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WHEN DID YOU START AS AN APPRENTICE SOCIAL WORKER?

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WHAT WERE YOU DOING BEFORE YOU STARTED YOUR APPRENTICESHIP?

I worked as a clinical support worker on psychiatric intensive care inpatient unit for Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO PURSUE A CAREER IN SOCIAL WORK?

I have always been interested in health and social care and have had various roles within the sector, paid and voluntary. I have experience of being a young family carer for a parent with mental health concerns and that was when I first knew that I wanted to support people who may have lost the ability to be heard to find their voice again.

I felt like I couldn't make a big enough impact and change whilst working as a support worker and made it my goal to progress my career.

DID YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES INFLUENCE YOUR DECISION TO PURSUE SOCIAL WORK? IF SO - HOW?

Yes, I had social care input when I was a teenager, unfortunately I wished that I was supported in a more effective way which made me think that I could use my experience to help and understand others.

I believe that caring for my parent from a young age influenced my career path, I have worked in care within various roles since leaving school and this has given me the knowledge on how care providers work which has benefited my current practice.

When working at my last job in the hospital I realised that I would be more suitable to a social work role rather than a nursing role. I noticed that whilst working in health a lot of social needs were being unmet and I was able to identify these whilst talking with patients.

HOW HAVE YOU FOUND THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING AN APPRENTICE SOCIAL WORKER?

Insightful, I have already learnt so much about social work since September and have discovered that my skills as support worker are transferable to the social work role. My first placement team have been amazing and have taught me valuable skills and values that I can take with me onto my next placement.

But the first few months were challenging, having to adapt to a new role and new employer can be hard. I have had to learn how to not put too much pressure on myself and to acknowledge that everything I do is a benefit to my learning and development.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND AN APPRENTICESHIP IN SOCIAL WORK TO SOMEONE CONSIDERING IT?

Yes, if you have the drive and determination to empower people and make a positive impact on their lives. I have always worked with people, and I feel that this is the best way to learn social work practice if you learn through doing things rather than just studying.

If you have a background in delivering care the transferable skills will be valuable to you and others on your journey through the apprenticeship.