

Real-life story - Carolyn Nield

From a young age, Carolyn has always been interested in being a psychotherapist so that she can help people with mental health illnesses.



Carolyn Nield Psychotherapist, cognitive analytic therapy
Employer or university Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Salary range £40k-£50k

How I got into the role

Growing up, I saw some of my family members battling with mental health problems so from a young age I knew I wanted to work as a psychotherapist to help people with similar illnesses.

I expected to study psychology at university before getting into my dream job, but I didn't get the grades I needed. I ended up going through clearing and studying sociology which in hindsight proved to be a useful first step. After graduating, I did a *mental health nursing diploma which provided many opportunities for career progression.

I eventually went on to work as a psychotherapist which led to my role today – working with adults with mental health illnesses. Life has a funny way of working itself out and my longer route into psychotherapy proved to be invaluable experience and a great base for training.

*no longer available.

What I do

On a typical day, I see patients for their therapy and carry out some psychotherapy assessments in order to

figure out which therapy will be most helpful for them. Other aspects of my role involve supervising trainees and consulting colleagues from the other teams. I also attend different types of meetings including clinical discussions and business meetings.

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The best bits and challenges

The best bit about my role is seeing the patients get better. My role can be difficult as I hear about the traumatic and distressing parts of people's lives. But it's also very helpful that I work as part of an experienced team and we work together to help the patient.

My least favourite part of my role is the admin work. There are a lot of reports to write and many emails to respond to and this can be demanding and time consuming. It can also detract from the most vital part of my work which requires thinking space and time for reflection.

Life outside work

A good work-life balance is essential to a healthy life so I try to make time for my hobbies and my family. We enjoy eating out and going to the cinema together. I love music and have been learning how to play guitar to take my mind off work.

Career plans and top tips for others

The NHS offers a lot of opportunities for career development and progression. I've taken a variety of training courses including domestic violence champion and supervisor training. I'm most proud of my supervisor training as it required a different skills set to clinical skills.

I'm currently taking a diploma in online counselling and psychotherapy to understand the implications that technology has in my field of work.

My top tip would be to take on training opportunities when they come about. Continuously expanding your knowledge is an important part of progressing your career.

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