

Changemakers: Building your Personal Brand for Sustainable Employment

Assignment 1: E-Portfolio Evidence of Learning

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This paper is submitted as part of BSc Health and Social Care

Module Lecturer: Dr Mark Gallagher-Read

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1. Personal Statement (MSc Health and Social Care)

“A modern health and social care system has to be completely focused on the needs of its users.” This sentiment of Patricia Hewitt indicates the importance of understanding and insight, something I feel I have in abundance as a mature learner, carer, father of 6, and current student of Health and Social Care (BSc).

I am thoroughly enjoying my studies achieving high marks in all my modules with a 1st year average of 66%. Returning to education has reignited my keenness for learning which becomes apparent in the work I do. During my 1st year of study, I was assigned a task focused on digital technology. Although the subject area was niche, I researched beyond the required material and began exploring other avenues. Per chance, one of these topics was mental digital health which sparked my eventual migration to the field of Health and Social Care. I now greatly appreciate the need for individuals in the field of social health and having read books like ‘One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest’, I realise the important role they play in the social fabric of society.

Currently completing my Bachelors in Health and Social Care, I am in a unique position as I have not only demonstrated a strong grasp of the theoretical elements of this field but am also able to understand their impact and real-world application due to my eclectic life experience. This comes from living in a poor socio-economic community, having been homeless myself, and having been a carer for my late parents. My father suffered from leukaemia and my mother had slight dementia though never formally diagnosed. They were immigrants to this country and held strong cultural values, it was left to me to find a balance between them receiving the necessary care and them living a comfortable life according to their traditional ideals. After their demise I also care for my younger sister who suffers from dystonia. All this while studying and working part-time has made me proficient in delivering effective care and being regimental with my time. None of this is done at the expense of quality leisure time spent playing board games with family, snooker with my brothers, and regularly exercising at the gym.

I have a strong desire to ensure my life experiences are put to good use in a constructive and assistive way. I would like to use my story and journey to inspire and motivate those going through difficulty showing them anything can be overcome with willpower and strong communication. An example of this from my own story is when I became homeless at the age of 15 turning to crime and suffering from mental health. Strangely, the change in my life came when I was serving a 120-hour community service working with pensioners. I provided such good service that I was offered a job as a supervisor and this opportunity led me to pinball to where I am today. I was given this second chance, an opportunity to move forward and make something positive of my life. This has been my biggest motivator to take up the opportunities that come my way and passing on the baton of assistance to others.

I am eager to achieve a master’s qualification so that I may be better equipped to serve in this field. As the Dalai Lama said, “It is not enough to be compassionate. You must act.” And that is what I endeavour to continue to do. I hope through further study I can increase my subject knowledge and thus provide a superior service of care to my wider community desperately in need of it.

2. Health and Social Care CV

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Professional Profile

A conscientious and confident mature student of Health and Social Care. Possesses extensive real-world experience in family management having raised 6 children to adulthood and cared for elderly parents with medical conditions prior to their demise. Excels in balancing tasks, keeping calm under pressure, and maintaining the welfare of dependants.

With over 20 years of experience and achievement, I am seeking to use the professional and care skills gained to empower those who are struggling and assist them in making sustainable positive changes to their lives by giving them the tools to understand and control their own strengths and weaknesses.

Career Summary

May 2000 – Present	Taxi Driver <i>Uber Technologies, Part-time Driver (July 2019 - Present)</i> <i>Trinity Taxis Ltd, Operations Coordinator (May 2000 till June 2019)</i>
	Contracted by various care home trusts like Avery, WCS, and Care UK to transport their elderly residents to and from their residence. This provided an insight into the realities of health care services and patient opinions about it. Gained information about procedures and issues surrounding these care systems as residents spoke to me openly as a source of venting their frustrations and concerns. I learnt a lot through dealing with vulnerable adults and children, some of whom suffered from mental health issues and broken families.
Sept 1999 – Present	Family Carer
	Ensured welfare and comfort of family members undergoing illness: - Father suffered from leukaemia (deceased 2006) - Mother suffered from dementia (deceased 2019) - Sister suffers from Dystonia (diagnosed 2019)

	For my parents, I also had to consider their cultural traditions and balance this with necessary medical requirements.
Mar 1986 - Jan 1991	Coral Social Clubs, Assistant Manager
	Worked through the ranks covering all segments of the club eventually achieving the role of Assistant Manager. Was responsible for organising efficient, smooth running of the club. This came down to people and conflict management and in cases dealing with disabilities. I learnt to safeguard clients in compliance with internal policies and procedures. Received 'Employee of the Month' on 8 occasions.

Core Skills

Flexible, adaptable, and able to work effectively in a variety of settings including cross-cultural settings. Ensure respect, empathy, and confidentiality is observed to build trust allowing for successful communication and support to be provided. Accompanied by a logical and analytical mind, delivering a cohesion of ability and confidence. Proficient in English, Urdu, Hindi, and Punjabi.

Professional Training and Qualifications

Sept 2020 - Present	Batchelors in Science Health and Social Care <i>University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Birmingham</i>
Sept 2019 – July 2020	Certificate in Higher Education Skills for the Workplace (66% average) <i>University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Birmingham</i>
Jun 2012	Level 2 NVQ Certificate in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving
Mar 2010 – Aug 2010	First Aid, St Johns Ambulance
Sept 2003 – June 2004	GCSE Urdu (A*) <i>Sidney Stringer School and Community College, Coventry</i>

References

Mark Gallagher-Read
Programme Manager, University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Aftab Hussain Aziz
Care Home Quality Inspector, Care Quality Commission

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3. Pitch – Documentary

Title: Back on Track

Picture a 15-year-old boy, the child of immigrants leaving home with the mindset of never returning in a city unknown to him and full of dangers and dangerous people. This was me at a stage in my life when I left home and became homeless. Hewett and Halligan (2010) highlight that this is a reality of many whether out of choice or necessity in the UK yet the reason why, the struggles, and the method of overcoming this national crisis has never been explored beyond news articles and short radio segments. I would like to shed a light on my journey through living rough on the streets and talk about the way many take advantage of this vulnerable community by criminalizing homelessness.

We see many documentaries these days talking about historical accounts and contemporary issues (Kinnari, 2018) however very rarely do we see them providing both the real-world situation as well as solutions and proven examples of overcoming the issues. My proposal is 'Back on Track', a 3-part Netflix documentary unwrapping this very issue.

Episode 1 – My Dark Days

The first of three episodes will highlight my journey into homelessness and how things went from bad to worse and I began to get involved with criminal activity out of desperation and my mental health spiralled out of control. With no one willing or able to help I was at the brink of suicide. It will also include interviews and reflections on the lives of others who have experienced homelessness focusing on the causes including lack of affordable housing, escaping domestic violence, or out of sheer poverty (Astrup, 2019).

Episode 2 – Lost on the Streets

The second episode will focus on my experiences while living on the streets, how they are run, the provisions available to people living rough, and how things have changed over the years. It will feature Geoff Thompson, a BAFTA-winning writer, filmmaker, spiritual teacher, and martial artist. Geoff was a well-known nightclub bouncer who had his fair share of dangerous experiences that he portrayed in his many books (Thompson, 2009) and short film some of which will be adopted into this documentary.

Episode 3 – Think Positive

This is the final in a trilogy and rightfully will have a hopeful message and ending to this documentary series. The area of interest in this episode will be stories of escape from homelessness, the streets, and crime. Featuring Chun Lee, a local gym owner who changed his life around and began promoting self-defence in place of violence, advocating respect in place of crime. Similarly, it will explore my own journey out of the vortex of crime. As I have stated, during my youth I was in a bad place struggling with my mental health and stuck in a seemingly unescapable cycle of crime and struggle. However, while I was serving a 120-hour community service working with pensioners I surprised everyone including myself by performing so well that I was offered a full-time job by the management as a supervisor. Just being gifted this opportunity on my lap filled me with hope and confidence and became my rope which I used to climb out of the rift I had been stuck in for so long. And it is this opportunity that those stuck in on the streets are yearning for (Farrall, Bottoms and Shapland, 2010), a gesture of kindness and support that is literally life changing.

In sum, this Netflix documentary series will be exploring how to get back on track when you feel desperate and abandoned by society, a challenge too difficult to imagine by those who have not experienced it for themselves. It will clearly explain what is now available to those who are struggling, YMCA housing (Somerville, 2011), Coventry Cyrenians, food banks, anti-harm, and mental health support as well as much more. Furthermore, it will advise social care, security and medical personnel how to identify, treat and rehabilitate those stuck in this system by proactively identifying and tackling the root cause. It is time a floodlight is shone on this social crisis allowing each of us to empathise with those around us and help rebuild our communities and the people who inhabit them.

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