



Rural Recruiting with Structured Interviews: Weaving Assessment, Recruitment and Equity

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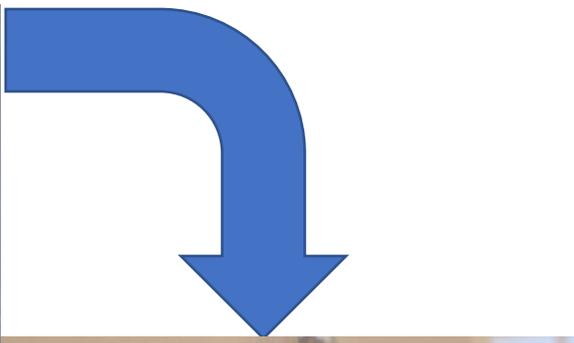
Who We Are

- Sky Lakes Medical Center – Community Partner and Site
- Oregon Health & Science University – university-administered
- Cascades East Family Medicine Center
- Joyce Hollander-Rodriguez – Program Director; Associate Dean of Rural Campus; CEFM Class of 2003
- Nellie Wirsing – Recruitment Lead; Medical Student Ed Lead; CEFM Class of 2006
- Dallas Swanson – APD of Education; CEFM Class of 2019



Not Inventors of the Wheel

- Best Practices for Conducting Residency Program Interviews
 - [AAMC Website](#)
- Holistic Review Primer for Program Directors
 - Jennifer Swails, MD, the program director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program at McGovern Medical School at the University of Texas Houston
- Larry Swanson, math teacher



The Recruitment Process

Match Process Mismatch

ERAS Application

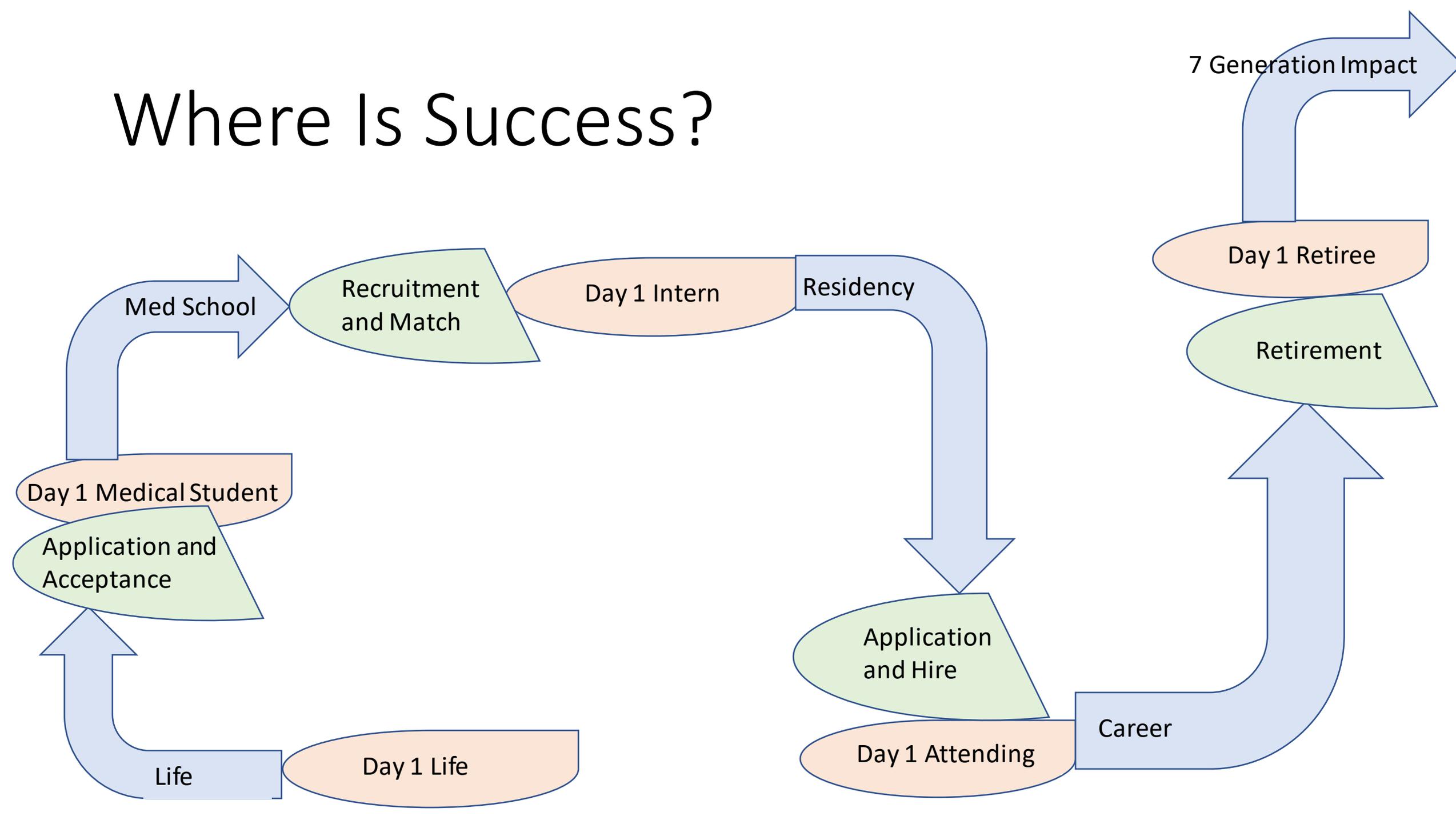
ERAS Supplementary

Interview

Other Recruitment Interactions

Rank List Submission

Where Is Success?



Structured Interviews



- "Interview designed to improve reliability and validity by increasing standardization
 - *Content-related components* increase the standardization of the interview content, such as asking questions that are job-related and asking the same questions to all applicants.
 - *Evaluation-related components* increase standardization of the evaluation process, such as using rating scales to evaluate the interview and training interviewers on evaluation procedures."

Integral Steps to Interview Success

Decide on
the
interview
day's
purpose

Identify key
experiences,
attributes
and metrics

Write good
questions

Write a
good
interview
rubric

Train
interviewers

Incorporate
the score
into the
ranking
process

A scenic rural landscape featuring a wooden fence in the foreground, a grassy field, and a forested mountain range in the background under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

Challenges and Opportunities in Rural Residency Interviews

Are we recruiting or assessing or both?

Are we recruiting or assessing or both?

Recruiting

- Benefits of training in a rural setting
- Attributes of the program
 - People
 - Place
 - Curricular opportunities
- Sharing the mission
- Sense of place

Assessing

- Rural interest and commitment
- Discerning successful future performance
 - Clinical skills and knowledge
 - Ability to work in the team
 - Ability to integrate into the community
- Mission alignment
- Sense of place



Which approach takes the primary role in your recruitment?

Do you know which one you are doing with each part of your recruitment day?

Are we recruiting or assessing or both?

Recruiting

- Benefits of training in a rural setting
- Attributes of the program
 - People
 - Place
 - Curricular opportunities
- Sharing the mission
- Sense of place
- Role of unstructured interviews





Assessing

- Rural interest and commitment
- Discerning successful future performance
 - Clinical skills and knowledge
 - Ability to work in the team
 - Ability to integrate into the community
 - Role of structured interviews
- Mission alignment
- Sense of place

Sense of Place in Recruiting

- **Place identity** – defining ourselves in relation to community and environment
- **Place attachment** – the love and bond felt for the place
- **Place dependence** – the opportunities a setting provides for goals and activity needs

- **Challenges and opportunities:**
 - **Familiarity:** Pathway programs and local ties
 - **Out of area:** "expat" sub-communities and integration

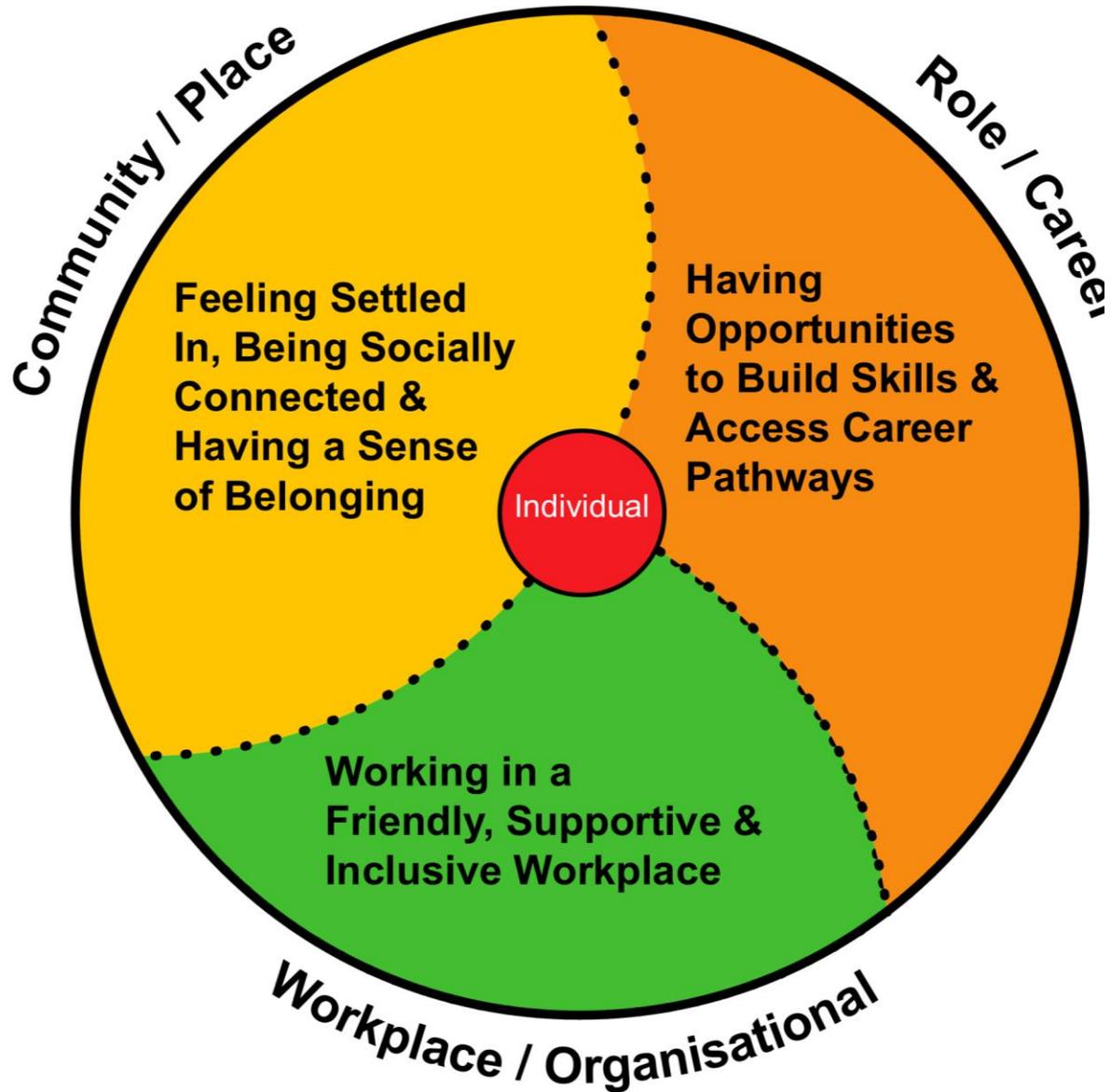




Sense of Place and Equity

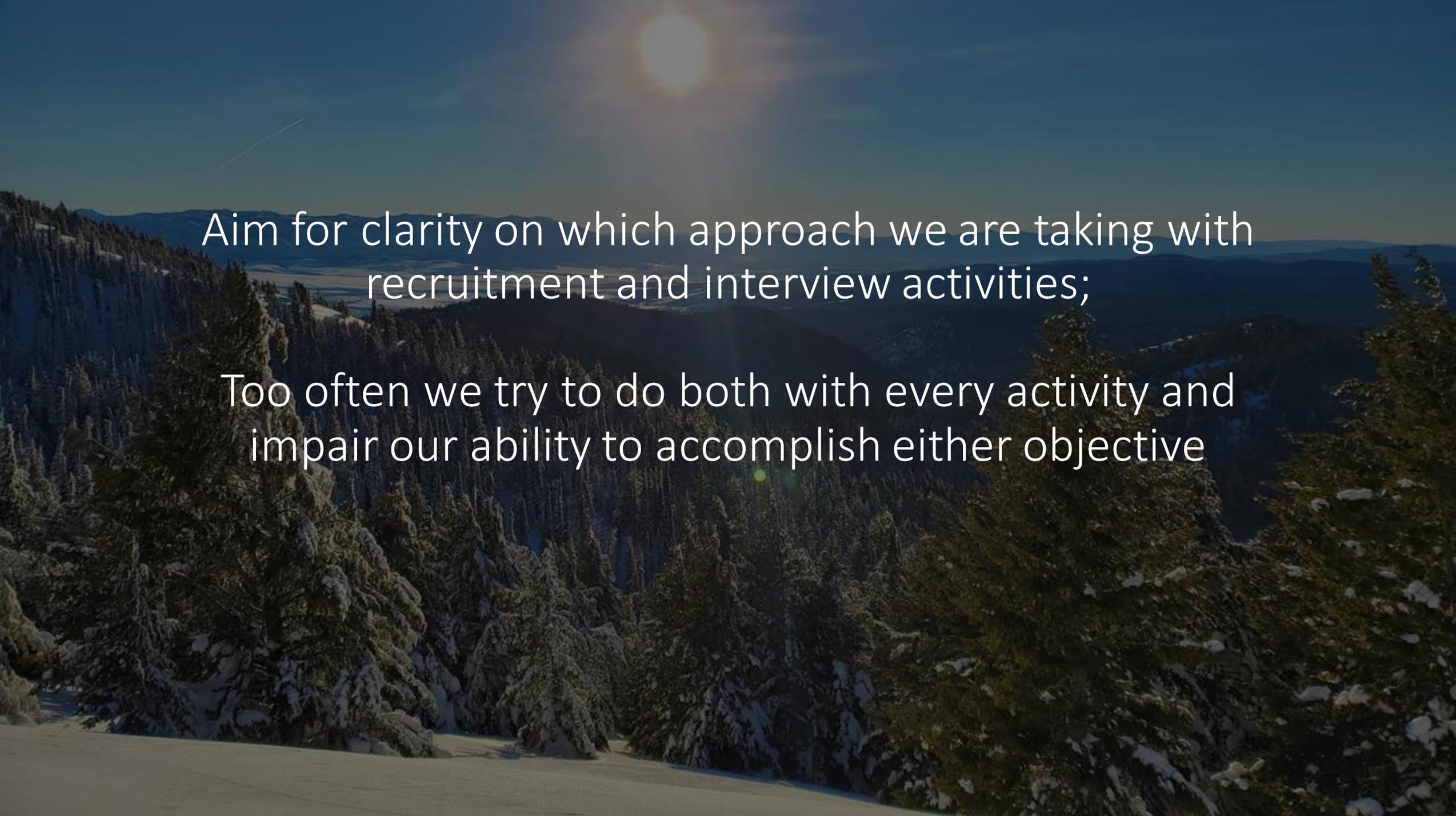
- **Equity and Virtual recruitment**
 - **Rural mortality penalty** means that access to primary care is equity and justice work
 - **Recruiting to rural programs** requires a greater acknowledgement of sense of place and context
 - **Recruiting underrepresented learners** requires greater awareness of resource scarcity AND greater acknowledgement of context





"Whole of Person" framework

- **Program Culture:**
 - Supportive workplace
 - Organizational learning and working environment
- **Curriculum:**
 - opportunities for training and growth
 - Procedures, clinical skills
- **Community/Place:**
 - Sense of belonging
 - Being socially connected
 - Being community-engaged and rooted

A scenic view of a snowy mountain landscape. The foreground shows a snow-covered slope leading down to a dense forest of evergreen trees, many of which are heavily laden with snow. In the background, rolling hills and mountains are visible under a clear blue sky. A bright sun is positioned in the upper center of the frame, creating a lens flare effect. The overall atmosphere is bright and crisp.

Aim for clarity on which approach we are taking with recruitment and interview activities;

Too often we try to do both with every activity and impair our ability to accomplish either objective

Integral Steps to Interview Success

Decide on
the purpose
of your
interview
day

Identify your
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Write good
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Our Mission

We educate family physicians to deliver innovative, comprehensive healthcare and serve our communities as leaders in rural family medicine.

Our Aims

1. Enhance **person-centered health** through comprehensive, culturally-respectful, whole-person health care for rural and under-resourced communities

2. Cultivate a **residency culture** that fosters leadership, collaboration, creativity, adaptability, and community-responsiveness.

3. Promote a **meaningful and sustainable work life** through reflection, resilience, comprehensive practice, community engagement, and professional development

4. Model and train in **leadership, innovation, and excellence** in comprehensive rural family medicine

Fit

- "**Person-organization fit** refers to compatibility between an applicant's personality, attitudes, work and learning style/preferences, and goals and the organization's culture.
- **Person-job fit** refers to compatibility between an applicant's competencies, knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes and the competencies and characteristics required to learn and perform the job successfully."



What We're Looking For



Experience

Rural
Work
Volunteer
Leadership



Attribute

Compassionate
Adaptable
Humanistic
Prompt & Courteous
Trustworthy



Metric

Passed Step/COMLEX
Excelled in Training
Spanish-Speaker
Underrepresented in
Medicine





Hybrid Interview Model

Successes and Challenges

Our Version of Hybrid Model

- Combination of structured and unstructured interviews. Applicants have:
 - Two unstructured interviews
 - One with PD
 - One with a resident
 - One structured interview
 - 2 faculty—one being a BH faculty





Unstructured Interviews

- Open format
- Interviews have reviewed applications in advance
- No standardized questions
- Explore applicants' interest in program
- Open for applicant questions
- Evaluation on interpersonal/communication skills only



Successes of Unstructured Interview

- Comfortable, feels lower stakes for applicants
- Gets a sense for interpersonal interactions
- Can tailor information to applicant's interest
- Able to address applicant questions/concerns
- Assesses person-person(organization?) fit

Challenges of Unstructured Interview

- Increased unconscious bias
 - i.e. unfair assessment
- Limited insight into future performance
 - i.e. invalid assessment
- Difficult to standardize interviewers
 - i.e. unreliable assessment





Structured Interviews

- Standard format
- Interviewers have not reviewed applications
- Four standardized questions asked to all applicants
 - Two situational questions
 - Two questions to address shared mission/goals
- Evaluates how applicants perform under pressure
- Standard scoring rubric which was practiced by interviewers and focus group of current residents and faculty



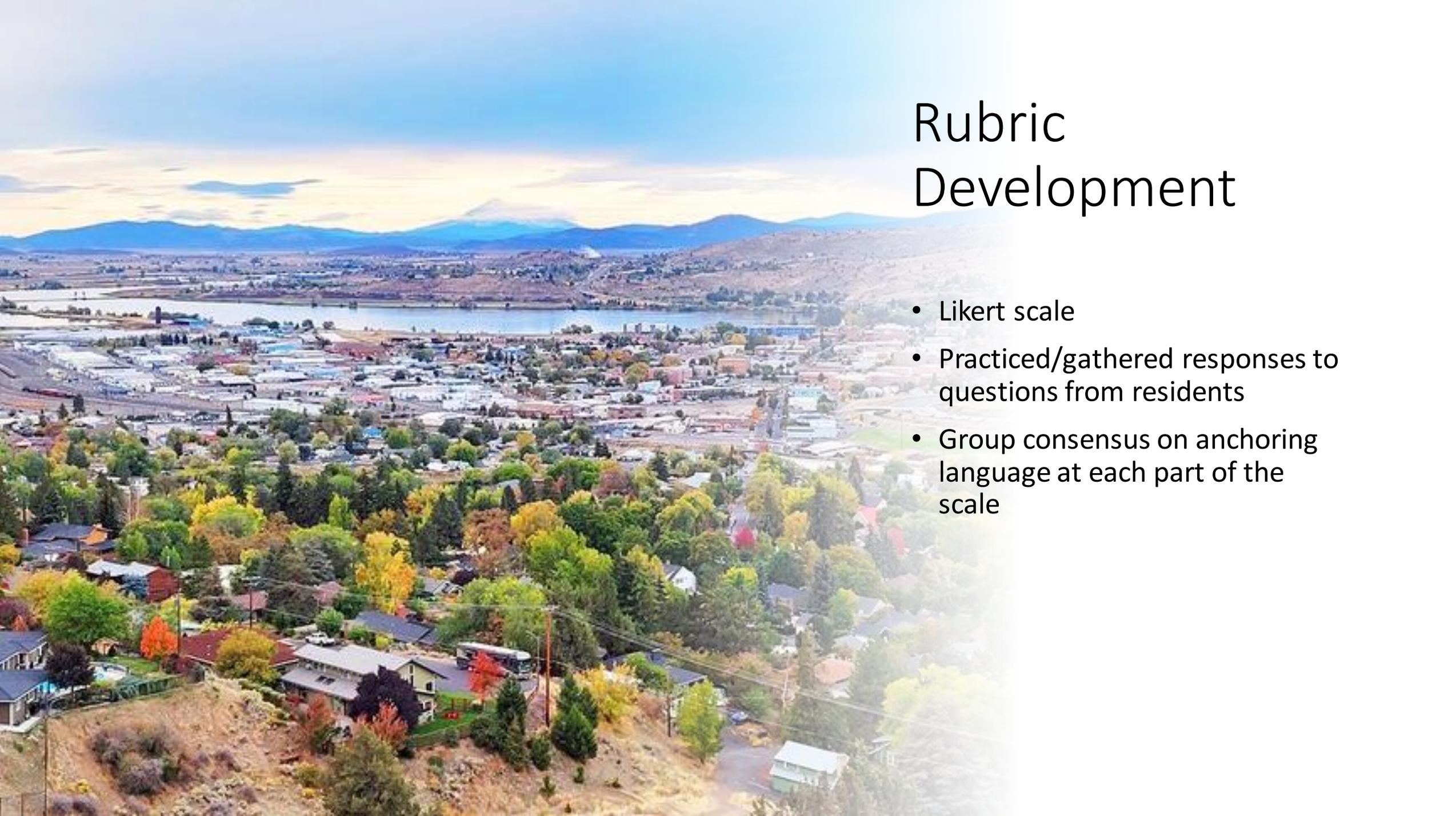
Successes of Structured Interview

- Decreased unconscious bias
- Improved residents' perception of the process being fair, reliable and valid
- Potential increase in diversity
- Improved ability to assess person-job and person-organization fit



Challenges of Structured Interview

- Applicant acceptability (rigidity/formality)
- Labor intensive--
 - Need to develop questions
 - Train interviewers on interview process
 - Develop/train the scoring rubric
- Required multiple interviewers
- Questions at risk of being revealed, applicants could game the system

An aerial photograph of a town, likely in a mountainous region, featuring a large lake in the middle ground and mountains in the background under a clear sky. The foreground shows residential areas with trees in autumn colors.

Rubric Development

- Likert scale
- Practiced/gathered responses to questions from residents
- Group consensus on anchoring language at each part of the scale

Interviewer Training

- Role play
- Practice scoring
- Written script for consistency
- Interviewed in dyads
- Small group of selected interviewers
- Scoring debriefing





Thinking Ahead to Next Year

- Structured interviews should get easier with time/additional experience
- Structured interviews added important information on applicants
- Will need to create new questions yearly
- Challenging to determine how much to weigh structured vs non-structured interviews in final scores
- Need to review/revamp pre-standardized interview scripting

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By the
questions we
ask you, we
are telling you
who we are.

Match Information Capture

ERAS Application

ERAS Supplementary

Interview

Other Recruitment Interactions

Rank List Submission

Applicant 1	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7			
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				
Applicant 2	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7			
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				

ERAS Application & Supplementary

- Applicant 1 – invited to interview
- Applicant 2 – invited to interview

Applicant 1	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7			
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				
Question 1	11			
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				
Applicant 2	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7			
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				
Question 1	16			
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				

Structured Interview

- Applicant 1 – on topic, but average development
- Applicant 2 – well-processed and comprehensive

Applicant 1	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score			
Statement	7						
Organization Fit							
Job Fit							
Question 1	11						
Question 2							
Question 3							
Question 4							
PD Communication	5						
Res Communication							
DEI & Regional Home Rubric	3						
Staff Rubric	2						
Applicant 2	Score				Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7						
Organization Fit							
Job Fit							
Question 1	16						
Question 2							
Question 3							
Question 4							
PD Communication	3						
Res Communication							
DEI & Regional Home Rubric	1						
Staff Rubric	1						

Other Recruitment Interactions

- Applicant 1 – kind, roots in the Klamath Basin; speaks Spanish
- Applicant 2 – lack of respect for PD ; condescending to resident; no connection and demanding

Applicant 1	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7			
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				
Question 1	11			
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				
PD Communication	5			
Res Communication				
DEI & Regional Home Rubric	3			
Staff Rubric	2			
Total	28			

Applicant 2	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7			
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				
Question 1	16			
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				
PD Communication	3			
Res Communication				
DEI & Regional Home Rubric	1			
Staff Rubric	1			
Total	28			

Raw Match Information

- Applicant 1 – Score of 28
- Applicant 2 – Score of 28

Applicant 1	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7	6.75	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				
Question 1	11	13.67		
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				
PD Communication	5	5.05		
Res Communication				
DEI & Regional Home Rubric	3	0.6		
Staff Rubric	2	1.95		
Total	28	28.02		
Applicant 2	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7	6.75	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				
Question 1	16	13.67		
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				
PD Communication	3	5.05		
Res Communication				
DEI & Regional Home Rubric	1	0.6		
Staff Rubric	1	1.95		
Total	28	28.02		

Using raw data, both applicants would be in the middle of our match list

Z - scores

$$Z - \text{score} = \frac{\text{Score} - \text{Average}}{\text{Standard Deviation}}$$

- Z scores ask – How rare are you?
 - -3 = in the bottom 1%
 - -1 = in the bottom 15%
 - 0 = the most average person on the planet
 - +1 = in the top 15%
 - +3 = in the top 1%

Applicant 1	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7	6.75	0.265957	-
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				
Question 1	11	13.67	-0.98889	
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				
PD Communication	5	5.05	-0.01111	
Res Communication				
DEI & Regional Home Rubric	3	0.6	3.076923	
Staff Rubric	2	1.95	0.113636	
Total	28	28.02	2.456517	
Applicant 2	Score	Average	Z-Score	
Statement	7	6.75	0.265957	-
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				
Question 1	16	13.67	0.862963	
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				
PD Communication	3	5.05	-0.45556	
Res Communication				
DEI & Regional Home Rubric	1	0.6	0.512821	
Staff Rubric	1	1.95	-2.15909	
Total	28	28.02	-0.97291	

Stratified Based on Rarity

- Applicant 1 – Significantly Above Average Applicant
- Applicant 2 – Significantly Below Average Applicant

Applicant 1	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7	6.75	0.265957	1.06383
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				
Question 1	11	13.67	-0.98889	-6.92222
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				
PD Communication	5	5.05	-0.01111	-0.07778
Res Communication				
DEI & Regional Home Rubric	3	0.6	3.076923	12.30769
Staff Rubric	2	1.95	0.113636	0.340909
Total	28	28.02	2.456517	6.712431

Applicant 2	Score	Average	Z-Score	Weighted Z-Score
Statement	7	6.75	0.265957	1.06383
Organization Fit				
Job Fit				
Question 1	16	13.67	0.862963	6.040741
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				
PD Communication	3	5.05	-0.45556	-3.18889
Res Communication				
DEI & Regional Home Rubric	1	0.6	0.512821	2.051282
Staff Rubric	1	1.95	-2.15909	-6.47727
Total	28	28.02	-0.97291	-0.51031

Further Emphasis

- Weight the Z-scores by factors to further emphasize one part of the application



Meeting Your Program's Needs Within a Hybrid Interview Model

Key Steps for Developing Behavioral Interview Questions

1. Identify your experiences, attributes and metrics
2. Decide on the purpose of your interview day
3. Write good questions
4. Write a good interview rubric
5. Train interviewers
6. Interview season!
7. Incorporate the score into the ranking process



Key Steps for Developing Behavioral Interview Questions

- "Identify key requirements of the PGY-1 position
- Determine which 3-5 competencies to target in the interview
- Develop behavioral or situational questions for each competency
- Invite faculty to review draft questions and map them to the competencies
- Retain only the questions that map to the target competencies
- Document the process and explain how the target competencies and items were selected"



Share Out Your
Questions



Thank you for all you do.

Resources

- AAMC Best Practices for Conducting Residency Program Interviews
- <https://www.aamc.org/about-us/mission-areas/medical-education/best-practices-conducting-residency-program-interviews>



Interested in
scripting
ideas?

- 
- If you're interested in seeing the scripting we used, email Nellie at nellie.wirsing@skylakes.org. She will email you a copy!
 - Additional questions? You can reach us at
 - dallas.swanson@skylakes.org
 - joyce.hollanderrodriguez@skylakes.org