

"I really enjoy the clinical side of my job and being able to see the positive change therapy can make for young people's lives."

Jim Albin

Senior wellbeing practitioner

Employer or university

Mental health support team in schools at Devon Partnership NHS Trust

Salary range

Band 6



How I got into the role

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I previously worked in student recruitment and widening participation at universities across the country. These roles really inspired me to start my higher education journey starting with a degree in Cultural Studies and Media Studies.

After graduating, I started a psychology conversion course while working, and then I moved to Exeter in 2006, and continued to study psychology with the Open University.

I decided to take voluntary redundancy. This is when I saw the education mental health practitioner vacancies being advertised. The role really appealed as it allowed me to use the skills I learned in my studies while helping young people experiencing challenges

with their mental health. The job also meant I could use a lot of the transferable skills from my previous posts such as working in schools and colleges.

When I saw the senior wellbeing practitioner roles advertised, I decided to apply. I wanted to progress my career but also wanted to keep the clinical aspect of being an education mental health practitioner. Being able to do this while progressing meant it struck the perfect balance.

What I do

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I work in schools and community settings offering low intensity psychological interventions based on CBT principles to young people. These young people have mild to moderate low mood and anxiety.

The young people I work with usually have specific challenges and means my role is more specialised. They may have trauma or self-harm. I also adapt our support for young people to improve participation and accessibility. This is really important, especially for young people with neurodiversity.

I also lead a team of education mental health practitioners and child wellbeing practitioners.

The best bits and challenges

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I really enjoy the clinical side of my job and being able to see the positive change therapy can make for young people's lives.

I am also really lucky to have the autonomy to be able to create and adapt a range of resources to better improve our service for our young people. I have done some really important work recently helping young people who are self-harming, and this is currently being piloted across the community.

I have challenges. I have dyslexia and dyspraxia and I can find it hard adapting to a neurotypical way of working. Getting a formal diagnosis helped a lot as it suddenly made a lot of things clear to me and helped me to understand why I was finding certain things tricky. I also get help and support from my employer.

As for the job, finding the time to get everything done can be challenge. There is just not enough time, especially as I am at university two days a week. I am also the first cohort of trainee senior well-being practitioners so we are trailblazers. It does mean there is a lot of uncertainty in the job and what the role should be. However, the service has been really supportive with this.

Life outside work

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I really enjoy going to the cinema as I'm a big film fan. I play guitar and an enjoy miniature and board games and find that these can be a great way to socialise with people.

Top tips for others

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Being a senior well-being practitioner is a great career path for education mental health practitioners, especially if you are keen to keep the clinical work and gain new experience/skills. You also get into more managerial roles and guide other practitioners. In the future, the role will a lot clearer so I would recommend going for it.

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