



Getting the Most from Your Rehab Travel Career

Congratulations on choosing a career as a traveling rehabilitation healthcare professional! Your education has prepared you well to deliver the specialized care that the United States population needs. Your training will help people of a variety of ages and backgrounds redevelop the physical and emotional strengths they need to return to work, extracurricular activities and other areas of their lives that injuries or developmental challenges have kept from them.

Appropriately, most rehabilitation professionals exert tremendous focused effort on developing technical knowledge through education and on the job training. However, few take time at the outset of their careers to properly plan their professional lives.

- What are my primary career goals?
- What type of life do I want my career to support?
- What will travel or local contract assignments help me accomplish?
- Where should I look for the best opportunities?
- How do I choose reliable people and companies to work with?
- How can I build a professional network that works hard for me in helping me achieve my goals?
- What are some of the challenges I expect to face and how will I overcome them?
- Am I truly prepared to take my professional life 'on the road'?
- How can I develop a continual process of discovery, experience, assessment of my progress and adjustment so that I am certain to achieve my goals?

Answering these and many more key questions can make all the difference between a career built on deliberate choices or one that has resulted from unexpected twists & turns.

MDI Medical is dedicated to your success. We recognize your professional talents and experiences, we value you as a person, and we are committed to helping you achieve your dreams. Getting the Most from Your Rehab Travel Career is an evolving publication based on the accumulation of many years helping thousands of rehabilitation professionals just like you. In this career guide we share our knowledge of the rehab travel market, our experiences finding just the right assignment for each traveler we serve, and the tips, tools and resources that can help you design the career of your dreams.

Congratulations on taking this important step. We look forward to contributing to your long term success.

Safe Travels,

Candace

Candace Berk
President
MDI Medical



Part I: Self Assessment

Designing Your Career Begins with Understanding YOU

Read any self-improvement book available and you'll quickly find a great deal of the material is dedicated to understanding what in life is most important to you. It's quite difficult to reach your expected destination without a map and clear milestones as your guides. In Part I of *Getting the Most from your Rehab Travel Career*, we'll help you quickly assess your goals, wants, needs, special requirements, and the milestones that will help you stay on track.

This can be an extensive process, or an activity that takes just minutes, but it is critical to start with self discovery (and to revisit often) if your career will take the shape that you originally intended.

Self Discovery

Ten people will give you ten different answers to the question "What does a rewarding career look like?" For some, a rewarding career is marked primarily by the income one generates or the level of authority accumulated. Others define success in terms of the life their career enables, be it abundant leisure time, unforgettable experiences, financial freedoms, or happy and healthy families and friends.

You must develop your own understanding of who you are, what you want and what you have to offer. For example:

- What is most important to me in my life? (Money? Status? Relationships? Time? Personal Growth?)
- What type of lifestyle do I want?
- What type of work gives me energy vs. draining me?
- What do I want to spend each day doing?
- Who are the types of people I enjoy working with?
- What type of work environment is important to me?
- What types of work, people & experiences will I avoid?
- What are my talents?
- What do I do better than anyone else?
- Where am I lacking?
- What steps must I take to improve?
- Why have I chosen to work on a travel or local contract basis?

Defining Your Goals

With a clear understanding of who you are and what is important to you, goals become quite clear. Of course, your goals will change over time as you discover more about yourself, accumulate different experiences and meet new people. However, in order to narrow your focus and set your sights on the initial target, a few early career goals are important.

It is also helpful to categorize your goals. Outline professional goals, personal goals, time frames for each, and think about how often you might revisit them.

Professional Goals

- What type of healthcare settings do I prefer?
- What assignment length is appealing to me?
- Am I willing to travel long distances or would I prefer to work locally?
- What skills would I like to acquire?

Personal Goals

- Why am I working on contract? To maximize income to pay off debt? How much & by when?
- What is most important to me on my first assignment? To see the country? Test the waters before making a permanent move? Stay close to family & friends?
- Do I prefer to find a great assignment and stay there for the long term or is it important to me to move around?
- Will I travel year-round or only during specific times?
- What locations are important to me?

The only right answers to these questions are your answers. If the reasons for pursuing the career you've chosen aren't truly yours, then the life you create won't be yours either. Define your goals. By taking this step, you'll be amazed at the clarity with which you can begin your career and chart your success.

People often say that this or that person has not yet found himself. But the self is not something one finds, it is something one creates.
~Thomas Szasz, "Personal Conduct," *The Second Sin*, 1973

I can teach anybody how to get what they want out of life. The problem is that I can't find anybody who can tell me what they want.
~Mark Twain



Set Rough Deadlines

A goal without a plan is simply a dream. By taking this first step toward self-discovery and goal definition, you'll apply a disciplined action plan to turn those dreams into reality. To complete your plan, it's important to set some rough timeframes. Organize your goals into categories such as:

- Assignment-Specific Goals
- 90 Day Goals
- 6 Month Goals
- 1 Year Goals
- 3 Year Goals
- 5 Years Goals

Rather than leave these vague references to time alone, pick some dates for each of them. There's tremendous power in attaching a deadline to a goal. Deadlines force you out of procrastination and into action. You've heard the saying 'If it weren't for the last minute, nothing would ever get done.' Setting deadlines helps you avoid operating in the last minute.

The One Thing

We all know people in life who seem to have it all together. Their life seems perfect. Great job, great family, lots of leisure time. They seem to get so much done. In many cases the only differences between them and you are clear goals, a plan, and the discipline to act on it.

It's time for you to design the life you want. It's your turn to build a career that leverages your strengths and enables the pursuit of your goals and dreams. To do that you must find the one thing.

The one thing is the type of work or activity that defines you. It's the one thing that may leave you physically exhausted, yet you just can't get enough. The one thing energizes you, ignites your passions, delivers immense satisfaction, exhilarates your soul and leaves you feeling magnificent.

Define exactly what that is for yourself, build your plan, and pursue it without compromise.

Let's Get to Work

The following pages present a series of self assessment questions to help you define what's important to you in your rehab therapy career.

Whether you are a Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, or Speech Language Pathologist, carefully considering your goals, primary needs, and big dreams is the first step to realizing them all.

Use this tool to get your plans down on paper and revisit it a couple times each year to make sure you're on track, or to think through some changing needs you may have.

About MDI Medical

MDI Medical is a JCAHO-certified healthcare staffing firm that delivers the finest career opportunities for Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Speech Language Pathologists. Our only business is the Rehab Therapy business, and with nearly 2,000 jobs to choose from each day, MDI has an opportunity for just about everyone.

MDI Medical is a division of the MDI Group, a staffing and professional services organization headquartered in Atlanta, GA. MDI has recorded 19 consecutive years of profitable growth, finishing 2006 with revenues over \$63 million earned from over 350 different clients.

MDI's philosophy is simple – be a great place for great people to work. To meet this goal, MDI focuses on recruiting to maintain a pipeline of quality candidates, puts the traveler first and treats people right.

As a testament to its success, MDI has earned multiple awards and recognition, such as Business Owner of the Year, from NAWBO; Top Companies for Women, from Atlanta Woman Magazine, and Top Diversity-Owned Companies in the US from DiversityBusiness.com. Furthermore, additional recognition has been received from publications such as Entrepreneur, Georgia Trend, Business to Business, Catalyst and the Atlanta Journal and Constitution.



MDI Medical has earned the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval™



Completing Your Self Assessment & Defining Goals

Below is a self assessment tool you can use to document what's important to you, your personal and professional goals and the relative timeframes for each.

Self Assessment Questions

1. What is most important to me in my life? _____

2. What type of lifestyle do I want? _____

3. What type of work gives me energy vs. draining me of it? _____

4. What do I want to spend each day doing? _____

5. Who are the types of people I enjoy working with? _____

6. What type of work environment is important to me? _____



7. What types of work, people and experiences do I want to avoid? _____

8. What are my talents? _____

9. What do I do better than anyone else? _____

10. In what areas (education, skills, experience) am I lacking? _____

11. What steps might I take to improve? _____



Professional Goals

1. What types of healthcare settings to I prefer? _____

2. What assignment length is appealing to me? _____

3. Am I willing to travel nationally or would I prefer to work locally? _____

4. What skills would I like to acquire? _____

Other Important Professional Goals: _____



Personal Goals

1. Why have I chosen contract work? To maximize income to pay off debt? How much & by when?

2. What is most important to me on my first assignment? To see the country? Test the waters before making a permanent move? Stay close to home? _____

3. Do I prefer to find a great assignment & stay there for the long term or is it important for me to move around?

4. Will I travel year round or only during specific times? _____

Locations

5. What locations are important to me? List your top 10:

- | | | |
|-----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 7. | 8. | 9. |
| 10. | | |



Travel & Housing, Pay & Benefits

1. Can I drive my own car to assignments or do I need transportation?

2. I prefer that my travel travel arrangements are made by: (check one)

My Travel Company Me (Note: Additional tax benefits may be possible with this option.)

3. My housing needs: (check all that apply)

I travel with pets How many? _____ What kind? _____

I will provide my own housing while on assignment

3. Please check all that apply:

I am traveling to maximize my income only. I want the highest possible hourly rate & I am willing to do without other travel accommodations or benefits to achieve that.

I am traveling to see the country. income is important, but so are some of the other comforts of home. I will need housing, a rental car, and would like to work little to no overtime so that I have the time to enjoy my assignment location.

I DO NOT need medical benefits of any kind.

I need medical benefits for myself only.

I need medical benefits for myself and my spouse.

I need medical benefits for myself and my child.

I need medical benefits for my family.

Getting Started

Now that you've defined your goals and completed your self assessment, share it with those who will help you along the way. In Part 2, we'll help you select a rehab therapy staffing company. Once you do that, your recruiter will become an invaluable resource. Help them understand who you are, your goals and the timeframes in which you'd like to achieve them. Over time you will find that a great travel company can make a huge difference in the quality of your career.