

Activity 3.3.4: Respiratory Therapy

Introduction

A baby comes into the world too early and her lungs are not yet fully developed. An elderly man who has smoked for years now finds himself gasping for breath. A teenage boy who has always struggled with asthma wants to improve his ability to play team sports. A young woman pulled out of the water after a near drowning finds it painful to take in and expel air.

All of the patients described above need assistance getting sufficient amounts of oxygen into their lungs and out to their cells. When a patient has trouble breathing and utilizing oxygen, a specialist called a *respiratory therapist* is often called upon to provide treatment and support. Without oxygen, our bodies would shut down in a matter of minutes. This vital gas fuels our cells and provides a necessary raw material for the creation of energy. Respiratory therapists work to manage both short-term and long-term oxygen crises and to assure that this resource is readily available to our bodies.

In this activity, you will explore another biomedical career area by writing a resume for a fictional respiratory therapist. A *resume* is a document that expresses a career objective as well as presents skills and experience to a potential employer. This resume will showcase the education, experience, and skills of this highly trained biomedical professional and will highlight the goals of respiratory therapy. As you work on the resume for a respiratory therapist, reflect on your own career aspirations and think about how you would go about writing your own resume and marketing your skills to a potential employer. Finally, play the role of a respiratory therapist to help your patient, Melissa Martin, get a better handle on her asthma and design a plan to manage her illness.

Equipment

* Computer with Internet access
* Laboratory journal
* Career journal
* Activity 3.3.4 Medical History – Visit #4 Resource Sheet
* Asthma Action Plan Excel Resource Sheet

Procedure

Part I: Respiratory Therapist Resume

1. Research all aspects of the training and day-to-day duties of a respiratory therapist. Begin compiling information you can use to compose a resume for a fictional respiratory therapist. Record notes in your career journal.
2. View the sample resumes shown on the Online Writing Lab site of Purdue University. Alternatively, your teacher may provide you with printed copies of these documents.

* Sample 1 <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20061128102341_564.pdf>
* Sample 2 <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/200601131159_565.pdf>
* Sample 3 <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/200511300133_547.pdf>

1. With a partner, analyze the sample resumes. In your laboratory journal, describe the types of information that are included in a resume and list the major headings.
2. Discuss your findings with the class.
3. View the presentation on resume writing produced by the Purdue University Writing Lab found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/ppt/20071017040900_699.ppt#256,1,Resumes>. Your teacher may choose to show this presentation to the class, but you can refer back to it later if you want to review key sections or obtain style and writing tips.
4. Visit the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University – Workplace Writers at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/681/01/>.
5. Scroll down to Employment Documents – The Resume and Curriculum Vitae (CV).
6. Read the information presented in the Resume Design section as well as in the four resume building reference sections that follow.
7. Combine information from your research on respiratory therapy and on writing an effective resume to design a resume for a fictional respiratory therapist. Make sure to include a clear objective, information about education and work experience, as well as any other information you feel will be helpful in showcasing skills to an employer. Think about the type of job your fictional therapist is trying to obtain and tailor the resume to really sell the experience and skills of this professional.
8. Type your resume. Follow the formatting guidelines and options presented in the Internet tutorial and presentation. Make sure to proofread your final product.
9. Compare your resume to that of another student in the class. Discuss the format and overall effectiveness of each resume.
10. Answer Conclusion questions 1-3.

**Part II – Asthma Action**

Asthma control focuses on two factors – reducing impairment and reducing risk. Asthmatics strive to prevent symptoms, maintain normal lung function, reduce the need for emergency care, and prevent loss of lung function. To maintain this control, asthmatics need to regularly take the appropriate medication, recognize and avoid environmental stresses that may cause worsened symptoms, monitor long term control, and work with professionals to adjust therapy as needed.

You have now been hired as a respiratory therapist. Your first case is to work with Melissa Martin, a young woman who has been inconsistent with her asthma treatment, to discuss her illness and develop an asthma action plan. Review Melissa’s medical history to familiarize yourself with the case.

1. Read the interview with a respiratory therapist available at <http://clinicians.org/respiratory-therapists-key-players-in-asthma-care/> to being thinking about the role respiratory therapists play in helping patients with asthma. In your laboratory journal, add additional notes about how the duties of the career may link to diseases such as asthma.
2. Obtain an Activity 3.3.4 Medical History – Visit #4 Resource Sheet.
3. Review the additional patient history for Melissa Martin.
4. Research the role of an asthma action plan. Begin to think about how this type of document could help Melissa.
5. Obtain an Asthma Action Plan template for Melissa.
6. Looking back on your work in this lesson, fill in the action plan for Melissa. Think about her peak flow ranges from Activity 3.3.1 and refer to her medications in Activity 3.3.3. Re-read all of the Medical History Resource Sheets and identify Melissa’s main triggers for asthma.
7. Attach your completed Asthma Action Plan to the Activity 3.3.4 Medical History Resource sheet or cut and paste the sheet into the actual document.
8. Add 1-2 paragraphs in the Recommendations section of the Medical History resource sheet that describes next steps for Melissa in her life with asthma. Mention key aspects of the plan, lifestyle modifications, as well as the consequences for not adhering to what has been outlined. Decide on an appropriate schedule for follow up visits, including what is to be accomplished at these sessions.
9. Answer the remaining Conclusion questions.

Conclusion

1. Describe the components of an effective resume.
2. Explain how the career area of respiratory therapy relates to our study of oxygen and lung volumes. Provide an example that illustrates your point.
3. Play the role of the respiratory therapist and explain to Melissa what is happening inside her body during an asthma attack. Help her see the consequences of improperly controlled asthma.

1. Describe two other situations where a person might work with a respiratory therapist.