

## **How has being at NT life supported your OT journey?**

NT Life has given me unique experiences, which will enable me as an OT to be more in touch with my own feelings and mental health, and allow me to understand my clients/patients better. Sitting amongst the participants in the group activities has allowed me to gain first-hand insight on how it feels to be in their shoes, which will improve my empathy for clients in the future. I have been able to learn more about mental health, and learn about how beneficial recovery colleges, like NT Life, are for people struggling with their mental health. Having a role-emerging placement has allowed me to develop my own professional identity, and not just inherit one from other OTs on typical placements. It has enabled me to apply theory to practice.

## **What will you take from here and use**

- **Personally**
- **Professionally**

NT Life has equipped me on how to look after my mental health, as it's vital to make sure that I am well before attempting to help others. If I take care of myself I will be able to ensure the best outcomes for my clients. I have also learnt my triggers and areas that I am uncomfortable in, which will help me in the future.

I have developed skills that I will be able to apply to my professional life, such as empathy. I have learnt the importance of being sensitive with others, and respecting peoples' boundaries. Learning about others' triggers has enabled me to be more open minded and aware of ways in which I can ensure that people feel comfortable and safe in my care.

## **How did we meet your expectations?**

NT life has exceeded my expectations as a placement. Since I started, I have felt supported, respected and listened to. My identity as an occupational therapy student has been upheld and respected, and I have felt like part of the team, an equal. This has helped me with developing my professional identity, and I have felt more comfortable to share my theory and knowledge with others, as everyone has been so curious and inquisitive of the benefits of occupational therapy.

## **Would you recommend us as a placement venue? Why?**

Definitely! Even though we have been the first students to complete a placement at NT Life, I hope we won't be the last. I believe that the benefits of being here on placement can help so many more OT students on their journey. The skills I developed and the things I have learnt have been so unique to this particular recovery college, and I don't think I would be the same person if I would have completed my placement elsewhere. I will be sad to leave.

**If you hadn't had us as a placement what wouldn't you know/feel now?**

I wouldn't be as in touch with my own mental health, and wouldn't know how important it is to look after my mental health in order to work efficiently and effectively. I don't think I would feel as confident to start working as an OT, as I have really developed my professional identity.

I wouldn't know as much as I do now about mental health and ways that help those struggling with their mental health. I have been able to see first-hand the benefits of engagement in activities, and the benefits of group activities. I have been able to talk to the participants about their own journeys and how NT life has improved and impacted their lives.

**What else could we do to improve outcomes for OT's?**

I think it's important for the OT students to have an activity that they can take over, which enables them to be independent, help with service improvement, and complete an activity analysis to evidence their understanding of the activity and how it benefits the participants.

I think it would be beneficial for the students to have a participant they can observe from enrollment until the end of their placement, and they could complete a case study on this participant. This will enable them to be more involved in supporting the participant, and will allow them to see how the participant transforms over the duration of the placement.

**Would you recommend us to your clients in the future?**

Yes definitely! I think that NT life reflects the core values of occupational therapy, as it is all built around social needs and the enabling participants to engage in meaningful occupations. I think that is a great place that fulfils the needs of those struggling with their mental health, and improves individuals' confidence.