

Project 3: Referral Letter

Successful interprofessional communication is vital to medical practice for ensuring quality patient care, reducing error, keeping workflow efficient, maintaining positive relationships between healthcare professionals, and reducing stress. Referral and reply letters are a common (and often the only) point of contact between healthcare providers, but may be absent or delayed, include insufficient or excessive detail, or be otherwise ineffective.

As an exercise in interprofessional communication, this assignment asks you to write a letter referring a patient to another healthcare provider or replying after seeing a referred patient. The first step is to develop the scenario surrounding the referral. You should consider questions including, but not limited to:

- Who are you writing to? Is this person a specialist? A junior member of the staff?
- What knowledge can you assume, and what should you explain?
- Who is the patient/client? What is their demeanor, medical history, expectations, etc.?
- What is the reason for referral? A second opinion? Diagnosis and management?
- How urgent is the situation? Is it an emergency referral?
- Will your role and expertise be clear, or do you anticipate any misconceptions or gaps in understanding?
- What is the nature of the problem?
- How certain are you about the diagnosis?
- Do you strongly support the referral, or are you just going along with a patient's request?
- What diagnostic tests would have already been run, and what would plausible results be?

You will discuss these situational considerations and how they will inform (or have informed) your writing choices in this unit's reading response and self-assessment memo.

Deliverable #1: Referral Letter

The letter should, at minimum, describe the patient, the problem, clinical findings, and the reason for referral. Consider what other information would be useful to this particular practitioner for their consultation.

I encourage you to write as a professional in your chosen career. (If that means going outside the referral letter genre, consult with me immediately so we can discuss how to preserve the goals of the assignment.) You may also choose a topic to carry forward to the patient education unit, which would give you a head start on researching the topic for that project.

If you would rather use a form than full letter format, design an appropriate form to use. Either way, limit the letter to **one single-spaced page**.

Deliverable #2: Bibliography

Your letter should be informed by research on the medical problem it discusses. To that end, include a bibliography of **at least six sources** you consulted and use APA format, 6th Ed.

Deliverable #3: Self-Assessment Memo

The self-assessment memo serves a crucial role in this assignment. It is where you will describe the scenario you've imagined for the referral letter and how those details have informed your writing choices. You should also explain how you drew on research and consulted examples to develop the letter. Any other reflections you have (e.g. about your writing process, feedback and revision, how you applied assigned readings, what you got out of the assignment, etc.) are appropriate here as well. For that reason, the memo should be **at least one single-spaced page**, no more than two.

Grading

High-scoring letters will be concise and respectful, include an effective level of detail, and use an appropriate format. I will also look for a well-thought out scenario and rationale for writing choices as evident in the self-assessment memo.