Transitioning from the Classroom to the Workforce

Ezinne V.C Onwuekwe

Bachelor of Pharmacy

Community Pharmacy
Managed a DRF

Recruited by AU for Africa CDC

Operationalization of the regional offices

Member, Technology
Advisory Group

Covid-19 Vaccine programme
coordinator
Foray into Healthcare data
analytics

Post graduate studies
in Public health

Certified Project
manager

Ebola Viral Disease
response

Public health officer (EPR)

Post graduate studies
in Business Analytics

Senior clinical informatics analyst

Founder &
Executive Director

From Theory to Practice – Embrace the Transition

- **Adapt** your knowledge to solve real-world challenges and constraints
- The workplace demands applied skills—be ready to evolve.
  - critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Bridging the gap between academic and industry standards.
  - *Programming languages*

"Being adaptable is not about abandoning what you learned—it's about evolving with new challenges and opportunities."

Balancing Goals – Set Realistic Career Expectations

- Early career is about **learning**, not perfection.
  - How does your role fit into the big picture?
- Align your ambitions with the needs of the organization.

"Balancing your aspirations with the demands of the organization will allow you to make a meaningful impact over time, while also building credibility and trust."

Face the Fear – Build Confidence and Move Forward

- Common fears?
  - imposter syndrome, fear of failure, FOMO, uncertainty...
- Anxiety is normal—use it as motivation
- Preparation, awareness (SWOT), and celebrating small wins lead to confidence

"Preparation is one of the best ways to overcome anxiety—when you're well-prepared, you build confidence."

Network & Grow – Leverage Mentorship and Learning

👎 Not just attending events or adding connections on LinkedIn

👍 Build meaningful connections—mentorship accelerates growth.

👍 Continuous learning is key, especially in fields like technology and health, which are constantly evolving
- Structured vs Unstructured learning
- Certifications vs Advanced degrees

👍 Stay curious—professional development is a lifelong journey.

- Do
  - take courses,
  - attend workshops,
  - read industry publications
  - join professional bodies
  - seek out coaches, mentors, sponsors

Essential Tools – Skills for Career Success in Digital Health

- Technical and soft skills are equally vital—keep sharpening both.

  - Technical skills constantly change, but soft skills remain with you throughout your career.
  - Soft skills are relevant, transferable and keep an individual highly employable

- Resilience and seeking feedback are key to early career progress
- Cultivate a growth mindset and a willingness to adapt

"You'll face setbacks—that's inevitable— but the ability to learn, adapt, and bounce back is what will define your career."

The Journey Begins

- Adaptability is your greatest asset—keep striving for growth.",
- Keep Learning
- Embrace challenges—they build character.
- Be prepared
- Leverage networks – online and offline
- Soft skills never go out of style
- Always seek feedback

"The future depends on what we do in the present."

– Gandhi