

Summary of Field Experience

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### **Placement and activity overview**

For my field experience, I volunteered at Shriner's Hospital for Children in Portland on Thursday mornings and every other Sunday afternoons. On Thursday mornings, I run the "art cart" that is filled with activities such as crayons, colored paper, scissors, glue, race cars, Play Doh, card games, coloring pages, markers, and all sorts of other craft supplies. I spend time in the waiting rooms interacting with patients and their families who are waiting to be seen by their doctor. I also walk around to the examination rooms looking for patients who are sitting in the rooms, waiting even more. I get to play games and color with patients with supplies from the "art cart," or play with the tablet or games the patients and their families bring for the waiting times. On Sunday's afternoons, there are no scheduled appointments, so the hospital is very quiet, except for the In Patient Care Unit. I get to spend time with patients who are staying on that unit for long stay medical care. We spend time in the large activity room, that holds cabinets of crafts supplies, games, books, and air hockey, foosball, video games, and ping pong. My time is spent interacting with patients and making their time at the hospital smoother, positive, and a little more home-y.

### **Reaction to experiences**

In my experiences at Shriner's Hospital, each day brings a new rhythm and patient interaction. One day I could be coloring with a nonverbal patient in a wheel chair or playing a card game with a patient who speaks a different language than me. It has been so humbling to interact with children who are different from me and I can be small part of their medical journey at Shriner's Hospital. Each patient has a unique need and I have learned to serve them in unique ways. Some patients need help holding cards or a pen, while others need help moving the game

to another table that is shorter or taller to accommodate their wheel chair. I have learned to adapt to the flow of patients coming into the waiting room, and expand my horizons in how I bond with someone. Even if I can't explain the rules to a game in my language, I can use facial expressions and hand gestures to interact with the patient who doesn't speak my language.

#### **How well original field experience goals were met**

I began with four main goals for my field experience. My first goal was to learn how to plan games and activities for patients and family members. I played a variety of card games, teaching patients and having patients teach me. I planned big crafts around the holidays this spring that patients could make in short time of being in the waiting room. My second goal was to learn how to interact with patients with different medical needs. Each time I volunteered, I would expand my experience interacting with different patients, and continually learned how to adapt to their needs. Making the table a different height, explaining directions differently, or looking for a different game or craft to do. My third goal was to learn how to create a positive and safe atmosphere for patients and their family members. I would always be encouraging to patients in conversations about medical procedures or conversations about the games or crafts we were doing. My fourth goal was to learn how to discern if this is the career path I wish to pursue. I did for sure discern that this is the career I want to continue to pursue. I have enjoyed my time volunteering at Shriner's and plan to continue volunteering and expanding my experience.

#### **How facts and concepts learned in prior course work relates to experiences**

My experience has connected to many of the psychology classes I have taken at George Fox, as well as online classes I have taken through UC Santa Barbara for my Child Life Certification. Classes including Counseling, Child Development, Adolescent Development, and

online Child Life and Play Therapy. In Counseling, I have learned how to sit with someone and attentively and engagingly listen. Patients and their family members in the hospital are going through a difficult and not very common experience, and I have found myself sitting and listening to those who need to let out their thoughts and feelings. In Child and Adolescent Development, I have learned how to observe concrete thinking and abstract thinking in different ages of children. Many different aged children come to Shriner's Hospital and I can acknowledge that they are at different cognitive and developmental levels, so different games and crafts may be needed to entertain different age groups. In Play Therapy, I have learned that play can be a benefit to children going through a medical situation at a hospital. Play therapy has the power to allow children to release energy or unwanted negative emotions that may arise, and allow children to learn and grow in times of play.

#### **How faith influenced field experience**

My faith has influenced my field experience by allowing me to see each patient who comes into the hospital as an individual with a unique story, family, culture and need. God has placed these children with medical needs on my heart to serve and each one is made in the image of God. As a follower of Christ, I am called to embrace those who are different from me, whether that means different background, culture, language, physicality, or medical need. I can serve patient and their families and care for them just as Jesus does.

#### **How experiences influenced career planning and evaluation of plans to continue**

My experiences have influenced my career planning exceptionally. I fall more and more in love with volunteering at Shriner's Hospital each time I go. My experiences have solidified that I want to continue to pursue a career in Child Life. I plan to continue to volunteer at

Shriners' Hospital and take online classes to further my progress in being certified after I graduate with my Bachelors degree. I recently applied to a practicum at a different hospital in Portland, Randall Children's Hospital. This practicum would be during the summer and would also further my experience and progress in becoming certified. I have enjoyed my experiences in field experience and plan to continue in this course next fall.