

My Practicum at the Toronto Grace

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HOST ORGANIZATION

My practicum was completed at **The Salvation Army Toronto Grace Health Centre (TGHC)**, a 119-bed facility located in the heart of downtown Toronto.

As a ministry of The Salvation Army, the mission is to provide unique, innovative, holistic care that reflects Christian values in order to meet the complex health needs of the patient population.

TGHC provides care to individuals with multifaceted diseases who require:

- **Complex Continuing Care (CCC)** – patients with multiple chronic diseases and functional disabilities who require a large number of therapeutic and clinical specialties.
- **Post-Acute Care Rehabilitation (PACR)** – care for patients who are recovering from orthopedic surgery, post stroke complications, neurological issues, etc. All patients in PACR are expected to return home and/or back into the community.
- **Palliative Care** – end of life care and support for patients and families. TGHC provides an interdisciplinary team to meet individuals physical, psychosocial, spiritual and cultural needs.



MY ROLE

In my role I provided support to my field supervisor, **TGHC's Chief Nursing Executive & Director of Quality, Patient Experience & Professional Practice (CNE)**.

I mainly assisted the CNE with preparing the TGHC for accreditation. I also had the opportunity to observe roles and activities of stakeholders in other Quality Improvement and Patient Safety Processes such as Harbour Light.

Harbour Light is a partner organization working with TGHC to safely transition TGHC's patients back into the Toronto community once they are discharged.

ACCREDITATION

Accreditation Canada is a third-party assessment body that works with patients, policy-makers and the public to evaluate and improve the excellence of health care for all. The mandate of Accreditation Canada is to improve the safety and quality of health-related services for all and develop a sustainable culture of improvements that can save and improve lives. Accreditation ensures organizations are complying with regulations and providing high-quality care.



My role as an accreditation student was to collect and classify TGHC documents such as policies, procedures, and rules/regulations, into Accreditation Canada standards.

In 2016, TGHC passed their accreditation assessment with exemplary standing, and they aim to achieve the same this year.

I reviewed 2/8 **Health Standards Organization (HSO)** guidelines: Leadership & Rehabilitation. These standards are a list of assessment criteria that organizations are to adhere by.

1. The **HSO's Leadership Guidelines** help health care leaders pursue excellence in leadership. They incorporate many frameworks such as LEADS in a Caring Environment to strengthen skills, abilities and behaviors required for health leaders at all levels.
2. The **HSO's Rehabilitation Guidelines** are designed for organizations providing assessment and treatment services within an acute care setting. This applies to many TGHC services that include physical, psychological, speech, occupational therapy and support services.

I sourced TGHC documents and applied them to accreditation standards using collaborative approaches (group meetings, problem solving, discussions, etc.) with my supervisor and staff members. Each document and policy was reviewed and updated if necessary.



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE SURVEY

I had the opportunity to administer a workplace violence survey. Workplace violence is a recognized hazard and mandate reported to which **Health Quality Ontario**, a body of the Ministry of Health must stay updated on to ensure a safe environment for their employees.

Questions in the survey:

- Who was exposed to violence (nurses, housekeeping, PSW's...)
- The different forms of harm patients were causing (hitting, shouting, kicking...)
- If safety/preventative measures were followed

I was then able to observe management apply the results into a corporate **scorecard**, which is a tool used to monitor data collected for quality improvement approaches.



IMPACT OF WORK ON ORGANIZATION

The outcomes I collected from the survey are extremely important information for the hospital, as administration can then determine if more precautions are needed when it comes to aggressive patients, if all necessary steps are being made to ensure safety for all and how staff feel their needs are being met. I was a useful resource for this project as many other staff members are fairly busy in their day-to-day responsibilities and they had an extra set of hands to help collect this information.

My work provided valuable resources for the hospital to prepare for accreditation and in that my field work supervisor was able to concentrate on direct patient care initiatives such as dealing with issues on nursing floors and preparing TGHC's Quality Improvement Plan for 2020.

IMPACT OF WORK ON ME

I gained an immense amount of knowledge about the importance of policies in how they impact care. As well, how reporting and collecting data is necessary to organizational function, accountability and quality improvement. I also learned about the processes that go into ensuring best practice care is provided.

- **Best Practice Guidelines (BPG's)** are a set of systematic advices that nurses and other health professionals use to aid in patient decision making in a variety of clinical practice situations. This was a good lesson to learn because it outlines certain expectations of healthcare workers to ensure quality and safety. BPG's are also used as a feature in accreditation standards.

Doing a practicum in a largely rehabilitative-based hospital reinforced my decision to continue my education on the graduate-level and enter the rehabilitative sciences.

I was able to **network** with the CNE, other nurses, allied health, graduate students, informatics students, even the CEO! Through these interactions I was able to express my willingness to learn, gain different perspectives of healthcare, get career advice and unlimited support. I have finished this practicum feeling like I have made valuable connections that will last long-term.



ADVICE & TIPS

Ask questions

This is the best opportunity to learn. Get the most out of your practicum by absorbing as much information as possible, it will make you an even better candidate in the healthcare field. Asking questions and observing not only helps you learn but will open other pathways in your practicum if your supervisor sees you are interested and motivated.

Treat your practicum like you would treat any job

Placements are a way to expose students to first-hand experience outside of the classroom. You will gain professionalism and many invaluable skills that can be put towards any future job. Leaving a good impression can also provide resources for you – whether you need a reference for a future graduate application or for employment purposes.