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MercyOne Therapy Rooms

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About MercyOne

MercyOne is a group of health care facilities located throughout Iowa. It was founded in 1998 and values the bettering of lives in the Iowa community. MercyOne in Waterloo is a standard hospital including an ER, surgery area, therapy rooms, and women's center.

420+  CARE LOCATIONS

3.3 MILLION+ PATIENT VISITS



91,000+ ANNUAL Hospital Stays



MercyOne's Mission

MercyOne serves with fidelity to the Gospel as a compassionate, healing ministry of Jesus Christ to transform the health of our communities.



Note: MercyOne in Waterloo, Iowa was formerly Covenant Medical Center. They just changed over to MercyOne a year ago, so some signs still say Covenant.

Who Am I?

- Sophomore
- Psychology major
- Preprofessional program for occupational therapy
- Resident Assistant in Noehren Hall
- Involved in Service and Leadership Council (volunteer student organization)
- Love to work with children and animals



My Volunteer Work

At the MercyOne in Waterloo, I normally volunteered in the therapy rooms: the inpatient, outpatient and EDI (Early Development Intervention). Most of the time I would observe the occupational therapists (OT), physical therapists (PT) and speech therapists while doing other tasks as listed below:

- cleaned/organized
- made copies
- spoke with patients



Inpatient Therapy Room

- Patient Type: adults who were currently staying overnight in the hospital dealing with serious illnesses or injuries (stroke, car accident)
- Workers: OT, PT, on occasion speech therapy, and social workers



Outpatient Therapy Room

- Patient Type: adults/teens who could live at home, normally dealing with an injury or changes in their body due to age
- Workers: Normally PT, and on occasion OT, speech therapy



EDI

EDI = Early Development Intervention

- Patient Type: kids dealing with injuries, neurological disorders, and developmental delays
- Workers: PT, OT, and speech therapy

My Career Path

Before volunteering at MercyOne, I was unsure of what I wanted to do with my psychology major. I had thought about occupational therapy or working in a behavioral unit. For the first few weeks of volunteering, I observed adult OT and PT which I quickly figured out were not for me. However, after watching just one session of pediatric OT, I fell in love with the occupation and knew it was the one for me.



What Is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational therapy is a type of hands-on therapy that's goal is to help all ages of people be able to maintain or gain the capabilities to complete daily tasks. Occupational therapists work with all types of patients who have a wide range of injuries, disabilities, and disorders. To assist patients, they may play games to improve brain function and motor skills.



Food Therapy

One type of therapy that OTs utilize is food therapy. The goals of food therapy are to have children be able to eat meals on their own and try new food. Kids who receive food therapy usually have other underlying disorders such as autism, sensory processing disorder, or oral motor delays. While volunteering, I observed a pediatric OT utilize food therapy. She taught me that most kids who need food therapy have texture problems.

To help with this, she would have the kids first touch the new food, then put it on their lips, followed by licking the food, and then finally trying the food.



Survey on Telehealth OT in Schools

Studies have looked at how telehealth could be used for OT in school systems. It can be challenging for OTs to work with kids in school; they may have large caseloads, kids' schedules might not align, or they may have to travel to several schools to work with all their students. Research has shown that OT appointments via video calls have been just as effective as in person appointments (Cotton, et al., 2017). With this information, a survey went out to 76 participants who work in schools including OTs to see if would be likely to implement telehealth OT appointments in their district. 42.86% stated they would be "very likely" or "likely" to adopt telehealth into their school (Rortvedt, 2019). Even though this was not a huge survey pool, it does show that telehealth may begin making an impact. appearance into the OT field.

My Future in Psychology

Now that I know that I want to be a pediatric occupational therapist, I will begin working on the prerequisites for OT graduate school. I will additionally begin my search for a good OT graduate program to attend.

Acknowledgements

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References

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