

Helpful Hints

What type of questions can I expect to be asked in a CPE interview?

The questions will often be along the same lines as the application (found at www.acpe.edu). The CPE Supervisor(s) will be looking for self awareness; an ability to articulate areas of growth; and willingness to “let them into” your issues/places of pain. They may push a bit in areas where they have a hunch there is pain or need for growth. They will want to know that you are able to work with populations which are not Christian, and to know that you will not enter CPE believing that your primary ministry is to convert everyone you meet. Therefore, they may dig in and seek to discover what you believe it is you have to offer persons when you are in their presence as a spiritual care giver.

They will want to know that you are open to ministering with diverse populations.

Occasionally they will ask questions which they know push your theology, such as, with a Baptist, how will you respond if a family from Mexico whose infant died that day asks you to baptize their child? If the hospital handles abortions, they may push you on what it will mean for you to minister to the family. Primarily, you are on a first date seeing if you want to proceed further.

What questions should I be asking in a CPE interview?

You will want to ask the supervisor about their philosophy of supervision. This will assist you in discerning how the supervisor, during your time in CPE, will urge you to expand your ministerial skills, grow and explore areas of brokenness in your own life. Ask yourself, “Will I let this person into my life?” If the answer is, “No,” you will want to explore other CPE programs.

You will want to ask them to describe a typical day and week in their CPE program. What are the required hours? You will typically spend ½ of your hours in small group process and ½ of your hours in a specific department of the hospital where you will be offering pastoral visitation to patients. Ask the supervisor how they assign students to specific hospital departments.

You will also have overnight on-calls. Find out how many you will have each week/month. Some CPE programs have the on-call chaplains stay at the hospital for 24 hours; others will have you arrive at the end of the Supervising Chaplain’s work day and you may leave when

they return in the morning. If it is important to you, you may ask about meal provision during on-calls and if there is an overnight on-call room for your lodging. Several hospitals have only weekend on-calls for their CPE students. Others will ask students to fulfill on-call duties mid-week. Find out how on-calls are assigned and if there is flexibility if you have a limitation (such as, if you are ministering in a local church and not able to take Sunday or another night of the week off). Do not expect much flexibility outside of their program policies.

Is there anything I need to do to get ready for CPE?

Yes. If you have not kept your infectious disease shots up-to-date, you will want to immediately see a public health department or your own private doctor. Call the hospitals where you are applying and ask for the personnel department. Ask the staff what immunizations they recommend and require.

Remember: the Hepatitis C series takes several months to complete. Ask your physician about the benefits and risks involved in order for you to make an educated decision about your protecting your health.