

## Residents offer M4s their top lessons on the Match process

SEP 22, 2021

### **Brendan Murphy**

Senior News Writer

---

Who better to offer a map for success during the residency-selection process than those who recently traversed the road?

In a recent AMA-member exclusive event, residency program directors and resident physicians offered insight on the key final details of a medical student's application—the Electronic Residency Application Service opened Sept. 1 but programs cannot access applications in the system until Sept. 29—along with broader advice about the process that culminates with the Match in March. A recording of the event is available for AMA members.

Here are some of the tips that residents offered to medical students as they begin the residency-application process.

### **Practice the art of conversation**

When you head into an interview you may be thinking big, but you also need to be able to hold court when it comes to small talk.

“Don't underestimate the importance of being able to hold a conversation with somebody,” said Anna Yap, MD, a third-year resident in University of California, Los Angeles-Ronald Reagan/Olive View emergency medicine program who is a delegate in the AMA Resident & Fellow Section.

“Especially in the online world, if you hold a conversation for one or two minutes with somebody it helps,” she said. “We as residents remember the people that we couldn't hold a conversation with. We in emergency medicine have the 4 a.m. test of: Do I want to hang out with that person if I'm working on a shift? If you're not sure you can do that, get with your friends and practice.”

Find out the top questions to ask before you submit your residency application.

## Maintain distance when necessary

Your friends and family want to support you, but sometimes that can just add to the stress of the application process.

“The No. 1 piece of advice I offer to anyone applying to residency is you are your own best advocate,” said AMA member Bukky Ajagbe Akingbola, DO, a first-year ob-gyn resident at the University of Minnesota. “That means advocating for yourself to programs about why they should take you and why you are a great fit, but also you are your own best advocate when it comes to your mental well-being. That can sometimes mean having a conversation and saying, ‘Hey, Mom, I will give you the updates at the time.’ Sometimes that [family contact] can be very anxiety-inducing when the process is already on your mind 24/7. Gain insight on which questions you should be asking interviewers.

## Focus on your own process

The desire to compete with others is natural. If you can keep focused on your applications and interviews—not worry about what others got—it will keep you in a better head space.

“Stay in your lane,” said AMA member Bryanne Standifer, MD, a chief resident in internal medicine at Henry Ford Hospital in Michigan. “Sometimes you can get really caught up on what interview a person received. Stay in your own lane don’t let other people be a stressor for you. We’re all on our own journey.”

Learn how to make the residency-application process seamless.

## Other applicants aren’t adversaries

The other students applying to residency programs in your specialty will eventually be your peers, and that’s a healthy way to look at the situation.

“The interview-application process—while it seems very big—the network is actually quite small,” said AMA member Liz Southworth MD, a second-year ob-gyn resident at Michigan Medicine. “Applicant pools tend to pull from similar groups of people. Don’t look at your co-interviewees as adversaries. Look at them as your future colleagues. It will make the process more exciting and enjoyable.”