

Healthcare Career Activity: Informational Interview

In this activity, you will:

1. Practice your employability skills.
2. Expand your professional network.
3. Get firsthand, relevant information about working within a particular field, industry, or position.
4. Find out about career paths you didn't know existed.
5. Get tips about how to prepare for and enter a given career.
6. Learn what it's like to work at a specific organization.

Task 1: Identify Two Employers to Engage in an Informational Interview

1. Visit www.futureforward.org
2. Click on the big yellow "Search Directory" button in the upper right corner
3. Scroll down and click on "Health Science Careers"
4. Click on the "Learn More" button of the following companies research and select **two** employers to request an informational interview with:
 - a. Ebenezer Senior Living – CNA, Nursing, Resident Assistant
 - b. ExercisAbilities - Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist
 - c. HealthForce - Massage Therapist
 - d. Hiawatha Valley Mental Health - Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, Psychiatrist, Nurse Practitioner, Therapist
 - e. Mayo Clinic – Emergency Medicine Paramedic, Licensed Practical Nurse, Phlebotomy, PTOT VCT, Radiologic Technologist, Clinical Neurophysiology Technology, CRNA, Surgical Tech, Histology Tech, Nuclear Medicine Tech
 - f. Spring Valley Ambulance - Emergency Medical Technician

Task 2: Practice Your Employability Skills and Schedule Two Informational Interviews

5. While on the employer's contact page in FutureForward™ (see steps in Task 1), determine the best way to reach out to the employer (phone or message through FutureForward™)
6. Use a short script to request an informational interview with the employer. Include the following talking points:
 - a. Greeting (Good morning, greetings, etc.)
 - b. Explain who you are (name, grade, school, and class you are taking)
 - c. Ask if there is a professional you can speak with to do an informational interview with
 - d. Let them know the topics you are interested in learning more about (i.e. getting firsthand, relevant information about working within a particular field, industry, or position, finding out about career paths you didn't know existed, getting tips about how

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to prepare for and enter a given career, or learn what it's like to work at a specific organization.)

- e. Ask the best mode to conduct the informational interview (phone, Zoom/Hangouts/FaceTime, or in person)
- f. Exchange contact information (phone and email)
- g. Thank them for their time

Task 3: Select 10-15 Informational Interview Questions

Below is a list of potential interview questions to select from.

Questions about the person's present professional experience

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your current responsibilities?
2. What is a typical day like?
3. What is a typical week like?
4. With whom do you primarily interact?
5. What skills and experiences are key to succeeding in your specialty/position?
6. What are common qualities of individuals who are successful in your specialty/position?
7. What makes this organization a particularly good place to work?
8. How long have you been in your position?
9. What is most challenging/unexpected about working in this specialty/position?
10. What do you like about your specialty and work environment?
11. How would you describe the culture, management style, and organization here?
12. What is your understanding of the average starting salary range for a new medical professional in this specialty/field?

Questions about the person's past professional experience

1. Why did you choose this profession?
2. How did you get into this field?
3. What path led you to this position?
4. What other settings or work environments have you worked in? What other settings or environments are common in this profession?
5. How did you organize your job search?
6. What was your application/interview process like?
7. What's been most rewarding about the professional path you have taken?
8. What would you do differently?
9. When you think about your first year in this specialty/position, what activities or actions were key towards your success (engaging other staff, setting expectations, work/life balance, etc.)?
10. What type of orientation or training did you receive when you first began working here?

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11. Was there anything you wish had been included in that training?

Questions about the person's professional future

1. What are some future career paths that open up for someone in your position 5-10 years down the road?
2. What would be a professionally interesting next step in your career?

General advice

1. What advice would you give someone in my position who wants to be successful in the field?
2. What would you advise new graduates about things to look for in terms of orientation, support, workload, etc.?
3. Looking back on your interview, what questions do you suggest candidates ask before taking a position? What do they need to know?
4. From the research and informational interviews I've completed so far, I've developed a list of organizations in our field that I'm interested in. Can you tell me anything about them? Are there organizations I've left off that I should look at more closely?
5. Can you recommend anyone else who might be willing to talk with me about their career path, either with a background or interest similar to mine or who works at one of the organizations I mentioned?

Task 4: Conduct Two Informational Interviews & Record Responses

Task 5: Reflect on Your Experience & Develop the Next Steps

Write down helpful advice that you'd like to remember. Then outline your next steps of what you are going to do with that information. Ex:

- I am going to research training opportunities to become an LPN at Minnesota State College Southeast.
- I like this company, I am going to let them know I was impressed with their organization and ask for suggestions on how to apply for open positions over the summer