

Luke Calver 0:15

Hello and welcome. This podcast has been brought to you from UHI and the Careers and Employability team. My name is Luke Calver. And then step sewed, we're focusing on the BA Child and Youth Studies degree showcasing one of the many career paths you could take. Once graduating, I'm joined by Dr. Mei-Li Roberts programme leader for Child and Youth studies, as well as alum Jo Johnson, who will be talking about their career over to Mei-Li.

Mei-Li 0:36

Thank you, Luke Calver. Thank you for joining us today, too. I just wonder if we could just start with just introducing yourself and telling us when you graduated

Jo Johnson 0:45

Okay. Hi, thank you for having me. My name is Jo Johnson. I graduated from Child & Youth Studies just last year, so very recently

Mei-Li 0:54

Thank you so obviously we're talking to you a little bit about kind of your career pathway and what you've gone into since graduating with us. Could you tell us a little bit about what your career path has been? Since you left the Child and Youth Studies degree, and a little bit about your current role?

Jo Johnson 1:11

Absolutely. So when I was doing my degree, I was a PSA in the school. And my reason for doing a degree was wanting to move past working in schools and work directly with families. So I was lucky enough to interview and get a job with Benardos. So my current role, I've got a hybrid role I project worker for a surgical space for you in Perth and Kinross. And I'm also family mentoring service coordinator. So I had a role in developing that which was really exciting. It's a great opportunity. And I'm also taking over volunteer recruitment for the Perth and Kinross area. It's really across the services. And just suppose you're working with families, and individuals and parents depending on what their need is and what we can do to support them.

Mei-Li 2:04

Thanks, Jo. And just thinking about your current role, as well, what would you say would be kind of the main aspects of the main tasks within your role that you find the most enjoyable

Jo Johnson 2:15

The thing that I love is going out and meeting the families. And maybe you're not meeting them at the easiest time. But they are always really engaging. I love meeting people, it's very much part of

my driver. But I also love working with people that it's looking at them becoming empowered them taking on what they would like to do. And my role is more facilitating offering practical emotional support. But the joy of it is when you see that progress. And that may look like quite small steps. But seeing them where they get to seen and set that little bit taller, a bit more eye contact, a bit more relaxed and focus on building that competence. And that's, that's really what it is it's making that difference reconnecting them with the community. But seeing them take control back of their lives and making those changes for themselves.

Mei-Li 3:14

That's great, Jo, and it does sound like a very kind of fulfilling role to have. Just yeah, just thinking a little bit about bit backer, I'm about you know, when you're studying with us for the child and youth Studies degree, so what would you say would be? How do you feel that the degree is helped you in the role that you're in today, and whether your kind of overall career journey. So obviously, you mentioned that you were previously a PSA in school a degree to kind of take a different pathway. So can you just tell us a little bit more about that

Jo Johnson 3:45

it did the degree enabled me to move forward and take my career in a slightly different direction. What it offered me was an excellent grounding, to be able to take that forward. So you do need part of the degree to go and do what I do. But it was also the range of topics or units provided such a good knowledge base, that you then continue to build on the day basis. But having that understanding that background units such as legislation, I found that a really difficult one, I would say that one, I use an awful lot because it is key to everything we do. So while I didn't love doing that unit, and it was a struggle that was really it underpins everything we do. So it's really, really important. You know, topics like units like pet riding, you have some parenting that that's also key to all that knowledge base feels such such a good grounding, to build details on and take forward. And that obviously wouldn't just apply to my role that can apply to anything working families working with children with young people.

Mei-Li 4:58

Thanks, Jo and we I think I heard you just say just said that you needed the degree to get into your current role. Is that Is that right?

Jo Johnson 5:06

Yeah, you need to equivalent, I think of level eight. They call it a little bit higher than that. But it's, it's that makes with experience. So when you have a degree, like BA in Child and youth studies opens up quite a broad range of opportunities to move into. And it's yeah, it's really just taking those bits forward and learning what you can from them. And even when it doesn't always go right, which you didn't, it was looking at what's what's gone wrong. So I will give you an example, I did fail to pet him. Because I hadn't done something critical, and I hadn't connected my case study to the actual topic. And it was so frustrating that you you can't find marks whether on TV set as a result of a

conversation with a tutor. I see the critical analysis just clicked with me. And actually, that is a really important part of my role. So you know that that was a difficult one, and I had to rewrite it. But actually, the learning from that is, is invaluable. And it was just just to bear in mind that I came into that course, well into my 40s. I hadn't had an experience of union before that actually, all those fields were very new to me, it was a tough learning curve at times, when it comes down to you.

Mei-Li 6:31

Thanks. Yeah, it's good to hear that, that that kind of reflection on on, on your learning. And I think that I think probably from my point of view, as a as a lecturer, that's like, a key point, it's not so much what happens at the time, but But what you learn what the kind of learning you're taking from that that's a really nice example that you've given us there. So thinking back on, obviously, throughout the two, you remember having completed the UHk graduate attributes that cover sheet and reflecting on those graduate attributes. And we're just like a little reminder of the graduate attributes. So there's kind of soft skills that we that our students are developing throughout the course of their degree. So it's not necessarily always like the explicit kind of subject areas, but So other things like time management, interpersonal skills, communication, obviously, your academic knowledge as well as it as part of those kind of graduate attributes. So, and obviously, the point of this is the idea that, you know, you're all becoming employable individuals that once you complete your degree, so you're getting these kind of other kinds of skills that are important for employability, as well as your kind of actual qualifications. So just kind of thinking that we back that back on the graduate UHI graduate degrees, what would you say are the key points that you learned and developed at you ha, and have those skills helped you now that you're in the working world,

Jo Johnson 7:52

I would say all of them, have impacted the working world. And they're all key skills that are required for me, because I came to doing a degree later on, I would say the academic skills were the pillar ones for me, because they took it took a bit of learning to get them, right. But I would say relating that to what I do now, report writing and recording. That's a real key point of what we do. And I remember getting some advice from some of the lectures about writing, when you write a document or report, and it's writing it to somebody who has no knowledge in that subject could actually come along, and be able to understand what you're saying. So that brings in the academic writing skills, the research skills as well, that was, that's really important what we do, and it was them to be able to develop that skill. And it's a style of writing as well. That's something I didn't have before. And that is is really important. In terms of communication, I've always been fairly comfortable with communication, but it was it making sure my communication was very, very clear. So sometimes you may think you have been very clear about something, but particularly relating to my role. If people are living quite chaotic, so lives at the present. What you think is clear, isn't always clear. So you need to adapt how you communicate, make sure that the understanding is there for the benefit of your service users and the volunteers and your colleagues as well. The self management, as in time management, absolutely key in what I do. So I now manage my own diary and my own workflow, which is great. The flip side of that, if you over commit yourself, you're going to be used from very long hours and you need to have a balance that's achievable. So that time management is really, really important, and you have to be realistic with it. And I learned that with a degree. I was working I had two children and you had to learn to make it work and still be effective.

When he was still And that applies now as well. I would say social awareness as interpersonal skills, again, absolutely key. We do in the degree, we had some group work as well, which was reflected in the marks. And again, that was how how you communicate how you relate to people. That's not always just words, that's body language, that everything you do represents how you connect with people and those skills, anything working with children working with families just throughout life, if that makes a big difference, and it's a big impact, if you get it right, people will want to engage with you. And if you get it wrong, you will get the door shut in your face. That's it, you get one shot to get it right, particularly in my role. But yeah, it was it was very important we had an our course was a variety of different people from people who may be 80 years old, living at home to a lot of people like neighbour families, people who had retired and wanted to do a different, you know, just wanted to learn wanted to take a different career path. So it was learning to deal with people from all different backgrounds, different experiences, and different times of life.

Mei-Li 11:18

Thanks, Jo. And it's good to hear that you've, you feel that that degree helped you with kind of those skills, you know, you're going misgiving, kind of practice their skills coming into your current role. So just, again, obviously, the purpose of the podcast is so you know, our current and future students can hear a little bit about your kind of career journey, and you know, where they could potentially go once they complete their degree. So if you're going to give some advice to current students, from your experiences, what would that be,

Jo Johnson 11:50

I think my biggest bit of advice, no matter how overwhelming it can feel, and it can at times, break it down, give yourself smaller goals. But more importantly, even when it's not going well never give up. I used to give myself maybe 20 minutes, I used to call it pity time, that just let yourself feel a bit sorry for yourself, give yourself that time, reframe it, pick yourself up. And it's that very, I did American many, many years ago. But it was just literally that mentality of just keep taking a step forward. And you just keep going. And if you do that, you will eventually get to the end. And when you get the certificate, that's when it's like it's worth it. absolutely worth it.

Mei-Li 12:37

Thanks so much, Jo. And, you know, it's good to hear about your suite. And it's really good advice for students, I think as well, what you've just said there about breaking down small chunks, whether whether thinking about the end goal, just constitution with the small goals at the time, and anything else that you wanted to add or say while we're here.

Jo Johnson 12:59

It is actually the the tutors were I mean, my degree was always online anyway, but it hit her in COVID as well. But actually those sometimes it may take a bit longer for tutors to get back to you because of the practicalities. I think it was, you know, would have been quite difficult to manage or imagine what was asked the question, they will get back to you, your pet will get back to you. Your fellow

students, in particularly this course, because it's online are invaluable. And it's just so you have somebody to bounce off. But when you get stuck, just to ask somebody, don't sit there and think I can't do this. You can you just need to ask for a bit of help sometimes.

Mei-Li 13:41

Yes, and yeah, I would say Yeah, but there's always someone there at the end of a computer or phone. There will always be someone who's there to help out point

Luke Calver 13:51

Thanks, Jo we hope this podcast has helped show you a potential career path from the Child and Youth Studies degree. Did you have any questions about the degree do contact uhi through the Course Content page on the UHI website. If you're a current student and have any questions on this career path, do contact the careers team and I'm sure we'll be able to help you out. Thank you very much for listening and thank you again Jo for participating in this podcast.