



Sarah Jady Leone Robinson

Occupational Therapist

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What is your job title, what does it involve day-to-day and how long have you been working in that role and/or at the Trust?

I am an occupational therapist (OT) and a core member of the multi-disciplinary team on the Riverfields ward at Clifton House in York. I work with patients towards their recovery both on the ward and in the community through assessment and intervention. It’s a diverse job, as everyone is so individual and their needs, interests, hopes and goals all very different. I get to work closely with the team on the ward, but also with outside agencies and possible providers of future placements.

As part of my role, I also get opportunity to work closely with other OTs in the hospital, developing Recovery College Courses and ward activities. Recently I’ve been developing my links with community agencies too including volunteer organisations, charities and the police.

Why did you choose to work for the NHS?

I believe in the core values of the NHS. I’d worked at Clifton House as a student, and really loved the work here, so I came back. There are other benefits too like job stability, opportunities for promotion and job stability.

What’s your favourite part about the job?

My favourite but most challenging part of what I do is when a patient comes to me with an idea or goal. Sometimes on the surface it seems impossible, but I work with them to help them achieve it.

Tell us about:

a time you were really proud of your work

Last year I helped patients create an exhibition of creativity on the shared space between the wards. They wanted it to be open to both staff and patients, and to embrace all kinds of creativity from cake-making to collage, poetry, painting, photography and printing. There were massive logistical issues, but between us we pulled out all the stops. We begged, stole and borrowed from various community-based organisations and the exhibition proved a resounding success.

I was amazed at how many creative people there were amongst the staff and patients, and the final result looked really professional. One patient was so pleased by what we had achieved that he invited NHS England to see the exhibition. He was even more chuffed when they turned up! Following this I received a Developing People Award from the Trust. However, the exhibition wouldn't have ever taken place had it not been the vision of the patients and the willingness of everyone including patients, ward staff, managers and medical secretaries.

your fondest memory of working at the Trust

Dr Isherwood the consultant was off sick because of a physical injury. Yet he took the time to hobble into work to attend a meeting where I was presented with a Star Award. I was really touched!

What do our values of integrity, simplicity and caring mean to you? How do you show these values in the work that you do?

Integrity to me means remaining honest, fair and sincere in my dealings with all the people I work with - be that staff, patients, outside organisations.

Simplicity is trying to 'say it as it is' and not hide behind clinical jargon.

Caring is seeing things from the perspective of the other person. When faced with people who are perceived as 'challenging', or experience difficulty with social interaction or engagement, I ask myself 'what is the lived experience of that person? If I find engaging with them difficult, what could that feel like for them?'

What message would you give to inspire the future NHS workforce in your area of work or in general?

At Clifton House we support patients to develop safer futures. We work as a team towards this shared vision and everyone's input is valued. Working here you will be given the opportunity to be dynamic, creative, person-centred and compassionate as you develop professionally.

How has the NHS made a difference to you/how have you seen the NHS help people?

I have had many opportunities to watch patients move from a position of acute illness to a pathway into the community. It is great to be part of that pathway, and even better to acknowledge when they have outgrown Clifton House.

It's not always been easy, and there have been lots of stressors over the last few years. However, there are some real stars amongst the ward teams who have consistently supported each other throughout rocky times. This has given me the confidence to remain true to my clinical judgements, even when these could result in difficult consequences. It has also brought me the confidence to develop positively challenging projects with patients.