The path to clinical psychology

As her studies have progressed, Oyinkan Solanke has narrowed her focus to three goals: to work hard, help others and strive to become a clinical psychologist.

‘I am aware of the competition to become a clinical psychologist. My MSc Psychology Conversion course at Hertfordshire has helped significantly, as my first degree did not provide enough components for further study in clinical psychology or to practice as a psychologist.’

She currently works as a Team Coordinator in a voluntary organisation that promotes suicide awareness and provides intervention. Through this, Oyinkan works with a small team of psychologists, who conduct suicide assessments on individuals who may be suicidal or have been bereaved by suicide.

Out of Africa

Under the National Youth Service Programme, Oyinkan was given the opportunity to travel to Africa in 2013, where she worked in the general outpatient department of a teaching hospital.

‘I worked under a clinical psychologist carrying out assessments, formulations and facilitating ward group therapy.

‘Once a week, I also designed and delivered education to adolescents and adults in rural areas, focusing on promoting safe and positive sexual health amongst youths.’

As well as the clinical experience, Oyinkan was also able to provide consultation at the annual sponsored Autism Care Week in Lagos.

‘I found that working in Africa provided me with the opportunity to explore clinical skills and experience that I wouldn’t have had elsewhere, as well as being able to observe the role of culture in the presentation of mental illness.’

Future plans

Over the next few years, Oyinkan is focused on getting on to a Clinical Psychology Doctorate course either in Ireland or the UK.

Alongside this, she’s continuing to volunteer and help others.

‘I sometimes fantasize about moving back to Africa to provide psychology services where they are most needed. I love volunteering and community building, and so will continue to seek short term opportunities where I can help others.’

I found that working in Africa provided me with the opportunity to explore clinical skills that I wouldn’t have had elsewhere, as well as being able to observe the role of culture in mental illness.