

From the Frontline to Digital Transformation: My Journey in Healthcare

By Amarachi Ukairo

How it all started

My journey into nursing began with a moment I have never forgotten. As a student nurse, a HCA once told me that I was too quiet to be a nurse and suggested that perhaps the profession was not for me. At the time, those words could easily have made me question whether I belonged in nursing. Instead, they became something I carried with me as I developed, learned and found my own voice.

I eventually realised that being quiet did not mean I lacked confidence, capability or something to contribute. I was listening, observing and learning. Over time, I found my voice and learned when it was important to use it.



More than two decades later, I can look back and see how far that student has come.

My career has taken me through nursing, midwifery, surgical nursing, pre assessment, education, infection prevention and control, resuscitation and blood transfusion, and more recently, clinical informatics and digital transformation. Each stage has taught me something different, but that early experience taught me something particularly important: never allow someone else's perception of you to become a limitation you place on yourself.

Sometimes the qualities that others see as weaknesses can become some of our greatest strengths.

For me, listening became one of those strengths. It has shaped how I care for patients, support colleagues, lead change and approach transformation.

Helping colleagues develop

One of the things I have always valued throughout my career is supporting colleagues to grow. I have supported colleagues through teaching, coaching, sharing knowledge, providing constructive feedback and creating opportunities for people to develop confidence in their practice. I believe professional development is not simply about attending courses or gaining qualifications. It is also about having someone who believes in you, recognises your potential, gives you an opportunity and encourages you to step outside your comfort zone.

Sometimes people already have the skills and experience they need. They simply need someone to help them recognise their potential.

As my career has developed, I have increasingly focused on helping colleagues understand that their existing skills and experience can open doors to opportunities they may not have considered. I also believe that when we progress in our own careers, we should help others to progress too.

Moving into digital healthcare

My transition into clinical informatics has been one of the most significant developments in my career. I currently work at George Eliot Hospital in Nuneaton, Warwickshire, at the intersection of clinical practice and digital transformation. My work includes supporting the development and implementation of electronic patient records and safer digital workflows.

This has given me a different perspective on healthcare.

Digital transformation is not simply about introducing technology. It is about understanding how people work, identifying what needs to improve and ensuring that technology supports safe, effective and person-centred care.

Technology should work for people, not the other way around.

I am particularly passionate about the opportunities that digital transformation can create for healthcare professionals. Digital innovation, artificial intelligence, informatics and research

can provide opportunities to develop new skills, move into emerging roles and create new career pathways.

I believe healthcare professionals should not simply be users of technology. We should be involved in designing, shaping and leading the future of healthcare. For me, innovation is therefore not only about technology. It is also about people, opportunity and professional progression.

Supporting colleagues through change

Change can be difficult, particularly when people feel that decisions are being made around them rather than with them. One of the techniques I use when supporting colleagues through change is listening first. I try to understand what people are experiencing, what concerns them and what they need to feel confident. I then work with them to identify practical solutions. I also believe in breaking complex changes into manageable steps, providing clear information and creating opportunities for people to ask questions without feeling judged. People do not always need someone to have all the answers. Sometimes they need someone who will listen, help them find the answer and stand alongside them while they develop their confidence.

Looking after my wellbeing

Healthcare can be demanding, and I have learned that looking after yourself is not selfish. It is essential if you want to continue supporting others effectively.

For me, wellbeing includes recognising when I need to pause, maintaining boundaries between work and personal life, spending time away from professional responsibilities and making space for the things that bring balance. I also believe in taking time to reflect. Healthcare professionals often move quickly from one challenge to the next without recognising how much they have achieved.

Sometimes we need to stop and acknowledge our own progress.

I have learned that resilience does not mean constantly pushing yourself regardless of how you feel. It means understanding your limits, seeking support when needed and finding healthy ways to continue moving forward.

Life outside work

Outside work, I value my involvement in church activities, family and friendships. These give me an opportunity to switch off from professional responsibilities and reconnect with the things that bring balance and enjoyment.

I think having interests outside healthcare is important. We are healthcare professionals, but healthcare is only one part of who we are. At home, I am not a nurse. I am an engineer because I also enjoy building and fixing things. I enjoy looking at a problem, understanding how it works and finding a way to make it better. In many ways, that part of my personality has also influenced my approach to healthcare, transformation and innovation.

Whether I am looking at a clinical process, a digital system or something that needs fixing at home, I naturally find myself asking: “How can we make this better?” My advice to healthcare professionals? My advice would be simple: “Do not underestimate yourself”.

Your current role does not have to define the limits of your career.

Keep learning. Be curious. Ask questions. Find people who will support your development and, when opportunities arise, be brave enough to put yourself forward. You may not always feel ready, but sometimes you have to take the opportunity and grow into it. Most importantly, remember that your experience has value.

Whether you are at the beginning of your career or have been working in healthcare for many years, there is always an opportunity to learn something new, support someone else and make a difference. And when you progress, remember to take others with you.

A message to healthcare professionals

Healthcare can sometimes feel overwhelming, particularly when the pressures are high and the demands seem endless. But never underestimate the impact of what you do.

- * The reassurance you give to a patient, matters.
- * The support you give to a colleague matters.
- *The knowledge you share matters.
- *The improvements you help introduce matter.

Leadership does not always come with a job title. Sometimes leadership is simply being the person who sees a problem and asks:

“How can we make this better?”

I believe leadership starts with listening. However, listening alone is not enough. Listening should lead to action. Looking back and looking forward

After two decades in healthcare, I am still learning, still developing and still looking for ways to make a difference. My journey has taken me from clinical practice to education, leadership and digital transformation. It has taught me that careers can evolve in ways we never originally planned. It has also taught me that some of the greatest opportunities come when we are willing to embrace change.

The future of healthcare will require professionals who are willing to learn, innovate, challenge established ways of working and create opportunities for others. I want to continue being part of that journey.

If there is one thing I would want another healthcare professional to take from my story, it is this:

“You don't have to see the whole staircase; just take the first step.”

You do not always know where that first step will lead. Sometimes you simply have to take the first step, remain open to learning and trust that your experience will help you navigate what comes next. We may not be able to change everything at once, but each of us can change something. Sometimes, that is where transformation begins.

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