

My Career Paper

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My Career

The focus of this paper will be to highlight my professional and personal experiences, as well as my career goals to create an accurate description of myself on the journey to becoming a professional in the human services field. This paper will intertwine my own personal philosophy when it comes to the helping profession, with skills that I have developed to set goals for my future career. The goal of this paper is to represent a journey from college student to young human services professional.

Professional Experiences

Throughout the years I have had experiences that allowed me to grow professionally. Whether they be employment or volunteer based, I have seen how hard work creates success. Although each of my professional experiences have been vastly different, they have each taught me valuable skills that I am able to transfer to any other professional opportunity that is presented to me.

Employment

One previous job that I had was working with Western Maine Foothills Association, a program that funded summer school for the River Valley community of Maine. During that summer, I served as a second grade “teacher.” Specific job duties included creating a safe, positive classroom environment, creating appropriate and engaging lesson plans and activities, and having insight over specific needs of the children. My experience at the summer program was rewarding and allowed me to grow as a young professional. I learned how to remain patient when dealing with stressful situations, how to calmly and appropriately work through challenges, and how to manage an organized classroom. Working with the children along with their parents

and families helped me gain confidence in myself and my abilities as well as my communication skills to thoughtfully and accurately relay information between individuals.

My current employment is quite different. I work in housekeeping at the Comfort Inn and Suites. My job duties include cleaning hotel rooms according to high industry standards, working on a strict and fast paced time schedule, maintaining accurate and clear paperwork, and stocking carts with supplies and linens. My experience at the hotel has taught me lessons in time management, learning to prioritize responsibilities so the most pressing needs get met. Also, I have gained confidence to work independently with a high degree of accountability. I am expected to work diligently by myself and uphold the standards of cleanliness. I take pride in my work, understanding that I am accountable for reaching these standards.

Volunteer Experience

My most rewarding volunteer experience was my involvement with the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization. I served as a Big Sister for a nine year old girl who had very little support and role models in her life. I took my role as a mentor very seriously and enjoyed the time I got to spend with my “Little Sister.” For an hour and a half after school, she and I would work together completing homework, talking about our day, and having fun with activities and games.

This experience was valuable in that it taught me responsibility and accountability. This young girl was relying on me to be there for her twice a week and I could not let her down. In addition, I was responsible in setting high standards for myself because I was acting as a role model.

Interests

My interests throughout the years have been very broad. One specific interest is a hobby I have had since I was six years old and that is field hockey. It takes dedication, passion, and discipline to stay in a sport for that long and the lessons it has taught me are immeasurable. Accountability, teamwork, and humbleness are the three that immediately come to mind. Field hockey allowed me to be a part of many teams, each requiring me to work with others, have faith in others, and really hold myself accountable for my role in the group's overall success. Dedicating so much time to this sport, gave me an overwhelming desire to win, but it also taught me that the whole is greater than the individual. This is where I gained skills in working collaboratively and allowing myself to remain humble and focus on the group's success rather than my own.

Courses of Interest

Although I am unsure in my future career path, I have always had a overwhelming interest in the area of substance abuse. This interest gave me the desire to pursue my addictions certification in addition to my degree. This certification required courses such as: Introduction to Addiction, Advanced Addiction, Substance Abuse Prevention, and Rehabilitation in Families. These courses were informative and interactive and gave me a solid foundation to understanding addiction as a disease and how it impacts individuals as well as families.

The Rehabilitation in Families course specifically, has had the most influence in leading me to my potential career path. I am learning how widespread addiction is and how detrimental it is to family structures and dynamics. I am finding myself driven in the direction of working with children who are affected by substance use in their families as a future career. I am finding this

course to be quite informative in understanding how significant the roles of individuals in a family shift when addiction is put into the structure.

In addition, my Substance Abuse Prevention course has provided me sufficient training and skills that I can transfer to my future career. With my growing interest in working within a school system, I can see how crucial prevention is in terms of substance use and the role it may play in schools. This course has provided me with the opportunity to think logically about what prevention programs work and how to develop and adapt programs to fit community needs. The skills that I have gained within this course make me feel comfortable transitioning them into a school setting and developing strategies for substance use prevention targeted at the child level.

Choice of Major

Working in the human services field was always what I wanted to do, so applying to schools with a strong program was important to me. I decided on Rehabilitation Services at Farmington because the program was not limited to one specific arena of human services. Knowing that I was not sure the direction I wanted to go in after graduation, I thought this major would be beneficial in exposing me to all aspects of the field in terms of mental health, disabilities, and substance use.

I first knew I wanted to be in the human services field after the death of my brother. This life changing event was the first time I had experienced something so tragic in the aftermath of a helpless situation. My brother struggled with PTSD and at the time I was not old enough to understand that this was a mental health issue, but I did understand that I had an overwhelming desire to help.

Along with this tragic event, came the support of others in my school and community. More specifically, my school guidance counselor became a great and trusted resource to me. When I look back on people who have shaped my desire for the human services field, I look towards the work she did and how she supported me. As an individual, she is someone I admire in terms of in the role of counselor and helping profession. My goal is to get my degree in human services and to make a positive impact on someone like she has done for me.

Career Goals

I am currently undecided when it comes to any specific job title that I hope to achieve after graduation. However, I have clear goals in mind when it comes to my future career. My goal is to find a steady career in the human services field that allows me to work with families as a unit. I have some interests in working within a school system or possibly family counseling. My goal is that my future career is exciting and allows for me to grow as a professional and individual often as to relieve burn out and keep my passion strong. In terms of my goals for my future environment, I have a strong desire to be in a setting that challenges me professionally but allows me to live comfortably with my future family. It is important to me that I have a strong sense of passion and community in the area in which I choose to base my career.

Fulfilling Goals in the Future

In order to fulfill my goals for the future, it is important that I remain focused and diligent in my academics and outside experiences. I believe that sometimes the future may seem daunting and overwhelming but to achieve my goals I must stay active and persistent. Another strategy for fulfilling my goals is to expose myself to multiple arenas of the field to grasp a better

understanding of myself as a professional and to really narrow down my professional focus. All goals can be fulfilled with hard work and a strong desire for success.

Five Year Goals

Five years from now my goal is to be graduated from the University of Maine at Farmington with my bachelors degree in Rehabilitation Services with a certificate in addiction studies. By this time I would be working in my first entry level job, gaining new experiences and finding myself as a professional. Personally, I would like to be living in the New England area. I hope in these five years I will have identified a clear focus for my career path. I am hopeful that within this time frame I will have a better understanding of my direction as a professional and what I hope to accomplish.

Ten Year Goals

Ten years from now my goal is to have a solid foundation in my career. I want to have a clear sense of self when it comes to my professional life. I envision myself having a career in ten years that has allowed me to grow in my professional realm. I hope that I will continue to learn and possibly expand my education to the graduate level to advance my career even further. By this time, I hope to have a family of my own and living in a stable environment and location. I intend that my specific job may change during this time, but I hope the overall career path will be solidified. With the interests I have now, I hope that in ten years time my career will be based in a school setting.

Twenty Year Goals

In twenty years, my goal is to be in the midst of a successful and fulfilling career. My goal is that I have taken advantage of opportunities that have come my way that allowed for both

professional and personal growth. Professionally, my goal is to be well respected, confident, and successful. As a professional, I never want to stop learning, especially from others. I hope that my career is engaging in terms of challenging me, even in twenty years time. Personally, my goal is to have raised successful and healthy children and have a clear understanding of who I am as a person. A lot has changed and I have grown so much in just the last three years of college, it is quite difficult to even imagine how much I will have grown and experienced in twenty years time. I am excited to see how my life will pan out.

Personal Philosophy

My personal philosophy is to approach individuals with kindness and good intentions. It is important to me that I take the experiences and lessons that I have gained from what my own life has brought me, and use them to make a positive impact on others.

This strong desire to help influences both my professional and personal goals. I strive to further my education in hopes of working with families and individuals who are dealing with difficult circumstances and bring about some positive changes to them. Growth within my education and within myself allows for new perspective and opportunity to influence others, but always keeping the core belief of approaching one with kindness as the driving force.

Personal Reflection

Writing this paper has allowed me to look back on my education experience and think critically about all the skills I have acquired along the way. Often times it is easy to get distracted by the end goal - graduation, but it is important to remember what has been learned throughout. I have learned after writing this paper that in just three short years of college, I have already grown so much as a person but yet there is still so much to be discovered.

Throughout my years in the rehabilitation program, I have learned a lot about myself. I have learned that so many avenues of human services is of interest to me. I came into college with the mindset that I had to have everything figured out and stick with it, but I have learned that it is okay to shift my direction in some ways. Given this, I have learned that my different interests should be seen as potential resources and I should not limit myself to one arena. Overall, the most valuable skill I have learned is to be confident and trusting of myself. I used to be cautious to speak up or give my input, but I am realizing that everyone has a thought or perspective to contribute.

Looking back and analyzing the professional and personal experiences I have had, gave me such a better understanding of myself in terms of skill sets that are valuable. Although I am still questioning the direct path I would like to take career wise, uncovering the skills I already possess was helpful in thinking about what could potentially be a good fit. I will be quite interested to read this paper years from now and compare my anticipated goals for the future with how my life has really panned out. I have learned that it is okay to be unsure about the future but it is always good to have direction.

Conclusion

My experiences both professional and personal have shaped me into the college student that I am today. They have molded and developed me into a student that has a clear passion for the human services field and making a positive impact on others. My courses in the rehabilitation program have provided me with skills and knowledge that I can transfer into the professional realm, making me confident to enter into my future career. The growth I have accomplished during my time in college has prepared me to shift into a professional setting.