



Conversations with Carers

Courtney's Story



What does being an unpaid family carer mean to you?

In recent years I have helped to support my nan. I never identified as an unpaid carer until seeing a carer do a guest talk on our course and I realised that the support I give nan is caring. Before my grandad died, I helped him too and since nan has been on her own, I try to ensure she has everything she needs. Her hearing and mobility aren't what they used to be and she doesn't drive so I help make sure she has her medication, shopping, goes out and gets to various hospital appointments. I also attend medical appointments with her and ask questions and make notes to make sure she understands what is being said to her.

How did you hear about your current job and what made you apply?

I was already working part time at the college but in another department. I enjoyed my role, but needed more hours due to the cost of living rising. I have a background in health and social care, as well as a passion for helping people and being in education, so to be able to be in a role that matched my interests was exciting. It was nerve wracking applying for my first full time job, but I thought I would take a leap of faith and it has proven to be a good choice.

What skills and knowledge have you gained since starting in your role?

I have learnt an enormous amount about the opportunities that are out there for people looking to get into health and social care roles. I've built my coaching skills and this is ongoing. I've done a number of different training courses which are mostly focused on mental health and wellbeing. I've built a network of contacts and have confidence and public speaking skills - on one occasion speaking to 300 students!

How is having this job helpful to you?

Whilst I work full time hours, I am able to flex to make sure I can still do school runs and support my nan with appointments. This job has shown me that I am capable of more than I ever thought I would be and has allowed me to build confidence to face and overcome barriers that I would have avoided.

What challenges do you face?

It has been a difficult transition going from part time to full time hours. I feel guilty that I can't help my nan as much as I used to, but as a family we make sure that nan is ok. I find it overwhelming sometimes when we have particularly busy weeks, but we work together as a team to ensure we are all able to get through busy times with smiles on our faces. I've found that celebrating our weekly wins together helps us all recognise the achievements we make and the challenges we've overcome.

What is your advice to others who might be considering getting a job?

Go for it! You will get the chance to gain new skills and knowledge, make new friends and have time to socialise whilst at work. I think the biggest thing for me is the sense of achievement of using my experience and knowledge to help make the lives of others better. It has also been really important for my own mental health and wellbeing.

