**Group Interviews**

Group Interviews are a fast and effective way to expedite the hiring process. The concept was created to cut down on the amount of time it takes to fill open positions in the practice. Another advantage is that you can now have all of the applicants available for the job in front of you at the same time and that is both interesting and helpful.

There is an exact protocol for scheduling applicants and conducting a successful group interview. Start with determining a day, time and location for the group interview to take place. Consider your parking situation when choosing a time. It’s often better to do the group interview when the practice is not seeing patients. Allow approximately 1.5 hours for the entire process.

**Preparation**

Before you start the process of the Group Interview you will need to do the following:

* Update the Job Description for the position you are trying to fill
* Prepare an ad and determine how long it will run
* Print copies of the Employment Application and Job Description
* Confirm the day and time for the Group Interview
* Set up a blind email account to receive resumes from applicants
* Place the employment ad
* Recruit someone to pose as an applicant [undercover in the group]
* You will need paper clips [place on each application] and pens
* Prepare a Sign In Sheet so applicants can enter their name and arrival time
* Receive and review resumes
* Begin contacting and inviting qualified applicants. You may or may not tell them it is a Group Interview. Ask them to bring an original hard copy of their resume to see how well they follow instructions. Not everyone will show up for the interview. State the time and location and let them know you are looking forward to meeting them. Don’t get into long conversations over the phone.

You will need to appoint a representative [yourself, or someone else in your practice] in advance to give a short presentation to the group. This has been extremely helpful as part of the Group Interview. A short presentation is given to the group and then afterwards, they are asked to turn their application over and write down as much as they can remember from the presentation. This allows you to see what they can recall, if the information/topics were duplicated properly or changed, their penmanship, spelling, grammar, and sentence composition. These are all very important and necessary in all positions. The presenter will give a description of the practice, mission statement, history, doctor, goals and positions available. Give specific information like, “The doctor graduated from dental school in 1999 and started this practice in 2005.” The presentation should last no longer than 5 to 7 minutes.

**The Day of the Group Interview**

Have the uncover applicant go into the designated area and wait for the applicants to arrive. This person will be paying close attention to what the others are saying and how they are interacting.

As each candidate arrives, they are greeted and asked to sign in and include their time of arrival. They are then directed to the designated area. This could be the reception room or staff lounge, depending on your office. Make note of anyone that arrives late.

Begin handing out the employment applications about five minutes after the appointment time. Make note of anyone that came without something to write with. A paper clip should be placed on each application ahead of time. The applicants will be asked to fill out the application and attach their resume. The undercover person will fill out an application as well, but making note of the reactions of the other applicants, things they are saying under their breath etc.

There will be a time limit of 20 minutes for filling out the application. The applicant will keep the application and their resume with them.

The pre-appointed person that will be making the short presentation to the applicants will now start presenting. The last thing he/she will say to the group is, “Turn your application over to the back of the last page and write down everything you can remember about the presentation I just gave.” The applicants will now write down what they can recall from the presentation. This is interesting because it shows how well they listen and duplicate what was said.

The applications and resumes should be collected as the applicants finish their write up.

Take the applications to another room and go through each of them. Look at the back of the application to see how each one did with recalling the contents of the presentation. This may be more beneficial than the amount of experience they have. Applicants that do not fit the criteria will be dismissed. All others will be interviewed at that time. The goal is to find someone that day and get them hired.

Send letters to everyone else that came and was not hired. Let them know the position has been filled and you will be keeping their application on file.

The Group Interview is an efficient and effective way to hire staff; it’s also a lot of fun.