'I love the fact you can *create something from nothing*'

Zeritu Holmes is a 48-year-old dental nurse. She works at three dental practices in Wiltshire and also assists at implant training courses for dental nurses in Bradford on Avon.

It was a friend who first prompted me to be a dental nurse. It was around 25 years ago and I was living in London and working as a shop assistant. I bumped into her at the tube station and we got talking about her job. She was a dental nurse and during the course of the conversation she suggested I should think about trying it out as a job. I didn't know at that stage that you could train as a dental nurse on the job but when she told me that it was possible, I suddenly knew that's what I should do. I've never looked back.

Learning on the job

First, I went to work as a dental nurse at a practice in London and learnt on the job. I started going to college one day a week but I never finished my course. However, I carried on working, muddled along and then decided to go back to the training and become a qualified dental nurse eight years ago.

I'm really lucky to say that I love my job. I love everything about it really - the whole package. I enjoy meeting people, working as a team, the clinical aspect of the job, everything. I know that I'm a bit of a chatterbox, so knowing that I get to interact with so many people everyday is ideal for my personality and of course, the other parts of the job fit for me too.

Enjoying the balance

During a typical working week, I work at three different practices and work with around four dentists. One is Dutch Barton Dental Practice, a private practice in Bradford on Avon and I also work for Oasis Dental Care and IDH, which are both NHS practices in Trowbridge. I guess some people might find that a bit complicated but I really enjoy

the balance I have. I learn different things from different people - dentists, hygienist and nurses - experiencing various ways of doing things and learning why they do it that way. One person will have their own method of doing things while another will have a totally different approach. It is sometimes a little bit of a challenge, because you have to switch between dentists and I have to respond to their different personalities, or I have to adapt from the mindset of one practice to another. Of course broadly the practices are the same because they are all in the same profession, but they all have their quirks, which I find keeps life interesting.

'FOR ME IT INVOLVED QUITE A LOT OF RESEARCH, AS NEW TECHNIQUES ARE EVOLVING IN THIS FIELD ALL THE TIME'

During the last few years I have worked with lots of lovely nurses and dentists. I have been asked to come on board full time at a couple of the practices but I've refused because I like the dynamic of lots of practices and the options it gives me. The whole thing flows really well. I can walk into any of those practices and there is always a warm welcome, plus I get invited to three Christmas parties! That's not bad going.

Implant process

I've been an implant nurse for around four years. I was first introduced to them when I joined the Dutch Barton Dental Practice and the practice owner sent me for training and I've loved it ever since. Obviously it is only a

part of my job but I do enough implants to feel completely comfortable doing them.

I love the fact you can create something from nothing and I'm very interested in the whole process from start to finish. I have a preference for surgical work anyway, because it is challenging, but generally I don't find implant nursing demanding because I enjoy it so much. Of course, there are certain things you need to consider. For example, you are trying to recreate a hospital environment and ensure you are completely sterile. That responsibility is yours, so there is quite a bit of preparation. Therefore, I am forever looking around to make sure I have done everything I can, so I am prepared for the patient in the best possible way.

Career progression

Recently I have started assisting on implant training courses for nurses, which feels like a nice career progression. I was a bit shy at first and it was definitely out of my comfort zone. I almost had to have a chat with myself to make me do it. However, I eventually realised that I love what I do, so I thought, "Why not?", and I did enjoy it.

I think the nurses on the course also enjoyed what I brought to the day, as I could offer a nurse's point of view. For me it involved quite a lot of research, as new techniques are evolving in this field all the time and I wanted to make sure I was up to date. Obviously I was only trained a few years ago but you have to be on top of things and, especially with teaching, you have a responsibility to know you are offering the right information. If I could gain a bit more confidence, I would love to do even more training work.

'IT IS SOMETIMES A LITTLE BIT OF A CHALLENGE, BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO SWITCH BETWEEN DENTISTS AND I HAVE TO RESPOND TO THEIR DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES'

What three things can Zeritu not live without?

1. My son
2. My husband
3. My cat - It's very simple but I love them all.

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