Letters of Recommendation

- Purpose: to secure outside evaluations of you from sources that most closely approximate the faculty with which you will be working. Includes professional, personal, and interpersonal commentaries.

- Research demonstrates that letters of recommendation are the single most important source of "subjective" information in your application

Letters of Recommendation

Choosing Letter Writers

- Knowing this, choose carefully
- First, how many: 3-4
- Second, who: academic, clinical, research
- All Ph.D. or co-signed by Ph.D.
- No politicians, family friends, practicing therapists, etc. University faculty or staff.
- A word about adjunct, assistant, associate, professor- do a SSI count

Letters of Recommendation

- Choose people who know you well, who can speak to different aspects of your experience, and who can and will take the time to write a strong letter

- ask, "Would you be willing to write me a strong letter of recommendation for graduate study in psychology?"

Provide Letter Writers With:

- Thumbnail sketch that includes
  -name and contact info
  -how they know you
  -your GRE and GPAs
  - bulleted items that you want them to include e.g. Psi Chi president, APA convention, focused area(s) of study, honors or awards
  -redundancy is fine

Provide Letter Writers With:

- Prominent deadline for completion, one week *earlier than earliest* deadline

- Provide a complete list of ALL schools and addresses at one time, if possible

- be sure to identify the type of program, (counseling, clinical, developmental, BN, Social, etc.), and call attention to any differences in this regard- stating the wrong program can be "kiss of death"-

Letters of Recommendation

- If letter writers give you an opportunity to review and revise, take it
  -add anything you want
  -delete only fact errors
  -return hard and disk copy to writer with new file clearly marked; "revised letter"