INCLUSIVE

Career Advancement

PROGRAM

Mastering the Interview: Part 2

Making a Strong Impression During the Interview

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF Human Services
Vocational Rehabilitation

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Today's Presenter

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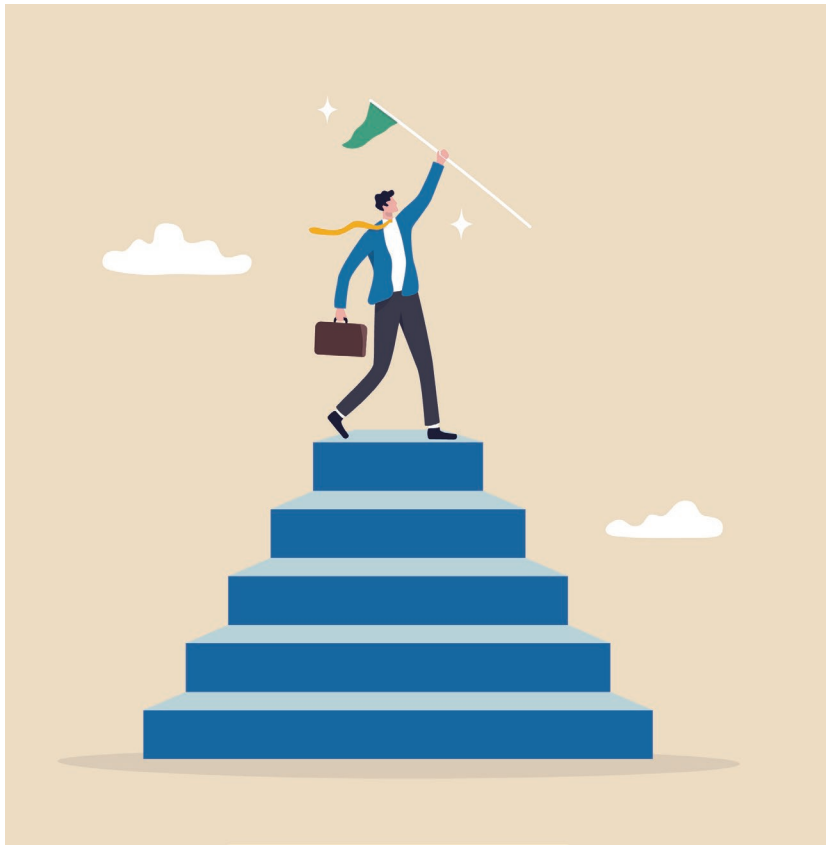


Mastering the Job Interview Series

- Part 1: Preparing for the Interview
- **Part 2: Making a Strong Impression During the Interview**
- Part 3: After the Interview—What's next?



Positive First Impressions



- Punctual and prepared
- Appearance and clothing
- Emotional state (calm and collected)
- Present and in the moment
- Greeting expectations
- Body posture/gestures
- Facial expressions
- Demonstrate genuine interest
- Vocal tone, speed, clarity, and confidence

Disclosure: You Choose

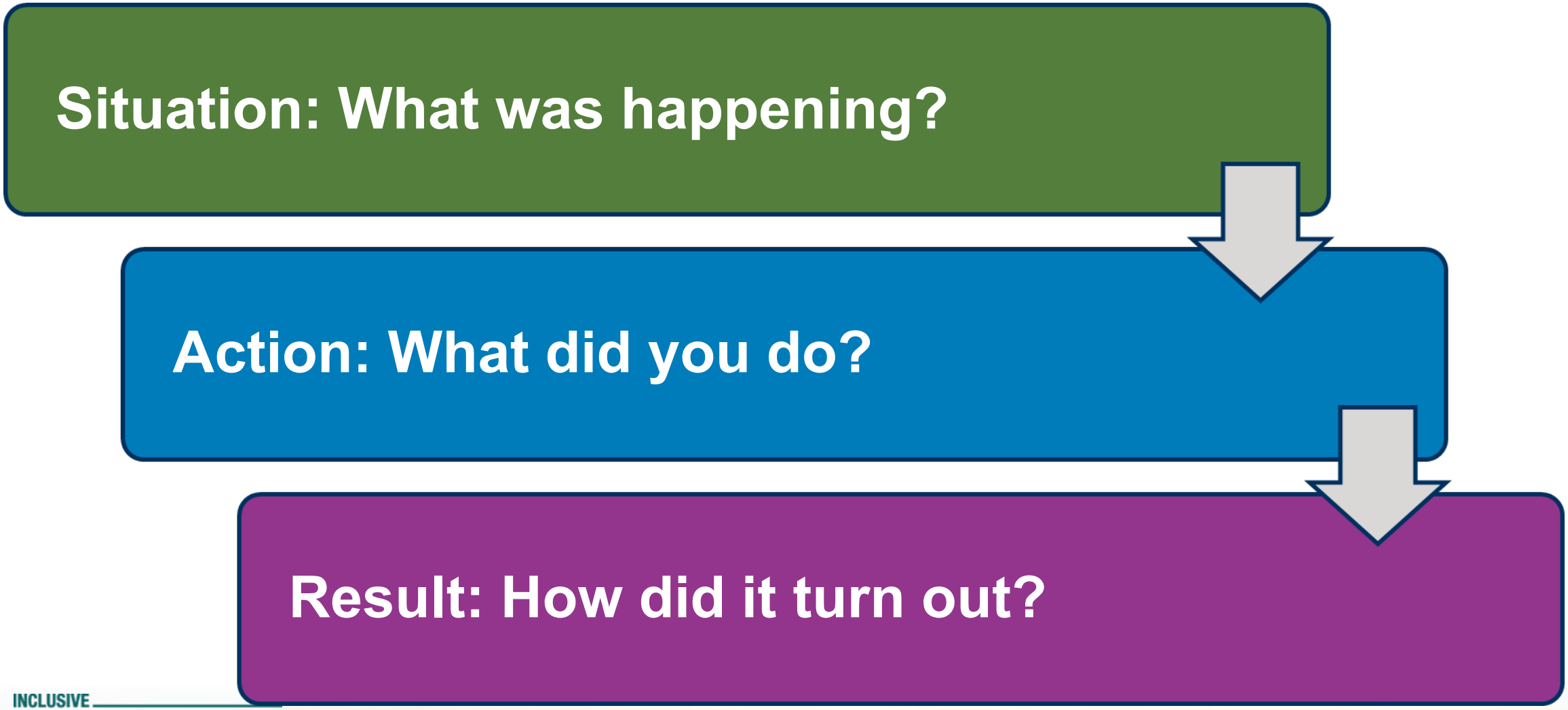
- Employers may questions about your ability to perform tasks that are necessary for the job.
- They should not ask directly about your disability.
- If they ask directly about your disability, you can choose not to disclose.
- Instead of answering questions about your disability, you can direct the conversation back to your skills and qualifications.



Common Types of Interview Questions

- Strengths/growth areas
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Handling conflict
- Dealing with a mistake
- Preferred work environment/leadership style
- Reasons you are looking for a new role
- Top 20 Interview Questions and Answers—Indeed

Providing Strong Answers to Interview Questions



Example of a Strong Answer

Situation: The weather was bad and some of my co-workers couldn't make it to work.

Action: I offered to stay late to cover until more people could get there safely.

Result: My co-workers were very appreciative and offered to cover a shift for me in the future. My boss said it showed I was a good team player.

Losing Focus During the Interview

Interviews are not about perfection. Employers are most impressed by effort, attitude, and honesty.

Tip: You can bring note cards with you to the interview.

Stress can cause us to lose focus in the moment, and this can be scary in an interview.

If this happens to you:

- pause for a moment and take a deep breath;
- ask the interviewer to repeat the question if needed;
- use a bridge phrase (“That’s a great question.”); or
- ask to circle back to the question later if you can’t think of an answer.

Example: Blanking Out During an Interview

Jen is in an interview and is nervous. She loses focus for a moment and realizes she missed the last question the interviewer asked her.

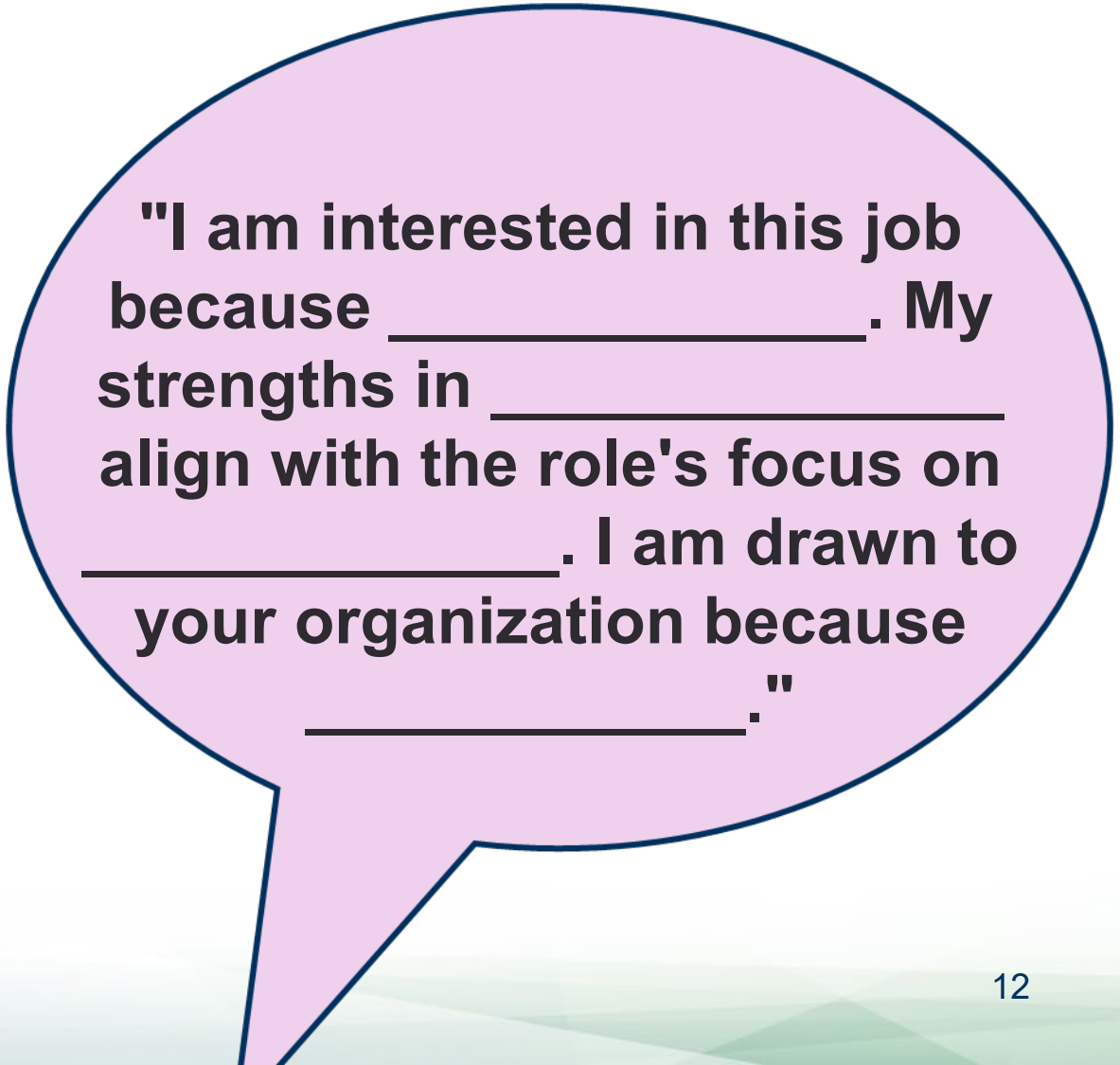
Jen: (Takes a deep breath and sits up straight) *"Could you please repeat that question?"*

Interviewer: *"Sure. What leadership opportunities have you had that have prepared you for this role?"*

Jen: (Reminds herself to slow down and think about the scripts she practiced during mock interviews). *"I am glad you asked, because I think leadership skills are really important. One way that I have gained leadership experience is by volunteering in my local community. I organized a neighborhood cleanup event last fall and I am also helping to start a community garden this summer. Leadership is an area in which I would like to grow, and I would love any opportunities the company can provide to develop my leadership skills even more."*

Answering "Why do you want this job?"

1. **Start with you** (strengths, interests, personal goals)
2. **Connect to the job** (how the specific job connects to your skills, experience, values, interests, etc.)
3. **Connect to the employer** (how their mission aligns with your values, something that excites you about the organization, etc.)



Ending with Thoughtful Questions

1. Show you have done your background work.

"I saw on the website, you are starting a new _____ program. Will this position have anything to do with growing that new program?"

2. Communicate that you are looking ahead to the future.

"What kind of skill-building or leadership opportunities do you see in this role within the near future?"

3. Ask questions that allow you to assess whether this role is a good match for you.

"*What are some examples of projects I would be working on?"*

Resources

Indeed—How to send a follow-up email after an interview—video

ICAP Contacts

If you have questions or would like additional information, contact:

ICAP direct email: ICAP@odhs.oregon.gov

Vocational Rehabilitation general email:
vr.info@odhs.oregon.gov