

title: **Struggles with coding interviews & exhaustion**

num_comments: 13

num_up_votes: 31

upvote_ratio: 0.98

Post Text

I got laid off work 2 months ago, worked at the startup straight out of college for 3 years as a full-stack dev and underpaid a lot so I couldn't save much. Now interviewing for roles again and it feels like something my brain can't process, I can't remember and answer simple questions like "principles of OOP" or "difference between SQL & no-sql" even though I know and understand them, they just seem to disappear from my head during the interviews and anxiety kicks in because I'm thinking "I know this, why am I not saying it, oh shit another failed interview" then realising I've been quiet for the past 2 minutes, which gives more anxiety and the loop just continues. Usually right after those interviews I can just google "OOP principles" and remember everything after a glance (PS: I'm also a CS grad) I need money and I really don't know how to get through this, it's also gotten to a level where I'm generally highly unmotivated for these interviews, even after taking meds. My current balance is Nobody really cares to hire someone with known ADHD I guess, why not just hire someone really good without ADHD who can crank out code like a machine. I used to know some ADHD engineers who had the same issues and eventually did a crypto scam of over 200k, then started a company and hired engineers to build it out. Now they're raising funds from VCs. Now I wish I had joined them and not tried to be the "saint" because now nobody even knows this origin story and they're talented people as well with notable past contributions, so everyone just sees them as "geniuses building a dope company". I honestly just want to have money and live a good quiet life at this point and not be constantly anxious and feel useless to the world.

Comments

Commenter_2

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 24

Are you interviewing on Zoom? Make a crazy red-yarn serial killer poster if all the things you might need to talk about during the interview and put it behind your webcam on the wall.

Or cover your laptop screen with post it notes that you can easily refer to.

Interviewing is a skill, you just need to figure out how it works for you.

Commenter_3

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

This is what I do. It works great.

Unknown_User

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 12

Repetition helps... long ago I used to be really nervous in interviews. You've just got to practice them. Study soft skills as well, and maybe do some paid practice interviews. Whenever I am looking for a new job I schedule some of my least favorite companies first, so I can sharpen up before doing the interviews I want to win.

Commenter_4

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 7

autodesk has a pretty chill interview process heads up

Commenter_5

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 7

Nobody is born being great at interviews. Practice practice practice.

I always keep notes behind my laptop screen! A copy of my resume taped to the wall behind at the very least so I can remember all my roles and responsibilities. (Yes, I will forget jobs I had for many years in conversation lol) Even just putting it up makes me more confident.

Trust me, nobody starts out good at interviews. They are awkward no matter what. I feel that if I can identify with my interviewer, make them feel like I'm talking to a friend of a friend, and those interviews go well.

Some interviewers however just feel like brick walls - and even after over two hundred interviews I bomb those. (I was once a recruiter and it gave me the best practice).

Everything you're feeling is valid and trust me when I say non ADHDers aren't usually accomplishing much more than anyone else.

Commenter_6

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 6

I just wanted to say I feel you completely. Mind numbing anxiety is a very real thing and you will get through this. There are sites like pramp that are good for practicing to verbalize your skills and the practice needs up helping.

There are also organizations like neuropool that work to help place neuro diverse candidates to help place them in positions so even if you are vocal about being ADHD. People do actively look to recruit diverse candidates.

Just know if you've gotten through three years at any tech company you can and will get a job if you try so keep going!

Commenter_7

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 3

Hey I feel you completely! I was able to get into FANG with adhd. Mainly because I was super interested in what I was doing. Plus I had some luck. Try neetcode and find a double to study with. I would recommend the following things do a dopamine detox. Then create a task list of topics and memorize and understand. Ask questions from subgroups on discord that also study this stuff do mock interviews get feedback :) I have a friend on discord doing this loop if you are looking for a study partner pm me and I'll send you his discord details

Commenter_8

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 4

I've been in a similar situation to yours, I think part of it is that working for a startup can make you a great employee but a lackluster interviewer.

Back then it took me three iterations to find a job, each involving a handful of interviews at a time. First I got clobbered at the tech screens but eventually was comfortable enough to pass. Next I was getting rejected at the on-sites or during take-homes. The last effort was successful because of the forced repetition and because I started targeting more similar environments to the one I was coming from.

My advice would be to take yourself out of the equation as much as possible, though it's hard not to take these things personally. Take a day or two to rest and gather your strength. You know that you're capable of doing the job as advertised, and if they can't see your value then it's their loss. I'm still going through the process as well but here are some tips that have been helping me:

- **Get some semblance of organization:** this process feels like life is going off the rails, so having a little bit of control here was mentally calming and also made it easier to keep track what I'm supposed to be doing. I'm using [this Notion template](#).

- **Use your environment to your advantage:** as others have suggested having notes and your resume on hand is also great for jogging your memory. I'm keeping bullets countering reasons people have turned me down so I can articulate them later. Your resume is another great tool because often it's how the other person structures the conversation, so you can leave minor details that might be forgotten otherwise.

- **Ease the tension with a bit of banter:** I've gotten into the habit of throwing the ball back at people and trying to get to know them a bit. It brings their guard down and lets me ease into a conversation. It's a fine line though because this can seem unprofessional.

- **Stick to a script:** I've noticed when I get too comfortable there's a chance I'll stick my foot in my mouth. Specifically: why are you looking to leave and how was your day. From now on it's all "weather's great and you" and "looking to grow/learn/etc."

Good luck on your search! We believe in you!

ETA: Another thing to keep in mind is that questions are generally targeted and probing for very specific information. This is not as applicable to CS Trivia (like the OOP question) but you can always ask for clarification as way to buy time and make sure you're giving good examples.

Commenter_9

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 3

~~Like~~ Love your perspective; extra points for including Notion (obsessed with that app).

Commenter_10

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

It was the same for me until I literally studied (like in high school) for my most recent interview. Like all the definitions and principles of oop programming, sql etc and it's the only way that worked for me because when I'm anxious my adhd becomes way worse and I just don't know what to say. You can help with post its on your laptop as others suggested. Hang in there!

Commenter_11

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

Could get some therapy, tbh it's all about how you're feeling that day and trying to calm your nerves. Try to remember when you had an interview that went really well and you were feeling good about it, then try to get yourself back in that mindset.

Also I hear taking a day or two off your meds can help with resetting the effects of whatever drug you are using to help with your adhd.

Commenter_12

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

Do you need a referral?

Commenter_13

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

Others have good advice. Running the rat race of stupid leet code interviews is one thing. Dealing with your own anxiety is a separate one - therapy, exercise, medication all may help the latter, I realize the pressure situation of an interview is tough.

If it helps, not only will some places have much less intense white boarding, but also know some interviewers are aware people react differently to that kind of pressure. When I've interviewed people and had them do code, it's just as much about whether they can talk through the logic, as whether they nail it with the right big O answer. If someone struggles with that portion it doesn't discount them since some people just don't do well in that environment. Some of what you describe in terms of coding or just answering questions on the spot and having that anxiety or mind blank is super normal, I think even for a lot of NT people.

Anyway I'd just keep trying, not every place is going to grill you (and I read into what places do, in terms of how they may operate once hired), and you'll gain some routine and comfort and hopefully less anxiety as you do more interviews. Other than that I'd do the same stuff I'd do to try and tamp down anxiety. Lower expectations, get some good exercise, whatever has worked for you in other scenarios.