



The Responsible  
Business Network  
Northern Ireland



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

I am a facilitator with the Barclays LifeSkills programme at Business in the Community. I travel to different schools and colleges in Northern Ireland as well as hybrid working.

## What does your job entail?

My role involves visiting schools and Further Education (FE) colleges and delivering sessions to help young people develop the skills and experience they need to enter the world of work. To date, across the UK, the project has helped 13 million people.

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

I taught in schools and FE colleges, which built up my experience of working with young people and understanding educational contexts. I took on the responsibility of Careers Assistant in one school and loved it. I was responsible for overseeing the school's work experience programme and interview skills training.

## Outline your career to date

After completing Psychology at Queen's University Belfast, I started working in a residential home for people with mental health needs. I moved on to work in one of the Healthy Living Centres which aim to improve health in areas of health inequality, and when the three years of funding ended I moved on to teacher training. It took a few years to get a permanent job and so I combined part-time teaching with other work in charity sector organisations. This helped me build resilience and adaptability. Some days I would go from working with 11 year olds in formal education during the day, to working with adults and more informal learning in the evening.

## Tell us about your qualifications and training

I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. I went on to complete a PGCE in Citizenship in England. I have also completed a coaching qualification. I enjoy learning new skills and have also done some training in outdoor pursuits such as hillwalking and climbing. Anything that I enjoy tends to become something that I want to learn how to lead and share with others!

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

Great communication, I spend a lot of time sharing ideas, information and instructions with others. Creativity is a must, it is important to find ways to bring topics to life and build up students' intrigue, interest and their motivation to find out more. I think good interpersonal skills are important too – reading the room, empathising and listening to hear about the issues that interest or concern the people in front of you.

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

I've received many pieces of good advice from people I respect. However, this quote from one of my favourite Psychologists, Brené Brown, just about sums it up: 'Authenticity is the daily practice of letting go of who we think we are supposed to be and embracing who we are'. Another one I love is, to be kind to everyone on the way up as you will meet the same people on the way down. I enjoy meeting people from many backgrounds and learning from each other.

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

I am involved with my local forest school and love spending time outdoors. I enjoy most outdoor pursuits and have had various attempts at a range of these including: paddle boarding, sea swimming, climbing and hiking - though not all in one day!! I like variety - so tend to have a wide range of interests.

## Tell us an interesting fact about yourself

I have volunteered abroad quite a few times and have ended up in some strange places – a tea plantation in Bangladesh, a castle and holiday park in Slovakia, the Czech mountains one winter. I tried skiing and snow boarding there too and we had to dig the cars out of the snow when it was time to leave.

## Who has inspired you most in your life?

I've been fortunate enough to know many inspiring role models. My dad was just magic - he had a helpful, funny & down to earth nature. My mum raised a family and went back to studying later on and graduated with a degree at 60. Not many people in their backgrounds went to university, so they have probably inspired my love of lifelong learning along with a sense of social responsibility.

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

You are so much more than just your grades or performance at school, whilst important, they are just one aspect of us. Nurture all aspects of yourself and your development.