

Self-Awareness Presentation

My Path to Becoming a Mental Health Care Assistant

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Professional Development within Health and Social Care

My chosen career: Mental Health Care Assistant

Mental Health Care Assistant – supports patients experiencing mental health difficulties as part of a supervised clinical team.

- Offers compassionate, person-centered emotional and practical support
- Observes wellbeing and reports changes or concerns to registered staff
- Supports everyday routines, recovery-focused activities and dignity
- Works with nurses and other professionals, following care plans (NHS England, 2023; Leeds and York Partnership NHS FT, 2026)

Relevant mental health job advert (NHS example)

Band 3 Healthcare Assistant – Steps to Recovery

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

Knowle, Solihull | £24,937–£26,598 per year (pro rata)

Permanent, part-time | Posted 16 March 2026 (advert now closed)

Duties: assist adults with severe and enduring mental health difficulties; support personal care and therapeutic activities; work with clinical colleagues.

Essential: healthcare assistant experience, knowledge of mental health in care, communication and teamwork.

This is a genuine role example, not a currently open vacancy.

Source: Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (2026) Band 3 Healthcare Assistant – Steps to Recovery. NHS Jobs. <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9436-26-0164> (accessed 15 October 2026).

Strengths and Weaknesses

STRENGTHS

- Confident, compassionate communication and active listening
- Able to build trust and maintain a respectful approach
- Willing to learn and accept supervision
- Interest in mental wellbeing and patient-centered care

WEAKNESSES

- Limited direct experience in a clinical mental health setting
- Need to strengthen time management and accurate record keeping
- Still developing confidence in responding to distress or crises
- Need more practice with observations, safeguarding and escalation

Opportunities and Threats

OPPORTUNITIES

- Volunteering or placements within mental health services
- Entry-level healthcare assistant roles with supervised experience
- Safeguarding, observation and de-escalation training (Price et al., 2015)
- NHS induction, reflective practice and progression routes

THREATS

- Competition from candidates with direct clinical experience
- Emotional demands, shift work and risk of burnout (Johnson et al., 2018)
- Maintaining boundaries, confidentiality and patient safety
- Balancing degree study with practical training and work

Using my strengths

- Use empathy and communication to build therapeutic rapport with patients who are distressed or withdrawn.
 - Follow the patient's care plan, provide supervised practical support and respect dignity, choice and confidentiality.
 - Notice changes in mood, behavior or safety; document observations and promptly inform the nurse in charge.
 - Seek supervision, constructive feedback and reflection to develop safe practice (Bradley and Becker, 2021).

Example: If a patient becomes distressed, remain calm, listen without judgement, follow agreed procedures and escalate risk to qualified staff.

SMART action plan

WITHIN 4 WEEKS

- Create and follow a weekly study and professional development planner.

WITHIN 6 WEEKS

- Review three mental health healthcare assistant person specifications and tailor my CV to required skills.

WITHIN 2 MONTHS

- Contact three local NHS or charity mental health services about placements or volunteering.

WITHIN 3 MONTHS

- Complete safeguarding, confidentiality and introductory de-escalation training; record evidence of learning.

REVIEW: Check progress monthly with tutor or supervisor.

Conclusion

My SWOT analysis shows that a Mental Health Care Assistant role closely matches my interest in supporting people experiencing mental health difficulties. My strengths in communication, empathy and willingness to learn provide a good foundation. To work safely and effectively, I need supervised clinical experience, better time management and more confidence in recognizing and escalating concerns. Through focused volunteering, mental health training, feedback and reflective practice, I can work towards a Mental Health Care Assistant position and later progress within mental health services.

References

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (2026) Band 3 Healthcare Assistant – Steps to Recovery. NHS Jobs. <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9436-26-0164> (Accessed: 15 October 2026).

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