

## Elsbeth, Forensic Psychology Practice Doctorate (ForenPsyD)

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**Duration:** 5.49 mins

**Speaker Names** (if given): S1 Elspeth - graduate

**S1** My motivation for choosing a Doctorate in Forensic Psychology was that I've always been interested in crime, offending and why people commit offences and as part of my undergraduate psychology course I did a module in Forensic Psychology and I found it really interesting and then from that I did a little bit of work with offenders in the community and again that was something that I really enjoyed. So I thought that the Doctorate in Forensic Psychology could offer me the psychology training that I wanted to do but also working supporting offenders as well which is something that I really enjoyed. So it seemed to be just the perfect course really for me. I chose the University of Birmingham in particular because I completed my undergrad study within the School of Psychology and I loved my time here and I knew that the University was really good, it had good facilities. I loved the campus and where the university was so I knew that I'd like to study here further.

The Doctorate in Forensic Psychology in particular I was really keen on because the course had a good reputation and the academics within the Centre for Forensic and Criminological Psychology had really interesting fields that they were looking into and I thought that would be something that I'd like to get involved with in some of their research ideas. I had three different placements over my time on the course, one every year, and all three of mine were in secure hospitals. There were lots of others available but the ones I chose were in secure hospitals and I worked with lots of different client groups. I had in-patient work, I worked with out-patients, and I worked with men and women. So I had lots of varied experiences really. I think the fact that they are quite long placements is really helpful because you are there for pretty much the whole academic year. It helps you to settle in feel like you're part of the team you are working with really. It can be challenging, I had some challenging times in my placements but there's a lot of support available and generally I absolutely loved all three of my placements and I am employed now in one the placements that I had during the course so it's been really, really positive.

Within the three years we do get a lot of support in terms of our development. Within placements we're provided with a lot of supervision. Our supervisor is generally quite an experienced, qualified psychologist within the placement. So they're able to offer a lot of support and a lot of guidance and pass on some of their skills and knowledge. We also have a lot of support in terms of peer-support on the course we have reflective practice groups which help us to discuss how we're doing on our placements, how we feel we're developing, discussing any problems that are coming up and how we can deal with those really. We are encouraged to be very reflective on the course and I found that really helpful in terms of developing skills, learning from maybe mistakes that we've made in the past and trying to see how we are developing as a clinician. So that's been really helpful.

What I've learnt on the course has really helped my practice as a developing psychologist. The teaching that we have is really varied and really interesting. We have people coming in and teaching us who are from the clinical field, so they're practitioners, forensic psychologists, that are coming in and telling us about their work how to work with specific types of offenders that they are working with particular clients that they are working with. Introducing us to some different therapeutic styles, different approaches we can use within our practice. Also we have teaching from academics as well so we learn a lot about theories of offending, all sorts of important groundwork for our work. So all of that is really applicable to our practice and you do find that you can take stuff from the teaching and apply it directly to your work within the field. Also the coursework we do links in very well to our practice so, for example we do a mock court report assignment which involves us thinking about how we would complete a court report if we were working in private practice or we were asked to do it for a court. Things like that are so useful just to have a go at practising doing it before you're actually doing it for real.

The course helps us to think about research ideas, developing our skills in terms of research. We have to do a lot of stats, as most courses do and being able to consolidate all those skills, complete a big research project which then means that in the future when we're working as psychologists we've got all the skills and knowledge that we can use when doing our own research projects.

I would definitely recommend studying at the University of Birmingham for other trainees. I've absolutely loved the course, I'm quite sad that it's coming to an end and I think the course itself can offer so much in terms of developing your skills as a forensic psychologist. I think its links with so many different placements across the West Midlands is so helpful. I love the University of Birmingham in general as well, not just the course but the facilities are great and I've lived in Birmingham ever since my undergrad course now and I don't think I'd want to be anywhere else, I think it's great.

**END OF RECORDING**