
5 Common Inappropriate Questions Women Face during Interviews: How to Deal with Them

Summary: *Women get asked questions that are borderline illegal during job interviews. Learn what some common inappropriate questions are and how to respond to them.*



Women tend to get asked different questions than men during interviews. Many of these questions are inappropriate for an interview. The workplace has improved for women greatly in the last several years, but there is still room for improvement. Learn how to best respond to these questions professionally and honestly.

“Are you married?”

Some interviewers forget that they are conducting an interview not a chat session. Personal questions have nothing to do with one’s ability to do the job. There is nothing wrong with asking how the information will help them in the hiring process. Sometimes asking a question in response to their question is a polite way of redirecting the conversation back on the right track. Technically it is illegal for employers to ask a question that does not relate to the position.

“Do you plan to wear that at work?”

If you are asked this question regarding your religious attire, such as head coverings, then the

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question is not appropriate. However, if the question is in reference to the length of your skirt, height of your heels, etc., then the question is not completely inappropriate. The job you're applying for may have clothing restrictions because of equipment used and safety regulations. If the position is a typical desk job, then there is no reason for the question to be asked. Politely respond that you don't see how your attire affects your ability to do the job.

“We sometimes make dirty jokes here at the office, is that okay?”

Inappropriate jokes can make anyone uncomfortable, not just women, and it is also considered sexual harassment. This kind of question is also a red flag about the kind of culture the company supports. You have to decide for yourself if you are willing to work for a company that doesn't respect women.

“How would you handle a mostly male team?”

There are some fields that are predominantly male, so it shouldn't be a surprise, but the question shouldn't be necessary. You will handle a male team just the same as any other team. State “I'd handle a male team as I would any other team,” to make it clear that the question has no merit in the conversation.

“You're a woman?”

If you have a neutral gender name, then you may be getting this question more often from interviewers that assume they would be interviewing a male. The problem is that this shouldn't matter. Try to read into the meaning behind the interviewer before responding. If they simply were surprised and don't appear condescending, then just respond lightheartedly.

There are plenty of other questions that are inappropriate and even down right illegal. Prepare yourself by researching more illegal interview questions before you go in, such as the ones found in this article:

The Illegal Sexist Questions Asked during an Interview

Photo: nawmbaboston.org