunity to join this program. These

are things that you are not committing yourself to but you're indicating that

you would love to be able to have the opportunity to join that program, "I'm

really excited about the possibility of doing my graduate work here and I hope

it works out I would love to have an offer" and then when faculty say would

Jamela interested oh yeah, she said to me I can't tell you three times I think she

said three times to me how thrilled she would be to have an offer. Okay because

let me tell you I don't want to offer positions to people who don't

really want to be there the last thing in the world I want to do is offer a position to a

student who holds that position for a week or two and then goes somewhere else.

And I've lost all my other good candidates in the meantime. So, you can

increase your chances of graduate admission simply by expressing your

strong interest if it is legitimate and if it is true. In addition to showing

interest you want to show you were informed of course you're knowledgeable

about the program, that's why you applied. You've gone online you read the faculty

BIOS you read about the research of read articles that some of the faculty have

written particularly in areas of your interest so you want to be knowledgeable

about the program you want to be knowledgeable about the faculty. Let’s be

knowledgeable about the university a little bit about the broader community.

You do not need to know information about the sports programs you do not

need to know about climate and broader things people are there you're there for

work you're there for professional reasons you're there as as an academic.

And so, you really want to concentrate on information that is maximally relevant

to that objective. That is keen admission of the graduate program of

your choice. So, you just want to be informed, this doesn't mean that you have

to have all that information committed to memory but you know if you meet Dr.

Brown it's nice if you know that Dr. Brown does x.x work. That's helpful, "I

understand you're in the neurocognitive area Dr. Brown. Yeah, I

saw that some of your work on you know attentional factors and it's really

interesting to me." Well they will notice that, they will

recognize that and they will appreciate the fact that you are taking the time to

be that informed. You want to indicate some inquisitiveness and inquisitiveness

send signals it sends a signal you are in fact interested. If you don't have a

question as I said before you may have a problem. Develop two or three or four

questions that you can ask again ask them multiple different contexts no

problem. Part of your experience in graduate school is about being interactive with other people you will have peer members in your laboratory with peer members in your classroom who have peer members in your clinic. How well do you play with other people? They will be looking for

how you interact with other people with the faculty and with other graduate

students. So, you want to be interactive you don't want to be competitive you

want to be you know enjoyably interactive with people. Relationships

are critical components of graduate training programs and we oftentimes

count on peer learning as a key element of the graduate training other

interviewees should be regarded by you as your peers and not your competitors. I

cannot tell you how unsavory it is to have a prospective graduate applicant

come up to be sidle up to me and say something bad about another applicant or

compare themselves favorably. I've had students say you know gosh I noticed

some other people here at the interview today have like three five and three six

GPAs I'm surprised that everyone that you're interviewing doesn't have a three

nine or better like me. Well that really does not play well you just don't want

to go there. In general, you want to be polite engage in interactive again

nothing is ever ever ever ever off stage. It's important that you demonstrate that

you are likeable and that's a key thing it's not easy to do when you're in an evaluative context but the more your interviewers enjoy themselves the more favorably, they're going to evaluate you. You want to show your humble, respectful, positive, sincere, excited, and enthusiastic. You do not want to demonstrate that you are being bored, bellicose, boastful, or bizarre. Now I know

you're saying who would go on a graduate interview and demonstrate that they're

bored, bellicose, boastful or bizarre. I can tell you I've put bored, bellicose, boastful, and bizarre because I've seen every one of those. I've seen people who sat at the back of the room on their iPhones yawning, I've seen people who were argumentative and critical and sort of

demanding, I've seen people who were boastful and aggrandizing, and I've seen

people who are really quite odd. None of those qualify you for Graduate

Admissions. Try to remain humble, respectful, positive, sincere, excited, and

enthusiastic. You of course are trying to evaluate a goodness-of-fit which means

that you're going to try to determine how you fit with the program along

multiple different dimensions. Can I see faculty that I would enjoy working with,

do I think they'd be good teachers, good trainers good fellow researchers, or

co-authors. How would I see myself interacting with these faculty members?

How many students do I see any potential friends, among the students are these

people who I would enjoy hanging out with I want to be spending a lot of time

if I have a lot of time in the laboratory how will these people be as

peers for me for the next X number of years. And then the overall goodness-of-fit

with the program. You're trying to make that determination and I want you

to be mindful about that. How do I fit here? Because the program is going to be

asking the same question. How do you fit here? You're both making determinations

of goodness of fit. And then finally an overall evaluation of your

performance. So, here are the dimensions again: Dress for Success, being

comfortable talking about yourself, communication is key, being interested informed

inquisitive interactive, being likable, establishing a goodness of fit,

and then rating your overall performance. How do you rate your overall performance?

Well along each of those 10 dimensions what I encourage you to do is to

consider a ten-point scale that ranges from one quite poor performance to 10

nailed it, outstanding excellent. And I encourage you to think that if you're

grading yourself along each of these; dress, interactivity, likableness or

whatever as a one two three or four those are all gradations of poor.

Admittedly one is far poorer than four but none of them is really where you

ultimately want to land. They are gradations of poor. By comparison of five

or six, this kind of neutral territory. That's okay it's not it's not damning

that's not a disadvantage if you have a one or more five or six. But ideally

you'd like to be in the good to very good content, maybe a seven or an eight

on average along each of those ten different dimensions. And ideally you

would like nothing more than to be a nine or a ten along each of those

different dimensions. And that's where I want you to ultimately get as you

practice your interview. So, I encourage you to do is simply go through

practice with a colleague give them a set of questions to ask you and you have

some idea of how you then respond to them and go through and practice a

fifteen-minute interview or a twenty minute interview. You may be surprised

how long it takes you may be surprised how short it seems to be. But you're

evaluating and you may ask them then also to evaluate on a one to ten how

would they evaluate your dress your comfort and talking about yourself how

you communicate the reciprocity of that communication how much you expressed

interest in the program how informed you were how inquisitive you were about

the program how interactive you were how likable you seemed and the goodness of

fit is a best like engage over the course of that interaction. And then

overall on a scale of one to ten averaging those out what would you give

you or what would they give you as a score. And again, if the first time

through you're scoring a five or a six the second time you're scoring is seven

or eight and the third or fourth time you're scoring and eight or nine

fabulous congratulations you're exactly in the corridor of where I want you to

be when it comes to interviewing for graduate study in psychology. Okay that's

a good place for us to pause. I would like any and all questions that you may

have and hope that this is useful in helping to sort of scaffold your

understanding of what you are likely to confront and what isn't very engaging

and a very critical part of the overall graduate admissions process. So, questions,

[Garth] Hi Greg so this is Garth. There's a number of questions and some ones that I

thought that might be key to ask. I think one of the first questions that had come

up, which I think was a very good one, was about how many in your

experience how many individuals are usually brought for an on-campus

interview versus how many are usually offered acceptance is there any and any

trend is it vary from program type to program type what you know kind of

getting an idea of where are you when you've made it to the interview

selection?

[Greg] Yeah, you know that's actually a fabulous question. And I will say

number one by just sort of disclaimer or qualification. It does vary by place

however, the vast majority of people who are brought in for an interview

eventually will be offered a position. Here's the deal: say I'm a professional

program a clinical or counseling program that's the ones where you get the

biggest numbers, right? So, they may bring in 15 people for interview say they only

have 5 slots, ok they offer them for the top 5 people three of them reject, two

accept. Ok so now they go back out and they offer it to another three and one

accepts and two reject. And then they offer to the next three and one accepts

and one rejects. So, you're down now you may be 10 or 12 deep in order to get what we

call the graduate programs call it the yield rate. The number of offers you have

to make in order to fill X number of positions. A very common yield a great

yield rate is like 80 percent 8 out of 10 people I offer to accept. A reasonable

yield rate is 50 or 60 percent. Because everybody can only go one place, right?

And they're applying to multiple places. So even though they may only be bringing

in five people in a given year and they're interviewing 10 or 15 people

chances are in the game of musical chairs by the time the music stops not

everyone but more than the top five right ten or twelve of those people are

probably ultimately going to get an offer. Even if they are an alternative

initially an alternate candidate. So, you are in pride of place and I want you to

take a deep breath and relax when you're invited in for a graduate interview your

chances have gone up so astronomically it's incredible. Not everyone who's

interviewed is going to get an offer but the majority of them will. Because a

graduate program if they have one position to offer, they're not

going to interview a hundred people. They're gonna interview three people or

four people because it's time-consuming. So just be aware that there they are not

engaging in overkill, they don't want to run out of applicants, but they don't

want to interview twenty times the people that they're going to be able to

offer to. It's just not an efficient utilization of resources.

[Garth] Just another question that I think is good. What if you're you know what if you're

you're thinking that you aren't really that greater promoting yourself so what

are some of the things that you can do to just kind of relax and take a breath

and make sure that you you know feel comfortable in this overall experience?

[Greg] Well, the first thing you should notice is that if you're being invited in for

an interview you don't have to promote yourself. They've seen something in

you that they like. Guaranteed okay so they're not they're not saying gosh I

don't know about Gregg he looks like a pretty crummy candidate let's invite him

in. They're seeing something they like, and don't forget the one thing on an

interview if they have a piece of paper on their desk the one piece of paper

they're gonna have out of everything is going to be your Vita it's gonna be your

resume. So, what you put on your resume you can be pretty sure is going to help

in the form or structure the interview. They're probably not going to be looking

at your GPA, they're not gonna really care about GRE, they're not going to be

trying to pour through the personal statement. So, you know and you can

actually, bring copies of your resume or your Vita and hand it to them and then you can be

even more assured that you have some degree of control. I think if you go in

knowing that you've got three or four questions that you can ask so you know

you've got some degree of control you take a deep breath you relax you allow

yourself to remind yourself that you're there because they see real value in you

and you know just try to be as comfortable as you can be. The people who

try to promote themselves is actually they are not the most successful

individuals. You know your record speaks for itself. They brought you in because

of that record and then you know you want to be the kind of person who when

they get up on Monday morning they are facing a week of working with you in

their classrooms and their laboratories they're looking forward to it. They're

not pulling the bed sheets back up over their head, they're saying, "oh! I'm looking

forward to you know I'm meeting with Garth

this morning I'm meeting with Greg this morning, this is great!" And that's

really what you want to be aiming for being yourself. [Garth] Excellent. This is a

question that we care about a lot something that I have addressed in my

own webinars and I want to see what your opinion is. And then I can you know see

if mine is the same. But one of the questions we got is how much personal

experience should you share particularly we hear this a lot in psychology when

people would say well I had some personal childhood trauma and that's

what's motivated me to come into this field or there was someone in my family

who experienced some kind of post-traumatic stress and so I'm

interested in studying post-traumatic stress how appropriate is it to

share these personal you know examples or experiences that you think are

related to your program?

[Greg] Well appropriateness not withstanding it's not

particularly helpful. And if you think about it you know the graduate program

you're going to is actually not a residential therapy program. So, while it

may be helpful that you know maybe you know maybe you have personal experience

that has helped inform some of your decision making but in terms of timing

that's not a reasonable thing to lead with. You're really there for

professional purposes and they want to know that your objectives and your

goals are really professional goals and objectives. And they're not

self-improvement and they're not resolving the family you know challenges

or crises or rifts. So, you know it's not at all I mean you could say gosh I'm

interested in you know I'm interested in you know he's always very image you can

feather in experiences. So, you know you could say I had experience you know with

behavioral management of postcardiac my you know father had a heart attack when

I was 10 or 12 and I, I was just aware that gosh there was so little follow-up

I felt I felt as if as a family we were just kind of abandoned and I would be to

our advantage to have you know follow-up care and I'm just aware that the program

or research that you're you know adjudicating here at the University just

seems to be so cutting edge to me I see the need for it and I'm particularly

interested in the gains that I've seen in reading Dr. Browns work on XY and Z. So, you move it over into the professional field because they're interested in goodness-of-fit. And goodness of fit is not for them, its goodness-of-fit between you, what you're interested in, what they do. Their

goodness if it is not between your personal interests you know resolving your personal interests and what the program can do for you in that regard. So, they're looking for how you can advance the mission the objectives of the university and the program and the program's

research within that. So that's really what you want to concentrate on. It's

like anything else, if you meet somebody you don't lead with the personal

disclosures, you lead with more professional or superficial things and

as you get to know them that you might feather in some of the more personal

motivations.

[Garth] I like how you put that talking about feathering in. And that's kind

of the same advice that we give. For example, I tell people you know my

brother had Down syndrome and that really motivated my wanting to

understand some of the neuro cognitive factors and decision making. But that was

really about all I ever said in the answer to it. I didn't go into any

great detail. So, I think you're right, that if it's a true motivator and

something that keeps you interested it's okay to reference it, but it shouldn't be

something that you dwell upon it's not an opportunity to share personal trauma

experiences because that's not what the program is about. So, I just wanted to

reinforce that, because we get that question a lot, we get that question yeah.

So, another question is you know as you're going through the process is it

okay to share if you have other interviews is it okay to share with

other programs that you might be interested in during the interview

process?

[Greg] That's a very good question I think it's fair to say that that varies

widely. I would say this: the assumption is if they're bringing you the you in

for an interview every single graduate program without exception is going to

assume that you have applied to other programs, you'd be foolish to apply to a

single program, that's putting all your eggs in one basket and they're gonna

assume that because they're bringing you in and they're an excellent program

other places are bringing you in because you're an excellent candidate. So the

bedrock assumption is they are not the only graduate program who's interested

in you or vice versa are you interested in them. So, I don't think you want to get

into a bidding wars. I don't want I don't think you want to say things

like, "gosh I kind of like it here but you know University of Michigan does it this

way or you know I see an opportunity at you know Cal State for this and I'm not

sure, I see that here." So I would I probably would not reveal at the

interview stage, I probably would not spend time revealing where else I'd

applied I would concentrate on what I saw is the distinctive advantages.

Because, don't forget you're trying to put your best foot forward to maximize

the chance of you gaining admission into that program. If I know for sure that for

questions you know what you say is taken seriously if you talk about University

of Michigan and Kent State at Ohio State three or four times during the interview

I'm thinking what are we chopped liver I'm thinking the chances are really good

you're going to be going to one of those other places and then when I have to

make a decision you know Greg versus Garth and Greg has talked all about Ohio

State Michigan and Garth has talked nothing about any other program other

than this one I'm going to offer it to Garth. Because I know Garth will come

here. Whereas I think Greg is going to go elsewhere. So, I would just be cautious in

invoking. Plus, when you invoke the names of other universities then you get into

things you don't, you're in territory you do not fully understand.

You know there could be institutional rivalries, there could be faculty

rivalries, you know we see ourselves as better than Michigan, Michigan sees

themselves as better than us. You know you don't need to introduce those

factors there you're in the deep end without knowing how deep that water is.

So, I think you just assume that they assume that you're a strong candidate,

that you've applied to other places, and that other people will be trying to

recruit you as well as they are.

[Garth] I think we have time for one more question. And I

think one that I always kind of liked to summarize or kind of end with is, as you

talked a lot about being prepared and understanding you know the type of

program you're looking for if you're going to be paired with one advisor you

should be pretty well-versed on a set of people's research but what if you're

going to a program, and I think this happens a lot more in the broad

professional programs maybe like counseling PsyD programs, where you

aren't going to be paired necessarily with a single person. How you know and

but you can't know the research of every single faculty member in the department.

So what's your approach to that scenario when it's not really you being

one-on-one mentored like you know in the type of program, I was in in a cognitive

neuroscience program well where it's more you're in the entire program and

you're being taught a broad set of professional skills, how do you how do

you navigate the faculty interests?

[Greg] Okay, that's a really good question Garth, see so

if you're in a science practice program, that would be a clinical or counseling

PhD, it's going to be pretty much exactly as your experience Garth. With a

neural cog, you're going to be going there you're gonna have a

single advisor they're going to be your primary mentor. Maybe you will

collaborate with another faculty or another research team. They're probably

90% of what you guys can do is within a given research team under the leadership

of a single faculty mentor. Now if you're applying so that you know you need to

that person inside and out and the other thing everything else in the program is

important but ancillary. If you're applying to a PsyD program it is much more

the professional model that you're describing. And what they're going to

be most interested in is that because they're gonna be making determinations.

The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. Most people when they fail

a graduate program, I don't want to go to the negative stuff but let me just be

honest with you, and they fail a graduate program it's

usually not because it grades and usually it's not usually you know

chemical dependency and some other personal issues notwithstanding it's not

because you can't do counts that are therapy it's mostly because you don't

finish your research. So, if you have done a prior piece of research a senior

thesis master's thesis whatever it may be honors thesis probably that if you're interested in pursuing that area that area is probably how they're going to match you with somebody. Don't forget if you're applying to a PsyD program most the faculty by definition are most

likely PsyD's. They're private probably not primarily researchers or they're

applied researchers. So, what they're gonna do is they're going to try to

marry your interest to the faculty or one faculty or a couple of faculty who

most closely aligned with your interest. And so, you want to be honest about

expressing what those are. "I kind of am interested in working with adolescents

right, kind of interested in eating disorders, I see myself doing something

in the substance use area." There's only gonna be one or two faculty who do

that and those are the people whose research programs you want to concentrate on. No one is going to put you into a graduate program where it's just a complete musical chairs you get there and then they kind of have to figure out shrug their shoulders and say, "well gosh what do we do with Greg? You know he was really a strong student, but we don't have a clue who he might work

with." So there will be some discussions about that and they're probably going to

ask you maybe even on interview, who do you know when you look around at our

faculty are there any particular people that your interest might fit with. You go, "well you know Dr. so-and-so works in the child area and marriage and family area or is interested in substance and that's an interest for me." And that gives them the clue they need and they will they will

try to match you. Because don't forget once they get you in there their goal is

the same as yours. You don't know this you think your goals to get into

graduate school, that is not your goal your goal is to get out of graduate

school. Because if your goal is only to get in and then you attrite. Yeah that is

attrition. Then you have not accomplished your goal. Your goal is accomplished at

the point you graduate and the same is true for the graduate program. Their goal

is not achieved when you're admitted it's when you're graduated. So they want

to invest in you and they do not want to bring somebody on board who they don't

feel they can match and meet their needs and it's a recipe for disappointment and

for subsequent attrition. So they will have a discussion with you, "what do you

think your interests are, could you see yourself as working with them" and they

will you know they will quite literally you know sort of talk with the various

faculty you expressed interest in and work out and match it maximizes the

goodness of fit your likelihood of succeeding.

[Garth] And I think we're actually up over the one hour period and I think that's a great place for us to end here because I think you summarized what our entire theme for the

entire webinar series here. That it's not just getting into graduate school

it's getting through. Which is actually some of the other segments that that we

offered and that some of the people here hopefully were able to attend.

So with that Greg I want to thank you very much for your time today and for

joining us and for all the wonderful advice that you just gave all our

all our attendees. And as a way of wrapping up I do want to remind you that

there will be a quick survey at the end of this that well as it pops up as we

close out of this you will be able to keep an eye on your email we will be

sending in a couple weeks once we get the video downloaded if we have to do

some formatting work on it but a link to the video. And if you are a member of

this series and you've been coming regularly then you should realize that

there are other resources from this webinar that you should be able to go

and check. I just also wanted to give a quick promotion to just the other

resources that we've had on our graduate psychology education and training

website. We do have our blog where we summarized all these aspects called "Your

your road map to graduate school." So that kind of was the outline for the series

of these webinars, and also if you're attending some of the regional

psychology meetings in particular I know at the moment that we'll be able be

doing a live workshop for at the Eastern Psychological Association workshop. Our

meeting in Boston this year so there'll be an opportunity to see this live if

you're going to be in that area. And with that I thank you very much and have a

good afternoon.