

Social Work 1

I have chosen social work as my degree subject mainly as a consequence of an experience I had when I was younger. When I was 12, I was going kickboxing; a girl was outside screaming and flailing about, her arms badly cut. I was confused and scared by what I saw. My dad, who works for social services, later explained that he worked with her and that she dealt with her emotional problems by taking drugs and extreme self-harming. That one experience has never left me. Since that night I have come to realise that this behaviour isn't uncommon. I have also learnt that the social circumstances of people can affect them in different ways. I now realise that plenty of people in our society need help, support and above all else understanding and patience.

Sociology is a subject that has interested me since studying it at GCSE level, so it was definitely a subject I wanted to continue at A-level. It is the subject that I enjoy studying the most. Also I studied Biology, Psychology, German and Critical Thinking, in which I achieved full marks in the exam and has made me become a more objective thinker.

It was my experiences along with my enthusiasm for sociology, my growing understanding of the ways in which society functions and my personal links to the world of social work, that inspired me to train to become a social worker. When I was younger I noticed my dad was always on the phone or out, but as I matured and began to understand the diversity and unpredictability of his job and I now realise why; having a true understanding of the demands of his job on person and family.

Within college I am a member of the Ambassador programme. One of the main responsibilities of this role is to represent the college at specific events. I was selected to talk about my experiences to this year's potential ambassadors, showing me how much my confidence has grown compared to this time last year, when I would never have considered speaking to a large group of people on my own. On a personal level I can see that I have matured due to the programme.

Outside college I keep active by going to a kickboxing club twice a week. I have been going since I was 12 and have advanced to a level where I have developed both my strength and stamina. I enjoy reading, and my favourite book is George Orwell's 1984. This book fascinates me, it was written about 60 years ago and shows a society of absolute control, where the phrase 'Big Brother is watching you' keeps society restrained.

During the summer I worked for Somerset County Council, as part of the social services office management team. This gave me the opportunity to observe social workers in their work surroundings. Although things sometimes appeared to be pressurised, it was a dynamic environment, where people work together to resolve problems. I was also able to speak with some recently qualified social workers about their training experience so I am aware of the effort required on course and placements.

As a result of this I decided to register as a sessional worker for the leaving care team in Somerset. I have been CRB checked and understand the importance of confidentiality in the work environment. This has given me the opportunity to observe different working approaches of leaving care workers. I realise I have a lot to learn, but will definitely take my experiences with me. I am also helping to deliver an independence programme at a weekly group for care leavers and am involved with the maintenance of care leaver's independent accommodation. Through this work I have built an understanding of the importance of regular supervision to improve my personal development.

I am making a deferred application for 2013 to continue gaining life experience working for the leaving care team after which I will start my course. I am also planning to tour Europe for 3 months. This will allow me to gain a better understanding of social systems of different countries by experiencing them myself.