

## Foundations of Emergency Medicine

### Foundations III: Guided Small Group Experience

## Personal Development

### Session 6: “The Job Search I”

#### ❖ Agenda and Learning Objectives

- Case Part I – Practice Environments (15 min)
  - Compare and contrast various post-residency employment opportunities
- Case Part II – The Application Timeline (10 min)
  - Describe the necessary steps and timeline for job application
- Case Part III – Cover Letter and CV Development (15 min)
  - List the necessary items to be included in a cover letter
  - List the necessary items to be included in a CV
  - Brainstorm personal cover letter key words, references and CV items
- Case Concludes (10 min)
  - Review Session Teaching Points

#### ❖ Note to Facilitators

This is the first in a two-part series covering the fundamentals of the job search. This session covers the job search up to the interview including a discussion of different practice environments, the timeline of the job application process as well as the fundamentals of CV and cover letter development. The second session will cover the job search from the interview through negotiation and contract evaluation.

In order to prepare for this session, please review the attached materials. If your program has examples of effective cover letters and/or CVs, it may be useful to print versions to hand out to the residents during the session. This session is primarily a question led group discussion, having a black or white board available to record discussion points may be helpful. Finally, there is a short individual activity at the end of the session to allow residents time to brainstorm for their own CVs and cover letters. There is a worksheet attached to this instructor guide you may print out to distribute to each resident or otherwise, ask the residents to use a pen/paper or computer to brainstorm using the prompts provided.

#### ❖ Case Part I – Practice Environments (15 min)

*It is September. Jenny is an outstanding Chief Resident -- perhaps, the best in several years. She has left an impact in just her first few months as chief, redesigning the didactic conference curriculum and producing a fair resident schedule many months in advance. Jenny has enjoyed her teaching role more than she anticipated but is uncertain about life as a clinician educator.*

*She had previously planned to enter private practice with a small, democratic, physician-owned group. Now she is strongly considering applying for a job at the hospital where she is currently a resident. Her wife is concerned that she will make less money and be burned out 'just like her attendings'.*

❖ **Discussion Questions with Teaching Points**

- **What are the advantages/disadvantages of private practice in a community hospital?**  
**Note to facilitators:** Please lead a discussion with your group. Brainstorm a list of pros and cons for practice at a non-teaching hospital. Ask a trainee to record on a white board.
  - Advantages (examples)
    - Higher salary
    - Perform procedures without trainees
    - More autonomy in clinical unit
    - Small medical staff/better professional relationships
  - Disadvantages (examples)
    - More clinical shifts
    - Monotony of clinical practice
    - Less local availability for CME
    - More difficult to stay up-to-date
  
- **What are the advantages/disadvantages of an academic position as a clinician educator?**  
**Note to facilitators:** Please lead a discussion with your group. Brainstorm a list of pros and cons for practice at a non-teaching hospital. Ask a trainee to record on a white board.
  - Advantages (examples)
    - Opportunity to teach
    - Less clinical obligations
    - Protected time for teaching and administrative work
    - Complex tertiary care patients
    - Variety in work (clinical work, teaching, research etc)
  - Disadvantages (examples)
    - Lower salary
    - More institutional complexity/bureaucracy
    - Many competing demands for time
    - Variable expectations for time-intensive scholarship
  
- **Are there any important advantages/disadvantages for other practice types?**  
**Note to facilitators:** Please lead a discussion with your group. Brainstorm a list of pros and cons for practice at a non-teaching hospital. Ask a trainee to record on a white board.

- Corporate Groups
    - Higher salaries, but often tiered and not necessarily fair or equitable
    - Many are not 'democratic' in leadership
    - Flexible, can easily transfer to other hospitals within the corporate group
  - Fellowships
    - Ability to develop a niche
    - Support for additional training opportunities
    - Mentorship
    - Less clinical hours
    - Low salary
  - Locum Tenens
    - Higher salaries
    - Flexible schedules
    - Variable ancillary support
    - Travel is expected
- **What requirements are there for being a faculty member at an academic institution per ACGME? What is a "core faculty"?**
    - Maximum 28 clinical hour per week
    - 1 piece of scholarship per year averaged over 5 years
    - 20% attendance at resident conference
    - Active mentoring and bedside teaching role
  - **Is Jenny competitive enough to apply for a job at her residency program? What do Chairs look for when considering faculty candidates?**
    - There is no correct answer to this question → large variation between sites
    - Some seek fellowship training to develop their niche and fit into a faculty group
    - Some things chairs look for:
      - Growth mindset
      - Eager to develop additional skills
      - Enjoy engaging and teaching residents
      - Experience with mentoring, teaching, research or curriculum design
  - **How do you decide which practice environment is best for you? What questions can you ask yourself?**
    - Talk to mentors → try to find some in and out of academic medicine
    - Seek out teaching and mentoring opportunities to determine if you enjoy these experiences
    - A good question to ask yourself is, "After a shift with a medical student or junior resident am I generally happier than I would have been without one?" → ultimately a large part of being academic faculty is daily teaching, if this makes you happier

academics is likely a good place for you, if it tends to leave you feeling drained, it may not be the best fit for you

- **How do you know whose hiring? What resources are there?**
  - Ask your mentors → they often know who is hiring, or who is going to hire, before jobs are even listed! Sometimes the best jobs are never posted.
  - Formal resources include job fairs at ACEP (October) and listings in various publications (ie Annals of Emergency Medicine, EMN news etc)
  - If you are interested in academic work, attending CORD your 2<sup>nd</sup> (for a 3-year program) or 3<sup>rd</sup> PGY year (for a 4-year program) may be helpful for networking
    - Ask your mentors to introduce you to people who might be hiring while there

#### ❖ **Case Part II – The Job Application Timelines (10 min)**

*It is now December. Jenny meets with her program director for her mid-year evaluation. She is excited to discuss her upcoming job search. She attended the EMRA Job Fair at ACEP, purchased a new suit for interviews and has read several chapters of AAEM's "Rules of the Road for Residents".*

*The first question asked by Jenny's program director is, "Where did you get a job?" Jenny responds, "Um, I haven't gotten one yet. That's what I wanted to speak with you about today. I'm very excited to –", but is cut off by her PD who exclaims, "What do you mean you haven't gotten one yet?!? You applied around, right? Everyone else in your class has signed offer letters at this point! What have you been doing??"*

#### ❖ **Discussion Questions with Teaching Points**

- **What is the usual timeline for applying for a job in the final year of residency? What about reaching out to hospitals/programs even earlier if I know that I'm interested?**  
**Note to facilitators:** The timeline will differ some based on if it's an academic versus community application (academic jobs tend to have earlier timelines). Please write down the time frames listed below and ask the group to brainstorm action items for each timeframe.
  - Overall, advice is to apply early → it would be unfortunate to miss out on the perfect job because of you waited too long. "The early bird gets the worm!"
  - It is also reasonable to reach out to programs/hospitals early (even before applying) if there are particular sites the resident is interested in for various reasons.
    - This email should include a general introduction of the resident, why they are particularly interested in the program/hospital and why their skillset might fit that environment
  - Remain patient → it often takes a while for this process to play out (especially at academic centers where searches are often done by committee)

- **July - September**
  - Residents should discuss their interests with trusted mentors and decide on their ideal practice environment
  - Make a list of potential jobs and obtain contact information
  - Complete a CV and Cover Letter
  - Attend informational sessions offered by large corporate groups, if interested
  - Submit application materials via E-mail or online corporate portals. These might include CV, cover letter, letters of recommendation, etc.
- **September – December**
  - Follow-up within several weeks of submitting applications with an email (and consider a phone call)
  - Complete phone or in-person interviews
  - Consider attending ACEP to meet prospective employers and/or participate in EMRA Job Fair
  - Fellowship applicants → be aware of application deadlines and the Match timeline
- **December – February**
  - Discuss job offers with a trusted faculty mentor
  - Negotiate terms of preferred offer
  - Sign and return offer letter
  - Hire a contract lawyer to review contract prior to signing
  - Apply for state medical license and hospital privileges
- **What key steps should a senior resident complete during the job search?**
  - Identify ideal practice environment and locations
  - Discuss potential job opportunities with mentors
  - Review draft CV and Cover Letter with faculty advisor
  - Apply in the mid-to-late summer of final year of residency
  - Fellowship applicants: familiarize yourself with Match timeline early
  - Prepare for interviews: key questions, mock interviews, etc.
  - Read a book about negotiation
  - Meet with a contract lawyer and financial planner
  - Pay close attention to all application deadlines
  - Read offer letter and contract carefully
  - Complete hospital credentialing and state medical license applications immediately after signing a contract

❖ **Case Part III - Cover Letter and CV Development (15 min)**

*It is now January. Jenny spends the holiday break writing cover letters and updating her curriculum vita (CV). She decides to ask her faculty mentor to review these documents before she*

*submits them to her chair for consideration. Her mentor returns them with several suggested edits. She offers to meet for a mock job interview the following week.*

#### ❖ Discussion Questions with Teaching Points

- **What are the necessary items to be included in a CV?**
  - Personal information (full name, degrees, preferred contact information)
  - Education (residency/fellowship, medical school, college)
  - Employment history (include only work pertinent to professional career)
  - Awards and Honors
  - Publications and Grants
  - Presentations / Lectures
  - Administrative Appointments / Committee Service
  - Professional Organizations and Memberships
  - Special Training / Certifications
  - References
  
- **Who should I ask to be references? How many do I need?**
  - List 3-5 references with preferred contact information (both phone and email)
  - Include current chair and program director → the other references should be individuals who know you well and know your work if you have a particular niche
  - Make sure to ask each individual for their permission to be listed as a reference
  
- **What content should be included in a cover letter? How long should it be? How should it be structured paragraph by paragraph?**
  - Make sure to answer three key questions:
    - Who am I?
    - What special skills or training do I have to offer?
    - What is my ideal job / position / role?
  - Ideal length is 1 page → no more than 2 pages
  - Target is 4 sections/paragraphs
    - **Paragraph 1:** State the exact position that you desire, whether full-time or part-time, and the preferred practice location
    - **Paragraph 2:** Describe your training program and year in training, practice locations, patient volume, special training and/or certifications
    - **Paragraph 3:** Describe your interests and skills in the context of your ideal job. Explain why you are the best person to hire for a specific role. Tell your prospective employer why she should hire you
    - **Paragraph 4:** Say thank you and provide preferred ways to be contacted. Consider offering to begin the interview process by phone

- **Note to Facilitators:**

As we conclude the session, please take the last 5 minutes before the case conclusion (as time allows) to have each individual resident brainstorm a list of personal adjectives to include in their cover letter as well as a list of items to make sure they included in their CV. You can use the worksheet included at the end of this facilitator guide to hand out to each of the residents or just ask them to record their thoughts on paper or their computer. If you have examples of successful cover letters or CVs from your program this is the time to distribute those also.

- ❖ **Case Conclusion**

*Jenny selects 8 hospitals to apply to, including her current training site. She receives prompt responses from all 8 chairs, 5 of whom regret to inform her that they already completed their search processes in November. The 3 remaining offer her interviews, including her current chair. After receiving job offers from each of the three sites, she schedules a final meeting with her chair for advice about the 3 offers and to clarify her career interests and long-term plans. Her chair concludes the session with an offer to be residency core faculty, an improvement from her previous offer. Jenny happily accepts the job at her current institution and provides timely responses to the chairs at the other institutions.*

- ❖ **Case Teaching Points Summary**

- Part I - Practice Environments
  - There are pros and cons to each of the different practice environments
  - Ask yourself → does teaching make me happier or does it leave me feeling burned out?
  - Identify mentors early and meet with them to discuss what they think would be a good fit for you
  - The requirements to be a core faculty at an academic institution is < 28 clinical hours per week, 1 scholarly project a year, 20% attendance at resident conference and significant bedside teaching and resident mentoring
  - Some things that chairs look for when choosing faculty candidates is a growth mindset, a niche skillset, proof of interest in education, curricular design or research
- Part II – The Job Application Timeline
  - Preparation is key to a successful job search during residency
  - Start early → its ok to reach out before you apply if there's a particular site you are interested in
  - Begin talking with trusted mentors as early as late spring/early summer
  - Aim to have your applications in by September and follow up by email/phone within 2-4 weeks
  - Be patient → this often takes a while especially at academic institutions where the search is often done by committee

- Part III – CV and Cover Letter
  - CVs should include 10 sections as listed above
  - Include 3-5 references including your PD and Chair → remember to reach out to your references and ask them if they feel comfortable acting as a reference
  - When developing your cover letter ask yourself the following questions:
    - Who am I?
    - What special skills or training do I have to offer?
    - What is my ideal job / position / role?
  - Cover letters should have 4 paragraphs with the following structure
    - **Paragraph 1:** State the exact position that you desire, whether full-time or part-time, and the preferred practice location
    - **Paragraph 2:** Describe your training program and year in training, practice locations, patient volume, special training and/or certifications
    - **Paragraph 3:** Describe your interests and skills in the context of your ideal job. Explain why you are the best person to hire for a specific role. Tell your prospective employer why he/she should hire you.
    - **Paragraph 4:** Say thank you and provide preferred ways to be contacted. Consider offering to begin the interview process by phone
  - Have everything proofread a few times before you send it
    - Make sure to change the specific details in your cover letter (ie chair's name, site name)!



## ❖ Facilitator Background Information

The job search is a stressful experience for many residents. The main challenges span both existential questions about one's preferred career and the application process itself. This session aims to help arm senior residents with some skills to tackle the initial steps of the job search process.

Career/personal questions that must be answered early in the process include: What practice environment makes me happy? Where do I want to live and raise a family? How much money do I need to be happy? How do I have an impactful career? Focusing on previous experiences with teaching may help clarify these questions and help guide residents to or away from jobs as clinician educators.

Common 'nuts and bolts' challenges in the application process include: creation of CV and cover letter, selection of hospitals to apply to, interviewing, responding to offer letters, contract negotiations, and the credential/licensing process. This session will address the first of these tasks while the second session on the job search will cover the later tasks. There are many resources available to both faculty advising residents as well as to residents themselves when they are creating these documents. Facilitators should prompt learners to consider each of the above items and reach out to trusted mentors for advice on these topics early in their final year of training.

## ❖ References

- **Author:** Michael Gisondi, MD (Vice Chair of Education, Department of Emergency Medicine, Stanford University, @MikeGisondi)
- **Editors:** Natasha Wheaton, MD
- **References:**
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  - Salib S, Valencia V, Moreno A. "And Now, Please Sign on the Dotted Line: Teaching Residents About Professional Life After Residency." *South Med J*. 2018 May;111(5):256-260.
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## Session 6: The Job Hunt 1 Worksheet for Cover Letter and CV Development

**Cover Letter Adjectives:** *Please circle words in the following list that you think describe you and you would like to include in your cover letter)*

accurately	active	adaptable	adept	aggressive
alert	ambitious	analytical	assertive	astute
attentive	aware	broad-minded	challenging	competent
conscientious	consistent	constructive	contributor	creative
dependable	determined	diplomatic	disciplined	discreet
diverse	dynamic	easily	economical	efficient
energetic	enterprising	enthusiastic	exceptional	experienced
expertise	extensively	extraverted	facilitator	fair
forceful	foresight	high-level	honest	imaginative
independent	initiative	innovative	instrumental	insightful
leading	logical	loyal	mature	methodical
objective	optimistic	participated	perceptive	personable
pioneering	pleasant	positive	practical	productive
readily	realistic	reliable	repeatedly	resourceful
responsible	responsive	self-reliant	sensitive	sincere
sophisticated	strongly	systematic	tactful	talented

**References:** *Please use the space below to list 3-5 references you plan to use for your job application. Remember, you should generally include your PD and Chair and make sure to ask prior to listing an individual as a reference!*

**CV Development:** *Please use the space on the back of the page to list activities, awards, lectures and other achievements you would like to include in your CV.*