



Bridging gaps in endoscopy nursing: A conversation with Erika Holford

In the realm of healthcare, education is the cornerstone of advancement. It not only equips professionals with the necessary skills but also fosters innovation and standardisation across various specialties. Recently, I had the privilege of speaking with Erika Holford, a seasoned endoscopy nurse, about her journey in education and workforce development within the field of endoscopy nursing.

Erika's background spans back to 1994 when she completed her EMB 998, a nursing teaching and assessing course. Since then, her teaching experiences have been diverse, ranging from ad hoc sessions to formal teaching within degree modules. Despite not having a traditional teaching qualification, Erika's passion for educating endoscopy nurses led her to join the faculty for ENDO3 after being introduced to the opportunity.

"When I started in endoscopy in 1992, there was a gap in endoscopy nurse training," Erika recalls. "The disbandment of the EMB left a void, and there was a lack of standardised training for endoscopy nurses." This realisation fuelled her desire to contribute to the development of comprehensive training programs provided by JETS workforce like ENDO3, which focuses on leadership and management—a much-needed aspect in the evolving landscape of endoscopy.

Erika's enthusiasm for teaching extends beyond ENDO3; recently she has also completed training for ENDO1 and looks forward to delivering it. She emphasises the importance of offering standardised training to the endoscopy workforce, highlighting the significance of filling the gaps in workforce development.

One of the major initiatives driving change in workforce development is the mandate of certain aspects of JETS Workforce for endoscopy services in the UK wishing to be accredited or retain their accreditation, which Erika believes will make a significant difference. "Trusts will have to get involved if they want JAG accreditation," she explains.



"Standardisation of training across endoscopy will improve the quality of care and provide a platform for measurement."

When it comes to keeping delegates engaged during courses, Erika relies on personal experiences, humour, and creating a safe environment for sharing. Erika expressed challenges in teaching, such as fitting courses around work commitments. However, this is mitigated by the excellent organisation provided by the JAG team and flexibility enabled by her trust.

Reflecting on her growth as a faculty member, Erika feels grateful for the opportunities to expand her skills. She acknowledges that while she may still feel junior in some aspects, each teaching experience enhances her confidence and expertise.

Looking ahead, Erika envisions further development in endoscopy nursing education, particularly with the introduction of ENDO2. She believes that standardising procedures and extending roles will empower nurses to deliver consistent standards of care across endoscopy units.

Erika's journey exemplifies the vital role of education and workforce development in healthcare. By bridging gaps and standardising training, professionals like Erika are paving the way for a more robust and innovative future in endoscopy nursing.