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At school I met an inspiring female member of the Samaritans and that led me to explore studying for a psychology degree. My role model Dr Maria Wyke inspired a passion for understanding individual patients' presentations, while Professor Barbara Wilson showed me how to be both authoritative and innovative in the field. I've found it particularly rewarding that my evidence of the existence of cognitive and behavioural change in patients with motor neurone disease has gained broad acceptance as a potential characteristic of this disorder.