Case Study #1

Miguel Suarez is a 24-year-old, Latino man who sustained a C4/5 spinal cord injury in 2010. After dropping out of high school in the 10th grade, he worked for four years at a loading dock of a major furniture supply warehouse in middle Georgia. Mr. Suarez was injured in a car accident on the way home from work by an uninsured motorist. He was taken to a regional hospital and released after three months to go home, using only a manual chair that his family had to push. Since his injury, he's spent most of his time at home watching television from an easy chair that allows him to sit up or lie down. He is completely reliant on his mother and two brothers to help him with activities of daily living. He is not able to leave the home because the home has four steps to enter it, and he has no modified van and lives in a rural town with no public transportation. His family (mother, father, two brothers and aunt) are supportive and protective and do everything they can to help Mr. Suarez, but most days he is home alone while everyone else works. A month ago his doctor sent him to a major rehabilitation hospital because of a urinary tract infection he was not able to treat effectively. While hospitalized, he met another quad who was using a powered chair, had a small laptop mounted on his wheelchair, used speech input to do many routine activities like opening and closing a door, turning room lights, a fan, and a personal computer on and off. The man also had a van with a lift and worked full time.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENTING PROBLEM

Mr. Suarez was referred by Robert Jones, Director of the Independent Living Program, to a vocational rehabilitation counselor who is in the vocational unit at the hospital. Mr. Suarez stated he had no idea what he could do with his life until he met and talked with Mr. Jones. Now he sees that he could perhaps return to some kind of work and earn a living. He stated he would like to get a GED and then go to college or technical school, but is challenged by all the barriers he sees. For the first time in a long time, he feels more hopeful about his future. He says he used to like to tinker with broken things and put them back together again so they would work. He presents himself to the counselor as a very pleasant young man who clearly articulates his experiences, and who has an engaging smile.

**Answer the following questions related to the Miguel Suarez case study.** Students will answer the case study questions using reputable sources. Where applicable justify all responses by referring to the textbook, scholarly journals, or other reputable sources (e.g., reputable websites). Typically, case study length should be between 1-3 pages of written responses.

Note: A reference page is required and citations should be included in the text of your report.

Upload your case study response by using a Microsoft Word document by 11:59 p.m. on the due date. A scoring rubric has been posted in the syllabus for this assignment. Using complete sentences, person-first language (e.g., individual with spinal cord injury) proper grammar, spelling, document organization, and punctuation will be part of your grade.

Suggested sources to help support answers:

* Cook, A., Polgar, J., & Encarnação, P. (2019). *Assistive Technologies: Principles and Practice* (5th ed.). Elsevier Publishers.
* Illinois Assistive Technology Program: <https://www.iltech.org/>
* Job Accommodation Network: <https://askjan.org/>
* Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/>
* Search for other reputable sources and websites. Typically, .com websites are not considered reputable.
1. What are the functional implications of a C4/C5 spinal cord injury? In other words, what is Mr. Suarez’s physical capability? Support your answer with a reputable reference.
2. The Human component of the HAAT model is the most important when providing services. Contextual factors are also important. A. Based on your understanding of the case study, what in your opinion are the barriers (i.e., environmental, mobility, transportation, educational, familial, and/or cultural) that challenge Mr. Suarez? B. What are his apparent strengths?
3. A. What makes an assistive technology low-tech versus high-tech? B. Based on the case study and your answers to #1 and #2 above, what is an example of an activity that Mr. Miguel would need to complete in his daily life and where will this activity occur? C. What is an example of a low-tech assistive technology that could help him accomplish that particular activity? D. What is an example of a high-tech assistive technology that could help him accomplish that particular activity? Support your answer with reputable references.