



Graham Duerden

Current Job Role: Occupational Therapist and manager of the Recovery & Wellbeing service(R&Ws), Adult mental health, Health and Social Services, States of Guernsey

Brief descriptive snapshot of this role?

Occupational Therapist (OT's) use 'meaningful occupation' as a treatment tool. We specialise in getting to know a person, what they need and want to do in life, and we find ways to help them to undertake these activities. We assess function, analyse tasks, problem solve and offer therapy and opportunities to engage in activity. As manager of R&WS I lead a team of mental health professionals and support workers to deliver 1:1 sessions and group opportunities for people with severe/ enduring mental health problems and illness. There are a wide variety of groups we offer, from social / activity groups outside of the hospital to talking/ learning/ craft groups inside the hospital.

What has been your journey into this role?

I began working as a carer in Learning Disability and then discovered how OT's work. Occupational Therapy embodies the saying "give a man a fish and he will eat for a day, teach them how to fish and he will eat forever." I undertook a health sciences access course and then university and trained to become an Occupational Therapist. After qualifying I worked in a number of different areas to consolidate my skills and gain experience. This included; general medicine, renal, cardiac, A&E, Older adult Community Mental Health Team, Psychiatric inpatient and adult Mental Health community.

Key skills & qualities for this role?

As an OT the key skills are; patience, communication, research, problem solving, organisational skills, resilience. The qualities are; optimism, determination, open mindedness, adaptability and a good sense of humour. As a manager-everything above :).

How does this role interact across the SOG and other external agencies?

In this role I have worked with Employment and Social Security in advising and supporting employment and advocating for service users in relation to benefits. I have worked with Education in regard to developing education programmes and vocational qualifications. I have worked with Housing in regard to advocating for service users and assessing living environments for functionality.

Why is this work important to you?

It feels good to help people, to appreciate the diversity and adaptability of human life and see growth and wellbeing.

If you would like to find out more about getting into a career in Mental Health, contact a Careers Adviser at careersguernsey@gov.gg



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