

Ruth.Tudor

just kind of moving that own because Alison mentioned something about benefits there. What kind of benefits there for do you think are there in engaging with sensitive and emotional topics you know?

Arabella

Benefits was my suggestion back at that last meeting and the reason why I said benefits was because of the little video I'm doing and it being about. You could you could study a tough subject but you get through it and you come through a stronger person. So that was the benefit and that's what I see myself doing in terms of the podcast, it's just focusing on the benefits as a student, encouraging other students to face those not very nice, you know, areas. But that they will come through it and as a result there will be stronger and more and more resilient.

Ruth.Tudor

Yeah, I suppose there's a learning aspect there to it isn't it there is a learning about yourself and learning about this.

Alison.Kingan

Yes.

Arabella

So yes, self-growth, isn't it? Personal growth? Definitely.

Alison.Kingan

Yes.

Ruth.Tudor

Demystifying everything.

Alison.Kingan

It it it, it absolutely is and I was a psychology student and I learned an awful lot about myself, even though that's not what the psychology modules are aimed at. They didn't have underneath, you know, in brackets for Alison to learn about herself. But I think that, you know, that many students will, you know, that they will find techniques that help them. I certainly did with me and. And I'm a mentally healthier person.

Arabella

True. You know.

Alison.Kingan

Because of doing the psychology courses and yes, there were extremely tough times. I'm not going to pretend, you know that I was not emotionally affected and in one instance particularly scarred to some degree. I mean, not hugely scarred it a little bit by it, but all the techniques, all the psychology research that's gone into this and into areas that you know, I resonated with, I learnt my, you know important skills and reasons why I behave in certain ways as well. You know, it was, it was really informative, but also, as as Arabella says.

It's it, you know it is coming to those difficult subjects and getting through it and learning not just about yourself, you know and why you behave in certain ways, but learning that emotional strategy, you know, the resilience, building yourself up more so that you can deal with more difficult subjects you can deal with life in a better way. And I've learned so much being a student, not just about the subject matters, but, you know what makes me tick and how to tick better.

Cinnomen.McGuigan

I've got one as well and I did a microcredential on accessibility and inclusive learning an area that I thought I knew a reasonable amount about, but in the deep diving into the mechanics of why we need accessibility I realized and I'm currently in the process of being diagnosed in the neurodiversity space, because I genuinely do not think like other people I know, it's gonna take a long time, as Arabella said, about health support at the minute. It's gonna take like 2 1/2 years to actually get.

Ruth.Tudor

On my.

Arabella

Ohh.

Cinnomen.McGuigan

A proper diagnosis, but I'm in that space now and a lot more accepting of my weird quirks because I see where they come from. I see exactly what that's about, and off that I'm currently doing, doing one around social justice around race and gender, but again is massively to some absolutely hugely triggering content in there. But the stuff that I'm learning about myself as a human being and applying that to others has been absolutely phenomenal and that's about the learning and it is about that self-interrogation and that is a huge benefit from studying in being able to look and fully examine yourself. But I think the key benefit isn't really for other students. I think you're looking at an institutional level. The benefit is on retention. It's on recognizing that students stick to and finish and do completion rates because they're able to be supported through topics like that. So on the one hand, it's about us being much more resilient as human beings and being able to work on content like that. But that has to be matched by the energy of the institution in supporting us through those spaces to make sure that we are then helping their numbers because we help them hit their targets because they've supported us to get to that space. So it's that. Sort of give and take. Around with benefits.

Arabella

So I do have to. I do have to come clean at this point. I've not had any support.

Cinnomen.McGuigan

Yeah, I think there's definitely times where I don't feel I have either.

Arabella

I won't mention that in the podcast.

Cinnomen.McGuigan

But we're here. Well, Arabella, we are here to make sure that those come in after us, do get that support and part was feeding into that is to recognize where it hasn't got. They've not got it right where the institutions that they're working within don't know how to do that. And part of what we're feeding into is to ensure that those behind us get a much better well-rounded experience because of us knowing what didn't work for us because you didn't give us anything.

Arabella

No, I mean I I've learned. I've learned in this past year about my learning to the point where I now think I'm on the autistic spectrum. Umm someone could say something to me and immediately it comes out in my brain as they've they've they mean something else and then I have to go and I go. No, no, no. It's like this. And and I have to have things really spelt out to me. Like I had such a job with the EMA because there weren't enough instructions for me. To be confident enough to have a go at it and I, you know, I just went everywhere for the answers and. That that in, in, in that respect, you know, if I if it turns out, yeah, I do. I am on that spectrum then that will come as a huge relief and that's different to bipolar because bipolar didn't come as a huge relief that came as an absolute huge devastation that took almost made me suicidal. Well I was suicidal and took two years to come to terms with.

Cinnomen.McGuigan

Yeah.

Arabella

So there's a there's a difference in those mental health areas where like if, if you know all of a sudden I'll get more help. Everything now I'm seeing myself like that and my daughter is as well and she's going. "Yeah. My mum I've always known you were on the autistic spectrum". Oh you didn't tell me that.

But it's actually it would actually come as quite a relief, I think. "Ohh. OK." And I've also learned how I learned differently. Like I'm more of a visual person. I've been doing the Ohh Social Research DD215.

Cinnomen.McGuigan

Yeah.

Arabella

And I've been going to YouTube and listening to tutorials to help me get through it because I learn better through seeing something or hearing it as opposed to reading it. So yeah, there's a lot you learn about yourself from these modules.

Ruth.Tudor

Most definitely. Definitely. Alison, do you want to add anything in or do you?

Arabella

What about you, Ruth, do you wanna say anything?

Ruth.Tudor

I'm just listening. And I think I very much think I like everybody else that you can learn so much about yourself and I'm very much a self reflecter, I'm a massive massive overthinker. And with somebody sets me on a path, then my brain just goes, you know, in places that I never thought it would go in. And so yeah, it's funny a lot of. My my degree is health and social care and although I never did the death and dying module everybody that I spoke to who did it said it was one of the best modules that they've ever done and it's not a morbid module or anything like that it's something that they really really did.

And but I used to teach. I kind of death and dying module when I taught at HNC level. And again it was never a morbid module to teach. It was something that a lot of people learned about themselves and how they would cope and what they would do. And again, about their emotional resilience. So it was actually something that people enjoyed learning about. So yeah, I think.

Yes, you do learn a lot because when I started again when I started working in the mental health sector, I learned a lot about myself and it brought a lot of realization to me about myself and about my childhood. Didn't it just and then it was just like, yeah, OK, now I understand that part of my life and now I understand why I am the way I am or why I behave or react the way I behave or react. And now I can do something about it. So, although it's not what you are saying or talking about. It is the same sort of same sort of thing. So yeah.

Arabella

It puts you in a more empathetic place? So, you not only understand about yourself, but you can say "ohh I can see how that might do that to that person so it kind of makes you a bit more human, doesn't it?"

Ruth.Tudor

Yes. And I think if you have that more empathetic part to yourself, certainly from my point of view, it helps me do my job because I have that better understanding of, you know, OK, I'm not autistic or I'm not bipolar, but I do have that ability to empathize with people. And because of my own life experiences or that, that realization or that understanding. So, I'd like to think it makes me better at my job or more understanding at my job, whether that's a tutor or as a pastoral support person.

Arabella

It makes you more accessible because I mean I I've even heard from my own family that I had at times that I should pull myself together. That I mean that is just the height of absolute ignorance.

Ruth.Tudor

Yeah, yeah.

Arabella

So, you know, and I imagine, like from Alison's point of view, that person, that tutor that she didn't get on with was probably of a similar mindset.

Ruth.Tudor

Yeah. Yeah, most definitely. That's not what you need to hear when you're feeling like that. Is it? You know, you need someone to just listen you. Yeah, exactly. You need someone to just sit and listen to you. Like, I think it was you Cin were that it's just someone to sit and listen nonjudgmentally.

Arabella

Yeah. No Judgment.

Alison.Kingan

It it was actually something I put in the in one of my assignments and he wrote on the PT3 that I should not because I I I did it as a as a first person, which I never usually do in an assignment, but it was very much personal to me and he just said "you should not feel this way. You should not be this way". And so, I hadn't I he was not somebody I'd ever go to help for to ask for help with. And there was absolutely no reason for him to comment. On that, you know, it was not kind of academic in any way for him to tell me how I should be feeling it didn't add anything at all. You know, he could carry on. Just give me my mark, make comments about the academic structure. Tell me maybe I shouldn't have written it in the first person. All of that. But for him to comment, you know, about a word that I'd used and said. "No, that's not you. That's not you at all." Yeah, I I thought was inappropriate. Really. I definitely wouldn't have gone to him for help.

Ruth.Tudor

Yeah. And the thing is that could have had a massive impact on you.

Alison.Kingan

It did.

Ruth.Tudor

Yes, it affected you and it affected you a lot, but it could have had an even bigger impact on you because you could have walked out the door and never come back or it

Alison.Kingan

I did.

Ruth.Tudor

You know, it could have had such a huge impact on you that you know it, it could have had a very well. It did have a detrimental impact on you, but you could have had he could have done, so much damage could have been done.

Alison.Kingan

He actually did. I I I resigned from my module and walked away from the OU for three days.

It's not. It's not a huge amount, but I kind of had to beg to be allowed back in again, and it was kind of like, you know, being victimized twice, you know, instead of saying to the tutor, because I, I didn't say to the OU why I'd sort of. You know, removed myself from the module. I just kind of went. And then to have then to. I thought I could just say "can I come back in again?" But no, I had to go through a process to kind of beg my way back in again. So you know that was we're talking about maybe 15-16 years ago if it happened now, I would go to the OU and say this is what had happened. Can you have a word with this tutor please? Mainly because I'm in a much stronger place and that's one thing that the Open University has enabled me to do for myself.

And that's to understand myself. Get stronger, become more emotionally resilient. Stand up for myself and stand up for other people. Because in those days I wasn't a Student Rep, so I didn't have people really to go to.

Ruth.Tudor

Yeah.

Alison.Kingan

Nowadays, I think this tutor. I'm not saying he needs to be sacked, but somebody needs to have a little word with him and say, do you realize the impact of just that small comment, to him it was just "you shouldn't describe yourself this way. You should describe yourself that way." Without realizing the impact it had on me and I don't think he changed as a result of that, but maybe words needed to be had with him. Yeah, as I say, would just be my benefit, but you could benefit of others.