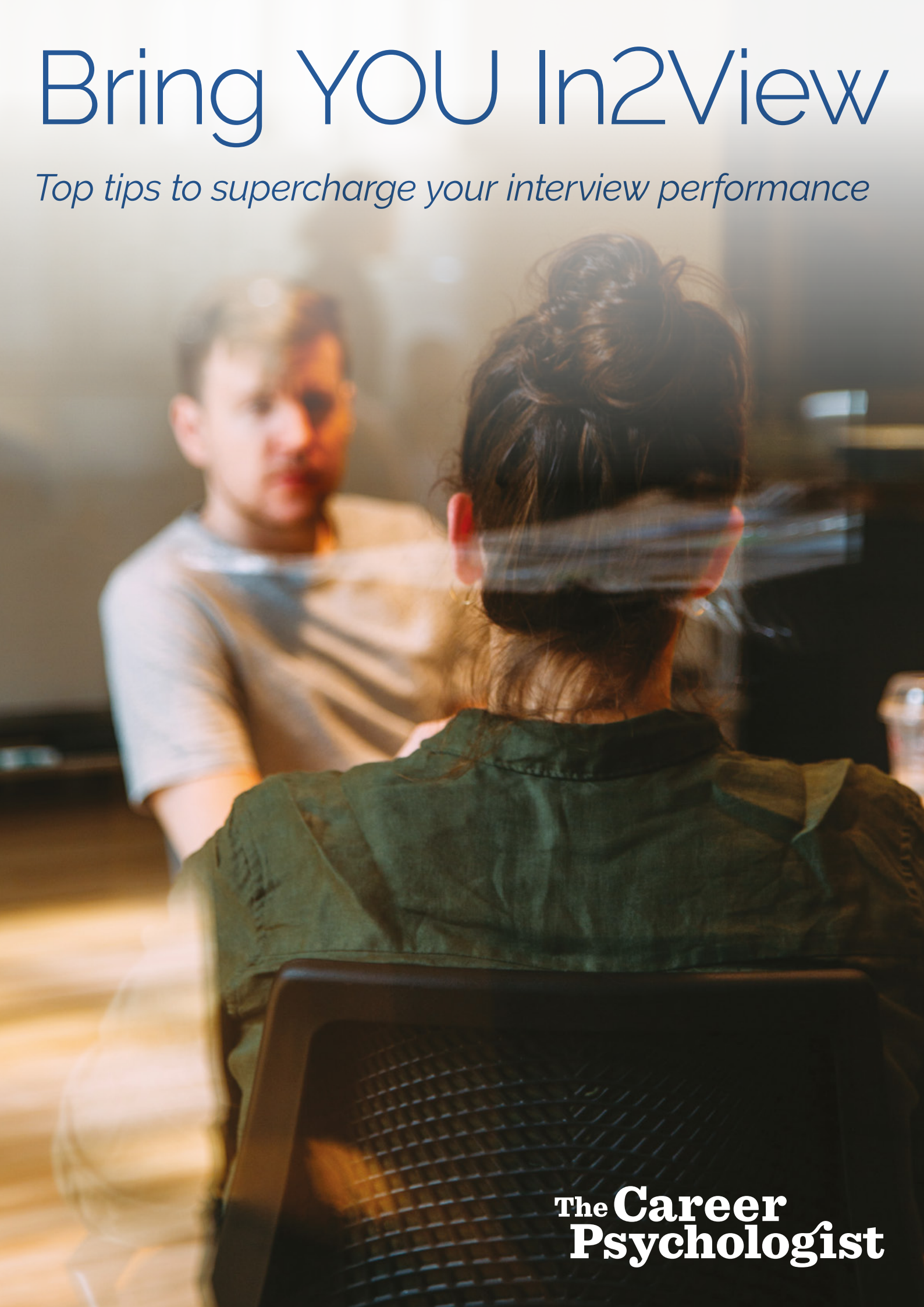


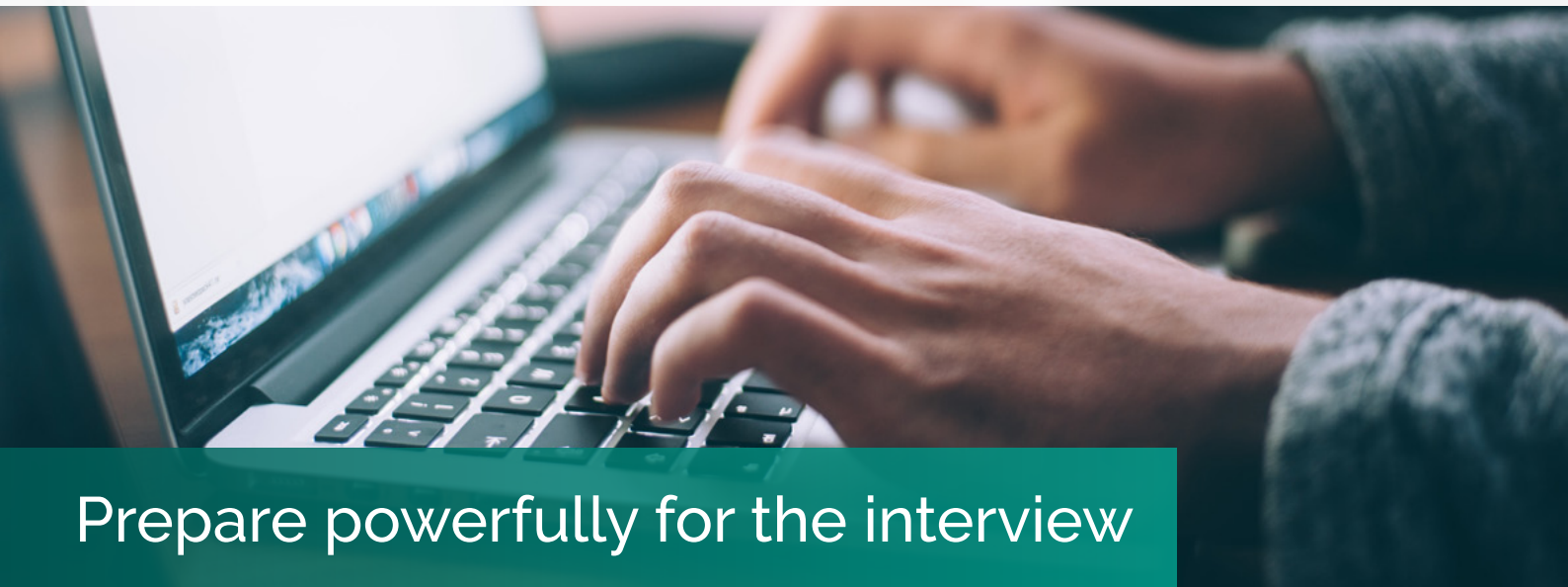
Bring YOU In2View

Top tips to supercharge your interview performance



**The Career
Psychologist**

This short booklet is jammed full of practical suggestions based on psychological science that will be helpful to anyone facing any type of (internal or external) career interview, with a particular focus on job interviews. It outlines what interviewers are looking for and includes a simple tool designed to help you understand yourself better and prepare more effectively ("The Matrix"). It contains insightful, evidence-based advice to help supercharge your performance and move you towards a great interview experience. You will even discover tips on how to harness your interview nerves to your advantage.



Prepare powerfully for the interview

Step 1: Get to know the organisation

- **Research:** Read their website - particularly their vision, mission and values - and identify what you like about this organisation.
- **Identify their need:** Follow the organisation on the news to discover what needs they are trying to meet.
- **Make notes:** Note what interests you most about the organisation and what questions you want to ask.

Top Tip: Make a note of anything you would not like to be asked about and prepare a response to address these questions

Step 2: Use the job description to your advantage

- **Logistics:** Be clear on the recruitment & interview process: timings, venue, who you are meeting, etc.
- **Format:** Understand the format of the interview (see 'About Structured Interviews' box).
- **Break it down:** Read the job description and person specification carefully and highlight key points.
- **Understand their needs:** Think how the job you are going for relates to their wider business needs.
- **Key competencies:** Identify the understandings, skills, abilities, and behaviours they are looking for.
- **Know your USP:** Think about what is unique about you and the way you could perform the role.
- **Note your strengths:** As these will illustrate how you will contribute to your team and the organisation.

Top Tip: Create a 'compelling story' that turns gaps into opportunities by looking widely at all the skills and experiences you have (and emphasize your willingness to learn).

About Structured Interviews:

Organisations use "Structured Interviews" as a measurement of whether you are able to do the job. So, the interview questions are carefully crafted to accurately reflect the job "competencies and requirements".

Tip: Pay close attention to the "competencies" and "requirements" in the job specification. Then address these by finding examples from your own experience and write out clear responses.



Prepare powerfully for the interview

Step 3: Focus on your values

Values can be thought of as ideas that guide you. On a practical level these might include ideas such as diligence, creativity, leadership or collaboration. They can even include bigger ideas we choose to stand for such as courage, honesty, learning, justice or growth.

- **Identify your values:** Think about a time you found work particularly meaningful or fulfilling. Ask yourself why and use the answer to clarify the kind of person you want to be at work (and use "The Matrix" - see text box).
- **Link your values to theirs:** Think about how your priorities align with their vision, mission and values.
- **Link your values to the role:** Ask yourself what is important to you about the job and what kind of person you would like to be in that role.

Top Tip: Make a note of how the "vision statement" or "mission statement" on their website aligns with your personal values.

How to use "The Matrix" to improve performance

When we become immersed in our thoughts and emotions too much, we lose touch with what may lead to success in the interview on the day. One of the most useful forms of preparation is to practice being fully engaged in the present moment. "The Matrix" helps to achieve this (see 'The ACT Interview Matrix' video)

A) First, clarify your 'why':

Dig deep and ask yourself what is important to you about this job? What sort of values and qualities do you want to present as an employee, colleague, leader, human being? (see step 3, above)

Action: Write a few of these in the top right hand corner of the grid.

B) Then identify your 'unhelpful stories':

Write down any psychological or emotional obstacle that stands between you and presenting yourself in interviews and which causes you to suffer. It's sometimes easier to think of these as the 'unhelpful stories' we tell ourselves (e.g. the "I'm not good enough" story can demotivate and lower confidence). Ask yourself what stories hold you back. **Action: Write a few 'unhelpful stories' in the top left corner of the grid.**

C) Notice how your 'unhelpful stories' influence your behaviours:

Observe how you behave when your mind reacts to an unhelpful story like "I'm an idiot" by trying to control

or avoid it (e.g. getting frustrated or procrastinating). Notice how this takes your mind off doing what's important. **Action: Write a few unhelpful reactive behaviours in the bottom left corner of the grid.**

D) Start taking more helpful actions:

Try doing things that move you **towards** your values and your overarching 'why?' rather than focusing on trying to avoid your unhelpful stories. Ask yourself if there is an alternative behaviour that might work better (e.g. use a diary to plan your day, or take breaks away from screens to exercise). **Action: Write the actions that work for you in the bottom right hand corner of the grid.**

E) Be kind to yourself:

When you notice you're beating yourself up, try to accept these thoughts as evidence that you care. When we start to accept the things we can't control (e.g. whether we get offered an interview, what others might be thinking) it helps us to focus on the things that really matter.

Before the interview





During the interview

- **Break the ice:** Start by acknowledging your interviewers, look them in the eye and thank them for their time, which also provides a little time to adjust to the interview setting and get things going smoothly.
- **Focus on being the solution for the organization:** Talk about the ways you can add value to the organisation and solve their issues, by drawing upon your previous online and news-based research.
- **Prepare a cheat sheet:** Write down two or three of the main points you want to get across. If you're doing an online interview, place these key messages around your screen.

Top Tip: Speak well of your current/last employer: Your prospective employer will welcome any evidence that you are a constructive and positive employee.

How to harness your nerves to improve performance!

Anxiety is normal! Everyone gets the jitters to some extent and you might even observe a few nerves starting to creep in as you read this booklet... To some degree these can be welcomed as part of the interview process because they can act as a helpful motivator (e.g. have you ever noticed that a little nervousness can sometimes push you to get out of bed early on the morning of an interview?). In fact, once we practice relating a little differently to our anxious thoughts, we can harness them to improve our interview performance. You can start this process by paying attention to your anxiety without trying to shut it down. Try using the techniques below:

Tip: Breathe into your worries: Mindful breathing helps to relax the body and cultivate a stronger awareness of the present moment, which allows us to respond more flexibly, creatively, and attentively to interviewers' questions. Try breathing in for a count of four, hold for two, and breathe out for four.

Tip: Free your nervousness: Interview anxiety feeds on resistance. The more you try to control it or fight it off, the more nervous you can feel. When we allow our nervousness to float freely, it becomes easier to stay focused on delivering the performance we have prepared for.

Tip: Embrace your stress: When we are stressed it can blind us to our own strengths. Notice when you are obsessing more on your anxiety than your ability to perform the role, and refocus with self-kindness, on your strengths.

Top Tip: Reframe your anxiety. When you notice yourself getting caught up in anxious thoughts, take a moment to remind yourself of the simple idea that "Anxiety is normal, it shows how much I care about this interview and it can be helpful to me right now"

After the interview





After the interview

Give yourself time for reflection.

- Be kind to yourself, give yourself time to process and reflect by doing something you enjoy.
- Think about and write down what went well in the interview as well as areas for improvement.
- Notice themes in feedback and identify what you can do to improve for the next time.

Top Tip: Ask for feedback whether you are successful or not, interviewing is a skill which needs to be developed through practice and feedback. Make sure you ask for constructive feedback on your interview performance.

Get in touch to talk with a career psychologist

This booklet offers just a few tips that have been selected from The Career Psychologist's **"Bring You In2View" interview coaching package** of three, 2-hour coaching sessions. If this resonates with you, or if anxiety is getting in the way of your interview performance and you'd like some further support please get in touch with The Career Psychologist at www.thecareerpsychologist.com/contact-us

Note: We also offer a leading **"Getting Unstuck" coaching package** of five 2-hour coaching sessions for anyone stuck in their career direction. Or, for organisations we can provide tailored **Employee Redundancy Support** and **Psychological Flexibility Coaching** services).