**I’m standing alongside women in nursing to #BreakTheBias**

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I often speak about diversity in nursing; I believe it is one of the most important matters that we must focus on as a profession. It is important on so many levels. I believe that the inside of a hospital, a surgery, a community team, a university or anywhere else where you might find nurses, should look exactly like the outside world. I believe that diversity can make our nursing world more relevant, powerful, and accessible. When I speak about diversity in nursing it is often geared towards my own journey and experience as a man in nursing. I use it as an opportunity to celebrate my career from my own unique perspective. I further use this platform to publicly say it's OK for a man to be a nurse and recognise the contribution men make to further diversifying nursing. Of course, I have my critics and of course I realise that gender is just one aspect of diversity.

Today though, I want to talk about how, on Tuesday 8 March, International Women's Day (https://www.internationalwomensday.com/), I will celebrate the 66 4381 women who make up nearly 90% of the Nursing and Midwifery Council register in the UK, according to the latest figures. I will be that man in nursing who says thank you to the many wonderful women in nursing that I have worked alongside and who have taught me so much about what it means to be a nurse.

Recently, when speaking about my own nursing journey, I talked about how my nursing self was discovered, shaped and developed by so many positive and inspirational role models. I shared stories of these role models from the early 1990s right up to the present day. They were a diverse group of people, including those at the start of their careers, and those with decades of experience, but one thing struck me—they were all women. Of course, I have worked with many people over my career, but my go to list of nursing idols were all women. Should I have been overly surprised about this considering 90% of the registered nurses in the world are women? Possibly not. Nursing has been described as a career dominated by women; I find this unhelpful. Women have not dominated my nursing world; they have enriched it.

International Women's Day 2022 is a global event of recognition where a dedicated day is used to not only celebrate women's achievements, but to raise awareness of bias and asks us all to take action for equality. Of course, these matters are important every day and not just reserved for this one day in March. It is, however, a day where we can all strive to forge greater gender equality in the world, celebrate all women's achievements, increase visibility and commit to challenging inequality. This year, #BreakTheBias is being used as a social media campaign and asks us all to positively commit to create a world where the sexes are more equal.

I want to use this as an opportunity to be a stronger ally for women. My own personal #BreakTheBias commitment is around gaining a better understanding of women's experiences. I am going to commit to calling out misogynistic and derogatory language—never allowing someone the opportunity to think that using the guise of ‘banter’ makes such language acceptable. I'm going to listen more to women's experiences, whether it's around matters of equal career opportunities and reward or about fear of personal safety and violence. I'm going to try and understand matters that I don't have to think of as a man. These are big statements to make, and it might not be easy, but I'm going to try and will encourage other men to make their own commitments alongside me.

And finally, please allow me the opportunity to recognise and thank every woman in nursing who has made me the nurse I am today. At the risk of sounding like I'm giving an acceptance speech at the Oscars, I dedicate this to my women-in-nursing role models and idols, including Lucy, Lisa, Tracey, Siobhan, Helen, Jo, Dawn, Loraine, Vanessa, Mabel, Karen, Shirley, Kathryn, Clair and Nichole—and every other woman in nursing I know and are yet to meet. Thank you.

An additional thank you to Kathryn, Stephanie, Jade, Katie, Ruth, and Melanie who have all helped me make my #BreakTheBias commitments and understand the importance of ally-ship.

Please join me on Tuesday 8 March on International Women's Day 2022 to recognise, thank and celebrate all women. And let us all contribute towards #BreakTheBias