



Royal College of
Obstetricians &
Gynaecologists

Summary of learning points



- Be aware of the impact that external factors can have on your behaviour at work. Recognise how they influence you. Acknowledge that external factors may affect your behaviour and consider telling others "*I'm having a bad day. I'm not at my best, please bear with me*".
- Don't immediately jump to conclusions about the intentions of others or make snap judgements.
- Sometimes it's your colleagues that are the first to recognise stress in you. If you suspect that external factors are leading to stress in a colleague, offer them support and highlight other people or services that may be able to help them.
- Tone of voice and non-verbal communication are just as important as the words which are used. This is true for all interactions, but particularly when giving feedback.



- If you are feeling unsupported or undermined by colleagues it is important to address these behaviours. Tackling them with the person responsible requires courage, but will improve your working environment in the long run.
- Do not be put off by perceived hierarchy. If you approach this in a non-emotional adult way you may be surprised by how effective this is.
- Seek help in dealing with these behaviours if you feel you need it. A trusted senior colleague (consultant, another trainee or senior midwife/nurse) may be very helpful to talk to about problems you are experiencing, and can support you in a face to face discussion with the colleague in question if you require it.



- Communication is key to ensure good professional relationships. Non-verbal communication skills are often more important than what is actually said.
- Active listening is important. Listen well before forming an opinion.
- Sometimes it is difficult to relax and even smile when someone is being confrontational but open body language and a non-threatening tone can help to disarm a situation.
- Engage in constructive professional dialogue by first listening.
- Acknowledge the impact of your physical and emotional state on your reactions. Recognise if you are hungry, thirsty, tired, stressed and take measures to remedy these early. This is equally important to recognise in colleagues and help them to manage themselves.



- Should a colleague be continually difficult to communicate with, it is appropriate to raise this with them, either by yourself should you feel confident doing this, or discussing with a trusted colleague, or educational supervisor who will be able to advise you further.
- Remember to comment on an individual's behaviour and how it makes you feel and not on their personality.
- Cultural practices are usually implicit and very difficult to define or make explicit.
- The process of cultural change can be very difficult to identify, support and manage.



- An understanding of cultural practices (beliefs, rituals and standards) on the part of new members joining a team and the team members hosting them can make it easier to support the process of transition.
- Educational interventions likely to help achieve positive changes for those who move to another culture to work could be based on three guiding principles:
 - recognition that they are in a state of cultural transition
 - offering opportunities to celebrate past experiences.
 - highlighting changes that one needs to make in order to successfully acculturate in the new culture.
- Supportive discussions and facilitation of reflections can help improve the outcomes where cultural transition is deemed to be affecting progression and adjustment in the team.



- Education and training are key drivers for team development which can only be enabled if staff are given time to meet and learn together. Inter professional learning can also develop mutual understanding of the differing cultures across professions.
- It is important to give feedback in a considered, structured manner at an appropriate time in the appropriate environment.
- Good feedback will allow the person receiving it to review, consider and understand what has happened and their role in it. The process should also allow them to reflect and plan action points about how they could use the learning to improve their practice in future.
- Lose the emotion - if you are feeling anxious or angry about an event or issue you are unlikely to be able to give or receive feedback effectively. Try and remain professional in your communication when you undertake this.



- Respectful communication being mindful of the BEMOS model will help you recognise poor workplace behaviour and plan solutions.
- Situations concerning performance management always have an element of complexity and their management is rarely clear cut.
- Good performance management and timely, constructive feedback is the key to avoiding these situations.
- Good leadership and organisational support is key for helping trainees facing difficulties.
- Observation of a trainee's practice in the workplace, either formally or informally, is particularly useful in contextualising reported behaviour provided by others in the team. It may facilitate the possibility of distinguishing between occasional and systemic difficulty on the part of the trainee in a particular assessment.