



Jennifer Lloyd

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What was your first role after graduating?

Speech and Language Therapy Assistant at the North East Trust for Aphasia, supporting a long-term aphasia group. My first clinical role was as a Band 5 SLT in the North Essex Adult Learning Disability Team.

What does your current role involve?

As Professional Lead, my role is to oversee the workforce development, governance and strategic development of adult SLT services in Cornwall.

At what stage did you decide which area of the profession to work in?

I'm a big advocate of not having a set plan and being open to opportunities that come to you. For me, it's important to know your values, strengths and what inspires you, but be open to a range of roles that will allow you to meet those – there is rarely one perfect job.

How did you progress from your first role to your current job?

One step at a time! I was lucky that lots of 'next steps' became available for me – but I was determined to be flexible on the type of role and location of steps that I took. My guiding principles were 'would I enjoy this?', 'do I feel ready?' 'would I feel positively challenged?', 'what does it mean for my own development?'

How have you used CPD and/or networking opportunities to help you progress in your career?

I've sought a diverse range of CPD. The Four Pillars of practice are really helpful in making sure that I've developed holistically, not just considering my clinical practice. I've only discovered the importance of networks and relationships in more recent years – having connections with people can introduce you to opportunities and ideas that you wouldn't have access to otherwise.

My advice to students looking to get into my current area of work:

- Know your own personal values and be guided by them
- Be open to trying something you hadn't considered – no experience is bad experience
- A side step can be just as valid and stretching as a step up
- Reach out to people who have interesting roles that you want to hear about – 99% of people will be willing to meet for a coffee and chat about what they do

Contact me: @JenniferL_SLT on Twitter

