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**Title:** Working with Others in Health and Social Care: My  
Experiences and Development

SWOT is a decision-making tool used by businesses, market researchers and even individuals. Its acronym stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and it can be used to assess and make informed decisions of situations (Helms and Nixon, 2010). It's simple framework allows for quick and easy construction and it can be used for a single event or over a period of time. It has been praised for its simplicity since its introduction in the 1960's (Phadermrod, Crowder and Wills, 2016) and was the second most frequently used analytic tool when surveyed by the Competitive Intelligent Foundation (Fehringer, Hohhof, 2006).

Given its ability to be adaptable, easily used and provide analytical data, the SWOT framework was used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a prior interview undertaken by myself to assist in maintaining my strengths, whilst providing insight for improvements for future interviews, making use of both my viewpoint and the interviewer's feedback.

When dressing for the interview I made sure to dress smart, with formal trousers, shirt and shoes. My attire was also commented upon during my feedback confirming I had dressed accordingly. I arrived ahead of time, greeted the interviewer with a smile and displayed open body language. My aim was to create a good initial impression. Throughout the interview I continued to keep engaged and make regular eye contact. Personal appearance, which includes body language, facial expressions as well as the clothing worn, is extremely important with research showing fifty-five percent of a person's first impression is based on appearance and behaviour (Corfield, 2009). According to a journal by Martin and Hodgson (2006) non-verbal communication is important in building trust and mutual respect. Corfield (2009) agrees that smiling is a 'powerful signal', providing reassurance to the other party that you are safe and by keeping eye contact and an open body-language you are showing you are interested in them (Rogers, 1959).

Further strengths identified by both parties was my ability to answer questions comprehensively, drawing from my skills and experiences. The STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method is a good way to ensure to fully answer any questions as it is easy to remember and aids highlighting of skills, experience and qualities you have. It also serves as a good preparation tool when preparing for the interview (National Careers Service, 2023).

One of my weaknesses is I always get very nervous, and this was also referred to in my feedback. This is something I have always dealt with and whilst I have improved it is still a big hurdle for me to overcome. In order to help my nerves on the day, I did prepare for the interview by reviewing the job description and thinking of scenarios I could use to answer questions around the subject area as well as looking at the general website for information. Immediately before and during the interview, I tried to control my nerves by slowing my breathing as slow, deep breathing can help to calm the mind and body (Royal College of Nursing, 2023). During the interview I also made sure to ask the interviewer to repeat the questions where necessary so I knew I was answering correctly and paused briefly to think before I began answering.

In order to overcome my nerves and improve my overall confidence whilst being interviewed I could look into some alternative therapies such as mindfulness practices as it can be helpful to manage stress and anxiety (National Health Service, 2022). Psychologist Kelly McGonigal (2014) also has a video entitled "how to make stress your friend" which is promoted by the Royal College of Nursing, along with a video entitled "How to turn anxiety into excitement" (The Atlantic, 2016) and these could also be useful way for me to help control my nerves.

Making sure I am prepared for an interview is always going to be a beneficial task. By ensuring I research the company and the vacancy I am interviewing for, and preparing answers for any likely questions I can ensure I am as prepared as I can be for the actual interview itself. Usually, the employer will have written down, in detail, what the post involves and by preparing responses to evidence how you meet the requirements, you are likely to be able to answer the job-related questions (Corfield, 2009).

Unfortunately, nerves have a huge impact on me, for interviews, public speaking, tests etcetera so even with undertaking self-help for my nervousness, it is something that will take a great deal of time and effort to at least overcome them to manageable level. By ensuring I am as prepared as I can be for any event especially interviews, I should at least reduce my anxiety and nerves partly and this is something I do have control over. By preparing well it will also help to order my thoughts, allowing acceptance of my nerves whilst calming my nerves to a level I am in control of (Su, 2016).

To make sure I am prepared for an interview, or in fact any event, I need to ensure I dedicate enough time to allow for the research and practise of likely questions, comprehensive examples. To do this

requires good time management skills. In life we often have many tasks to undertake at any given moment so ensuring time is allocated for research and preparation is a necessity. There are several steps that a person can take to aid time management leading up to an interview. For example, by simply creating a list of what tasks are likely to be required leading up to the event. Further still by detailing the task, due date, time needed to complete it allows a realistic demand on your time and shows where you have time to allow for preparation without the possibility of losing track (NHS Inform, 2023).

Overall, I am pleased with how my interview went but by carrying out the SWOT analysis I have been able to see areas I can improve upon, what areas I should endeavour to repeat and ways in which I can help myself improve. I will certainly look into the aids I have found and look into this more as I do feel that I would benefit from them, not only for interviews but for presentations and any stressful situations.

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