



**Chris Courtney**

**Mental Health Assessor**

### Introduce yourself. Where do you work? What is your job role?

My name is Chris Courtney. I work in Old See House Mental Health Centre as a Mental Health Assessor. I trained as a Social Worker.

### What does your job entail?

As a Mental Health Assessor at the Old See House Mental Health Centre, my primary responsibility is to assess adults who have been referred by their GP. The individuals I assess are typically experiencing low mood and anxiety and require our team to refer them to mental health support services both within the community and the trust. This may include counselling services.

### How did you get into this line of work?

I applied to the Belfast Trust recruitment waiting list and was offered a position in the Assessment Team after a successful interview. Working in mental health as a professional has always been my goal, and this role aligns perfectly with my career aspirations.

### Outline your career to date

After working as a Site Engineer in Armagh for ten years, I transitioned into a role as a Support Worker at Inspire Autism Services.

### Tell us about your qualifications and training

I completed a Higher Diploma in Parenting & Relationship Mentoring at University College Cork, followed by a fast-track Bachelor's Degree in Social Work at Queen's University.

### What qualities are required for your job – personal and professional?

I have a strong interest in mental health and a desire to support individuals in need. I understand that people's behaviour is often a way of protecting themselves from negative emotions. As a mental health professional, it is important to have empathy and to actively listen to individuals while also prioritising your own personal needs. Being assertive in your role when assessing people, taking positive risks, and being able to learn from failures are all essential qualities for success in this field.

### What is the best advice you have ever received?

Perfection gets in the way of progress.

### Tell us an interesting fact about yourself

I had the opportunity to speak on television about my experience volunteering with MACS Belfast, an organisation that provides support to young people facing mental health challenges.

### What do you like to do in your spare time?

In my free time, I enjoy reading books on psychology and watching documentaries on Netflix. I'm also a sports enthusiast and enjoy watching sports as well as playing 5-a-side football.

### Who has inspired you most in your life?

I had a mentor who was a consultant psychologist and bestselling author, Dr Tony Humphreys, he helped me gain a greater understanding of human behaviour.

### What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

Don't overestimate what you can achieve in a year, and don't underestimate what you can accomplish in ten years. When deciding on your career path, it's important to explore all possible options and speak with individuals who are currently working in the field that you're interested in pursuing.