**1. What challenges were you facing and what motivated you to solve them?**

The challenge is about getting work, finding employment. Those sorts of things. I don’t have any problem in filling in application forms because I read them through. I put the application in according to the job description and the person specification, so I do not have a problem with that.

However for the actual interview that has been the problem. I am freaked out easily. If I don’t get my head round the questions, I will not be able to finish the whole interview. That has been the barrier for me, even thinking of applying for a job.

I came to the Retention Team Application sessions. We all talked about our experiences and what we were going through. From there Swallay booked a mock interview session with me. That was how I broke down the barrier to become more confident in answering questions. It very helpful in the sense I have to answer questions myself.

I worked on questions like. ‘Tell me about yourself’. ‘Why do you want to apply for this job?’ ‘What can you bring on to the team? We focussed on those types of questions. So that type of question in the interview didn’t faze me, as I already knew what to say. It made me feel more prepared.

To answer those kind of questions - like tell, tell me why you want the job sort of thing. They are the ones that build my confidence. Then once I am able to do this on all other questions, it will not be too difficult.

There was one question we practised I can't really remember. Exactly the same question came out at my interview. I was shocked. Honestly, I was shocked. So because he showed me how to deal with that particular situation like someone in crisis, how will you deal with it? I got that job. Immediately after I finished the interview, I rang him Oh my God, the exact question we worked on together. If we had not, maybe I couldn’t have answered it.

The problem has not been the question, I know the answer but how do to bring it out of me. I've been the problem. Until I started working with Swallay, the answers were sealed, but after practice, practice, practice with Swallay, I am now more confident than before with interviews. So I wanted him to know that.

**2. Why did you choose the NHS over other organisations?**

I'm a nurse by my background. So where else would I work? I’ve tried private health care before. I'm not saying that that they're not good, but when you are thinking about moving forward like building your career, the NHS is much better in developing your career and supporting you to achieve what you want to achieve. That is why I believe in working with the NHS rather than any other organisation. It’s more secure. Once you work with the NHS and you're known to the NHS, you can work for years doing your job and doing it well.

I don’t care how much private work pays me. I prefer to stay with the NHS. I am loyal to NHS. I see the benefits of being part of this national service.

**3. What do you think helped you to achieve your success?**

Building your confidence and support. Someone believing in me that I can do it. So that helped me to believe in myself - that I could do it. My confidence has been given back to me. Swallay tells me “Come on. You can do it.” I do not see an interview as a threat anymore.

**4, How have you benefited from obtaining your new job?**

At the moment I can't really say much about that because I haven't had my orientation period yet. I’m just starting.

**5. Have our retention services helped you to improve your day to day life?**

I'm more confident in meeting people now. I said to Swallay that if you have an interview, I don't mind joining the panel to build my confidence. In my previous job. I didn't have that opportunity to interview people. Despite supervising junior staff – which is part of building your career opportunities. That should be available: stretching your skills and giving you a few more managerial opportunities. During our sessions, he let me know what opportunities I can look out for at work. For example discussions with my supervisor to look into my career options .Because if you don't ask, and if you don't talk about it, you don't get it.

You have to grab the ladder! In your character, you need to open your mind, your eyes and your mouth at the same time. Because we are not the only ones out there. If others working with you are more open and more proactive than you, they will get these chances. What I've got from our sessions is to be more forward. If you think something will walk up to you or a career will walk up to you, no,it doesn’t work like that. You have to open your mind, your eyes, and talk about it with your supervisor. Then you be able to get it.

I wish I'd met him for five years ago. I could have gone far. Because within one or two months, I was able to go through an interview successfully it.

So you have to think about what you want to achieve? You aim at it, you set your goal and you discuss with your manager. Which has been very helpful .I've been the one delaying myself. I am the one that can move myself on. You have to believe in yourself. Prepare yourself. Build yourself and believe in what you prepared. Then you move on.

I've changed. Especially the barrier that has been broken.

**7. What would you say to others facing the same challenges you have faced?**

That if they want, Iook at my story. I can encourage them. As Swallay told me – the job is not going to come to you. You have to prepare yourself and look for the job and get ready. Make up your mind. Don't be your own enemy. And move forward.

**8. Before you were offered the job, what problems were you facing? In other words, why did you apply to the NHS?**

I've been with the NHS for long now. The NHS helps develop your career. It gives you vital security job security.

**9. How have you been helped to get where you are?**

I've been helped through job search. My own willpower and energy, has been the backbone of where I am today. I would have loved to climb more ladders. Which is the reason I'm working with The Retention Team now, building, my confidence and doing all the mock interviews. Doing the Interview practise together and suggesting possible questions with me has helped me to get where I am today.

**10 Describe who has had an impact in helping you reach this new position.**

Swallay, because he is available for you. He will look at your application. I was at a meeting sometimes ago, with other employers. They did not have the position I was looking for at the time, but I was shocked to see that other employers will come and talk to us and say what positions are available. That was a very big opportunity. Employers came on that platform. Which was very good. The team are the one. That has been my backbone - saying Christiana, you can do it. You can move on.

Look at me. I would not be on a Band 6 for good seven years if I had known this before. I could probably have moved on and up a long time ago.

So I am grateful to the retention team for what they have done, and the impact they have had on my career. Thank you