**Tammy Ayres, School of Criminology (05.07.22)**

I’m Dr. Tammy Ayres, I am an Associate Professor and I sit in the School of Criminology, and we are based in the Fielding Johnson Building.

So I guess because my background is in sociology, criminology, law, and psychology with a little sprinkling of philosophy, it helps me to connect with and work with some of the people I do. So I’ve worked with psychologists, historians, people from English, politics, international relations, human rights both here in the UK as well as internationally, environmentalists and colleagues from the Global South as well as the Global North. It’s quite an eclectic mix of not only different academics and scholars from different disciplines, but also stakeholders and practitioners, and the point of that is - I suppose that because I’ve got that interdisciplinary background, it’s quite easy for me to naturally just draw on different theories, concepts, methodologies, approaches, work with different agencies, and try and synthesise them into a coherent and co-ordinated whole.

The project we’ve done in Guyana on the prison service and the inmates has involved academic from different disciplines - we hadn’t worked together before - and what we’ve done is we’ve worked together to share knowledge, expertise, methodologies, theories, information, data sources, even skills, and that’s just in the academic team. We’ve also got practitioners who we’re working alongside, and I think it’s really important to have that interdisciplinarity, to accurately capture the extent, experience, and treatment of something as complex as mental, neurological and substance use disorders in Guyana’s prisons. And that’s true whether we’re looking at prisoners or the people that work in those prisons. And only by combining those different disciplines, and those different disciplinary approaches - whether we’re talking about methodology reviews, or combining different concepts and theories, I think what it does is help you to capture that multifaceted nature of - most phenomena; nothing’s ever simple, is it? So it gives you that multifaceted nature, both the context and the background of where mental, neurological and substance use disorders have come from. And not just looking at in the contemporary, but also looking at it historically - I think a lot of academia and some disciplines are very ahistorical, and although traditional academia has placed historians in these individual disciplinary silos, that’s not a natural way of working, and I think if you look at the literature everyone’s acknowledged that, and what it actually does is, it puts limits on academics but also people’s ability to provide a full and comprehensive picture.

So I do like that sort of meander as you go towards campus, particularly if you’re due to teach or if it’s in the summer or a graduation, when you’ve got all the parents and people in their gowns, even just walking through the park is quite relaxing on a nice day - you can prepare yourself to go and teach, and then you can unwind from teaching, if that makes sense, so it’s quite a nice stroll that just sort of gives you that space between classes.