

Experiencing It – A guide to medical, health and social care work experience

Resources required: Computer with a projector and big screen or interactive whiteboard set up with internet access. Note: To view the website the following software and updates are required:

- Adobe Flash Player Version 8 or above
- Adobe Acrobat Reader to open documents in PDF format

Session Objectives:

- Introduce the tasteofmedicine.com website.
- Highlight the importance of work experience for students applying to university and especially for a healthcare course.
- Students to learn about and understand key skills that are important for a career in healthcare and to draw them from all different aspects of their lives.
- Students to recognise that these skills are also relevant to other courses and careers. They are not exclusive to healthcare.
- Students to learn about and improve their self reflection.

Introduction (3 mins)

We would recommend starting this session by introducing the tasteofmedicine.com website, in particular the [Work Experience](#) section, and briefly explain why students might find this site useful. Here are some key points which you may

- Work experience is crucial for getting onto a university course for a healthcare profession.
- The [Work Experience](#) section is just one part of the tasteofmedicine.com website produced by St George's, University of London
- It focuses on uncovering what is relevant work experience and how to get the most out of it with helpful hints and tips from current students.
- As well as providing information, the site goes on to promote the importance of reflecting on experiences and helps students recognise that key skills can be taken from all types of experiences and made relevant to a career in healthcare.
- Finally the site contains clips of university interviews allowing users to reflect on the value of different work and voluntary experiences in the selection process, and also has interactive

tools including a structured journal and web log (blog) to support students' reflective practice.

Main lesson (30 mins)

The Experiencing It section of Taste of Medicine can be broken down into three main parts.

1) The first part is called "Getting Good Experience" (10 mins)

This gives useful tips on how to go about organising a useful work experience placement. It also highlights the key skills a healthcare professional needs and how not just through work experience, but in other aspects of life like extra-curricular activities people can show they have these skills and personal qualities.

- Now.....we would recommend dividing the students up into small groups (approx 4 students in each) and asking them the following question...

What skills/ character traits do you think are important for a healthcare professional to have?

Give the groups of students 2 minutes to write down as many as they can.

- Next..... we would suggest getting the groups to talk about their responses.
- Then..... click on the **skills bank** tab to compare answers given here.

Students may mention skills that are not in the skills bank as this list is not exhaustive. Any additional skills mentioned might still be of use in healthcare.

We have found it works well to briefly engage in a class discussion about why certain skills are important.

(You could click on the " **The St George's Competencies**" for the skills/ traits St George's looks for in its applicants.)

- Next..... click and watch the first 2 videos (**orange** and **blue**)

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1. How to go about it

Truth is, landing healthcare-related work experience isn't always easy. You may get a 'no' or two, but polite persistence usually pays off! The tips below come from people who have been exactly where you are now, and if you continue through the rest of this section, you'll see that non healthcare-related experience can be very valuable too.

Top Tips

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Where?

1 Getting good experience 2 Making the most of it 3 Giving a great interview

- Was what the students heard expected?

Again at this point it might help to reaffirm the key points about the importance of skills/experience.

Work experience for healthcare professions doesn't only have to be done in a hospital setting.

- Click on **Where?** Tab – This gives examples of where students might be able to get relevant healthcare work experience.

Here are other examples where useful work experience can be found and areas from the students' life where one can gain valuable experience relevant for a career in healthcare. This is highlighted in the **"Everything Counts"** tab.

It might be helpful to briefly ask the students to think of one "thing" they are doing that is not related to their course/career of choice specifically but could be relevant because they are developing important skills.

2) The second part is called “Making the Most of It” (10 mins)

This part talks about things students can do before, during and after going on their work experience placement to ensure they learn a lot from it and have a lot to talk about when going for a university interview.

Before starting the videos it might support discussion if students quickly discuss in groups how they might prepare for work experience and summarise this before watching the following videos.

- Click on videos 1 and 3. (**orange** and **purple**) (2mins)



An extremely important part of this is self reflection which is introduced here. Students being able to reflect on how they felt about the things they saw and did during their work experience will help them appreciate the skills they may have developed and also help them grow as a person. It will also be useful for them at university as students are often required to write reflective pieces about their experiences on placements throughout their course.

We encourage reflection at all points and find it can be useful to ‘unpick’ what students understand by reflection and how they might do this (which is covered next) before continuing.

- Click on the **“During”** tab and click on the second video clip (**Blue**) (1min)

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2. During

When taking part in work or voluntary experience, really try to make the most of the opportunity - you've almost certainly gone to a lot of effort to secure the job or placement, so don't let that effort go to waste. Remember, you're there to offer your help and to develop your skills and knowledge, so get involved as much as you can and don't forget to keep a record of anything that stands out so you can reflect on it afterwards.

Top Tips

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Before **After**

1 Getting good experience **2** Making the most of it **3** Giving a great interview

The downloadable journal is an extremely useful tool to help students start thinking about what they will take away from their experiences.

- Click on the **Journal icon**.

Take 3 minutes to briefly talk through it, what questions it gets them to think about, to give them an idea about what they might reflect on during and after their work experience and to answer any questions the students have.

- Next.....Click on...**after** tab and then the video clip (1 min) to introduce the next section.

3) The third part is called **“Giving a Great Interview”**. (10 mins)

- Click on **Giving a Great Interview**... and then click **begin**
- The first video is an applicant, AKIN's, interview (2mins), if time allows give the students (in their groups) 1 minute to talk over how well they think the interviewee did and give him a score using the 15 point scoring criteria on the website.

If there is sufficient time it might further the session by discussing the scores given by each group and then reveal which group was the closest and why the St George's interviewers scored them as they did.

- You can do this for each of the 3 interviewees. (AKIN, LEDA, MICHAEL)(each video is 2 mins)

Closing (last few mins)

- We would suggest starting with a whole group reflection first by discussing what have they learnt.

Here is a summary of what we intended this session to cover.

- The importance of work experience when applying to university for a healthcare course and also how this can be applied more generally.
- The key skills important for a career in healthcare, from your work experience as well as all different aspects and experiences from your life, not just specific work experience.
- The process of reflection and how it is extremely important in demonstrating what we have learnt from our experiences.
- How reflection can be applied in other circumstances e.g. applying for university or in an interview situation.
- If students have any questions there is a contact us section on the website, **they shouldn't be afraid to try it!**
- **Very Important:** Students can look at the site online at anytime at www.tasteofmedicine.com and can download the journal and use the blog to support reflection.