

A GUIDE FOR EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISORS TO SUPPORT FOUNDATION DENTISTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS



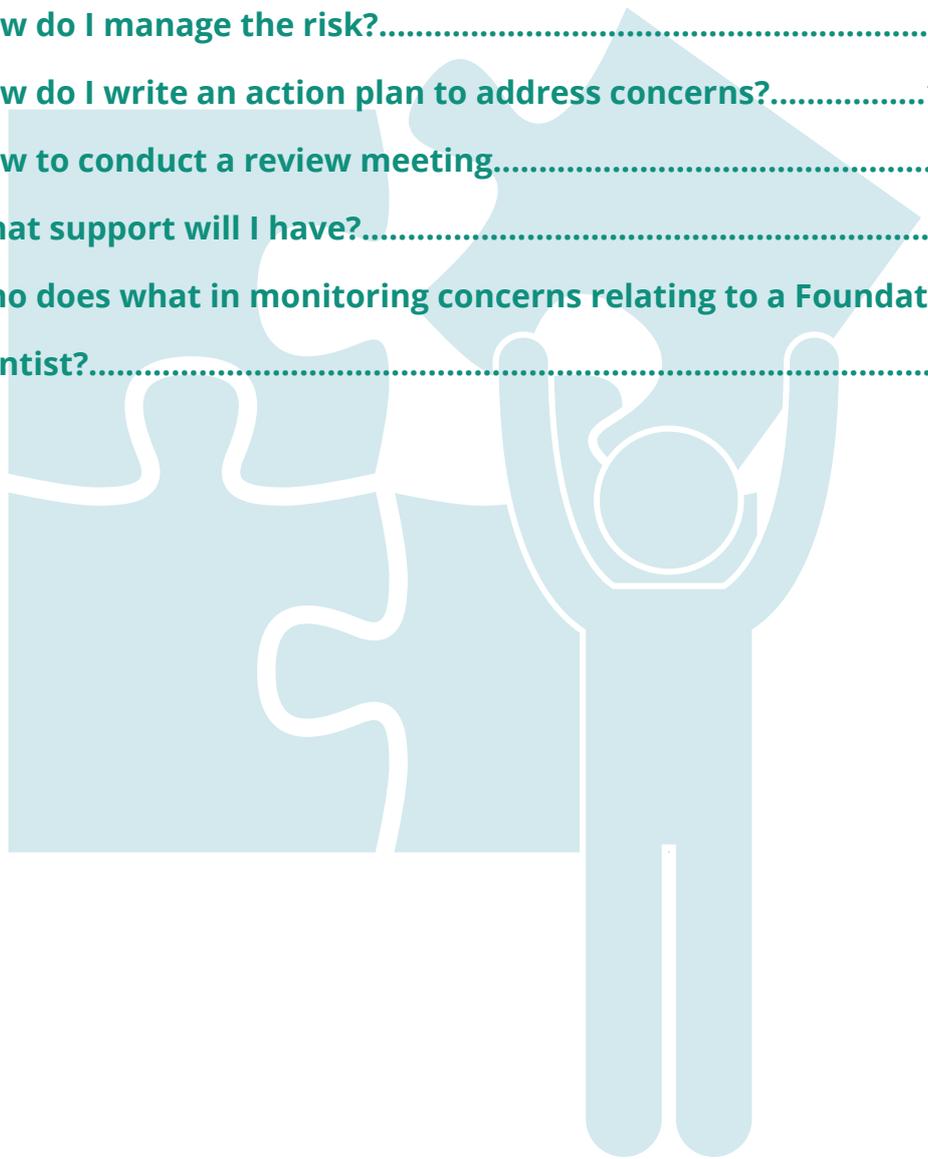
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'Safe Practitioner'

The GDC document 'preparing for practice', GDC learning outcomes PRINT.qxd:Layout 1 (gdc-uk.org) describes the outcomes which must be attained before the registration of a new dentist.

The domains for attainment are:

- Clinical
- Communication
- Professionalism
- Management and leadership

Those entering foundation training have demonstrated that they have achieved the level of the **'Safe Practitioner'**. The safe practitioner is defined as **'a rounded professional who, in addition to being a competent clinician and/or technician, will have the range of professional skills required to begin working as part of a dental team and be well prepared for independent practice. The safe practitioner will be able to assess their own capabilities and limitations, act within these boundaries and will know when to request support and advice.'**

The BDS qualification for registration is the first stage in the development of a dental professional. The Foundation Training scheme is designed to take a safe practitioner and enhance their clinical and administrative competence promoting high standards through relevant postgraduate training over the course of the training year.



"The transition from dental school to general practice presents challenges for new graduates. The new environment and systems, team, materials and equipment alongside the increased and varied pace of work can be daunting for new dentists. Throughout this time, it is normal for a Foundation Dentist to require a settling in period during which time they can be demanding of your time".



An integral role of the Educational Supervisor is monitoring and managing the performance of a Foundation Dentist during this transition. This includes assessing if the performance of a Foundation Dentist is satisfactory or if it needs to be improved and identifying what actions therefore need to be taken.

In the early weeks, the ePortfolio is front loaded to assist you in reaching the conclusion about the performance status of your Foundation Dentist. **It is essential that the ePortfolio is maintained as a contemporaneous document by both the Foundation Dentist and Educational Supervisor to allow for early recognition of any Foundation Dentist who may benefit from intervention.**

The Educational Transitional Document (ETD) will also support both Foundation Dentists and Educational Supervisors during this period it is essential that time is spent reflecting on its content and prioritising learning based on this.

It is normal for a new graduate to require teaching input from you particularly in the early months. Through good documentation within the ePortfolio, both you and the Foundation Dentist will be able to track progress and the response to interventions.

A small number of Foundation Dentists will experience difficulties during their training which will require additional help within the practice setting or if more serious or more prolonged, intervention by NIMDTA. The way in which such difficulties are managed is dictated by the nature and context of the difficulties. Concerns about a Foundation Dentists' conduct, clinical performance or health may come from a variety of sources including significant events or critical incidents, complaints from patients or colleagues or workplace based assessments. The Educational Supervisor should consult with colleagues to explore the nature and extent of the concerns and seek clear evidence.

The issues should be raised with the Foundation Dentist at the earliest possible opportunity in order to obtain his or her perspective. As soon as it is clear that there is a problem appropriate action should be taken. Early identification and intervention is in the best interests of the patient, the Foundation Dentist and the whole clinical team.

Typically performance concerns have a multi-factorial basis; Deficits of knowledge and skills, conduct be it personal or professional, health issues and lastly outside factors including environmental issues within the training practice can all lead to a Foundation Dentist finding themselves in need of additional support.

Raising concerns about Foundation Dentist performance can seem daunting for the Educational Supervisor. Supporting a Foundation Dentist in difficulty can be extremely challenging yet immensely rewarding.



Concerns should be raised when they are manifested by:

- Under performance
- Changes in behaviour
- Failure to progress satisfactorily

Once the underlying cause of the Foundation Dentist's difficulties is identified, a realistic and proportionate remedial action plan should be put in place. If it is not possible to deliver this in the Foundation Dentist's current placement the Foundation Dentist may need to be moved to a placement which can. Advice should be sought from the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ Training Programme Director (TPD) early. The plan should be regularly reviewed throughout the course of its delivery to ensure that it continues to meet the Foundation Dentist's needs. Good communication between NIMDTA and the Educational Supervisor is crucial.

Review of competence progression (RCP)

There are three formal stages of the review of competence progression during the 12 months of training:

- Early stage review - completed between weeks 4-6
- Interim review competence progression - completed at month 5-6
- Final review competence progression - completed at month 11

Whilst these reviews form formal staging points during the year, an Educational Supervisor can flag concerns about a Foundation Dentist **at any point in the year**. The earlier a concern is raised, the sooner intervention can be provided and hopefully negate any negative impact on the training provision and progression.

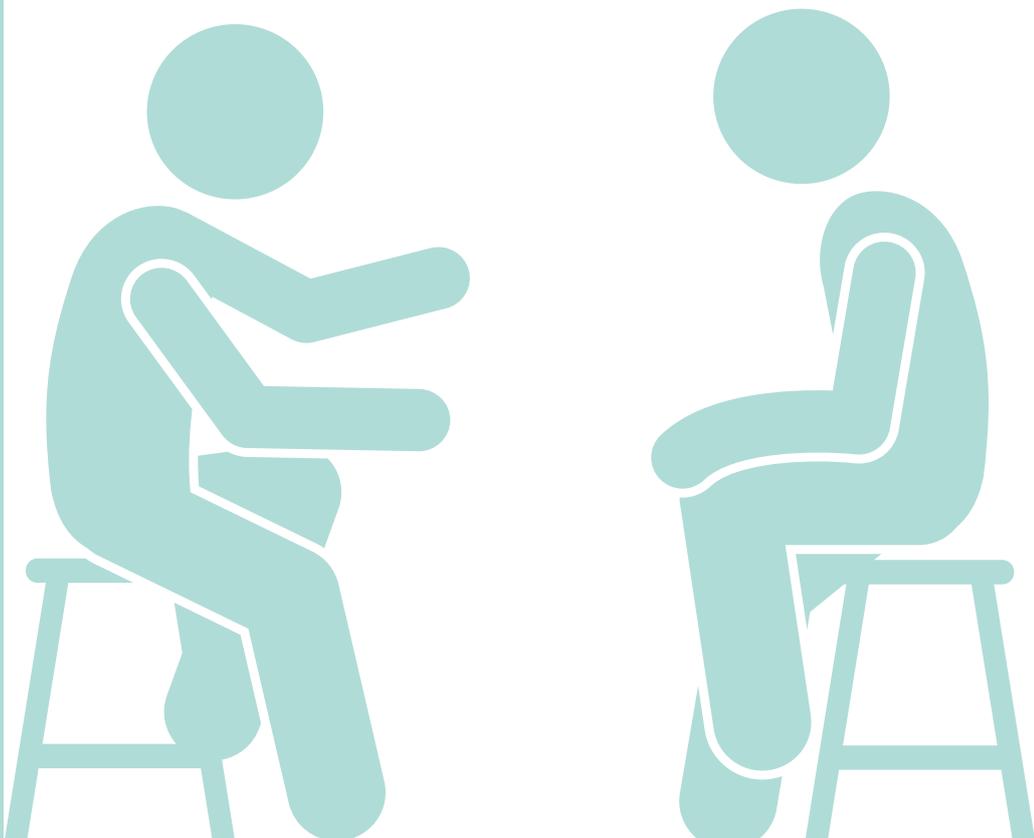
As soon as an Educational Supervisor has a concern about a Foundation Dentist, they should:

- Discuss these concerns openly and honestly with the Foundation Dentist
- Evidence and document the concerns accurately
- Share the validated evidence with the Foundation Dentist
- Seek advice from the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD

Dependent on the nature and risk of the concerns raised, advice and support may be sought from a variety of sources external to the Dental Foundation Training team:

- Professional Support Unit
- Trainee Review Group
- Occupational Health
- General Dental Council

The Dental Foundation Training team may make referrals to these bodies having discussed the relevant issues fully with both the Foundation Dentist and yourself.



What Should I Look Out For?

Early warning signs:

1. Lack of insight:

- Failure to accept constructive criticism
- Inflexibility
- Resistance to change
- Defensiveness
- Inappropriate requests for assistance

2. Reduced rates of professionalism:

- Poor behaviour and attitude
- Over-confidence
- Disrespect towards patients and other staff
- Misuse of social media and internet

3. Inability to take personal responsibility:

- Significant number of minor incidents apparently outside the Foundation Dentist's control - punctuality, failure to complete e-Portfolio, need to finish early, missing deadlines
- Failure to confront issues

4. Poor personal organisation and time management:

- Failure to utilise clinical time and opportunities effectively
- Difficulty with ePortfolio maintenance, audits

5. Disengagement from or disruption of educational process

6. Erratic or inappropriate behaviour:

- Outbursts
- Inappropriate behaviour with patients and colleagues
- Imagined slights

7. Low work rate:

- Difficulty in completing tasks within time frame - clinical and administrative
- Unusually long appointments/ inappropriate number of appointments for course of treatment
- Arriving early and leaving late but nothing to show
- Avoidance of certain procedures

8. Patient complaints

9. Negative feedback from peers and other staff

10. Poor quality clinical work and failure to progress

11. Frequent short term sickness absence

Hard and soft information may come from a variety of sources both within and outside the practice.



Who Else Might Be Helpful?

Other practice staff can provide invaluable information about the performance of the Foundation Dentist:

- Reception staff, nurses, other dentists in the practice
- Laboratory staff may also be able to provide feedback about the performance or conduct of a Foundation Dentist
- Patients may fail to return for appointments or seek treatment with other dentists in the practice
- Complaints may come in from patients verbally or in writing

Having identified a Foundation Dentist who is experiencing difficulties, the Foundation Dentist should expect to be treated fairly, supportively and confidentially throughout the process. It is essential that the Educational Supervisor discusses their concerns with the Foundation Dentist at the earliest opportunity and also seeks advice from the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD.

Information **must only be shared** with the appropriate and relevant people.





<http://standards.gdc-uk.org/>

As a dental professional, the Foundation Dentist has a duty as a registrant to consider how their performance can be impacted upon by their health, personal and professional conduct. Not all Foundation Dentists have the insight to assess the implications of their performance and the role of the Educational Supervisor in identifying such issues is essential.

All concerns must be promptly and fully investigated to establish the facts as lasting damage may be caused to a Foundation Dentist's reputation, confidence and career prospects if allegations are unfounded or malicious.

What questions should I ask myself?

1. What are the primary issues?
2. What are the contributing factors?
3. What are the mitigating factors?
4. Is there a patient safety issue?
5. Is the training environment fit for purpose?
6. Is the Foundation Dentist physically and mentally fit and well?
7. Can the Foundation Dentist demonstrate clinical competence?
 - Does the Foundation Dentist know what to do?
 - Does the Foundation Dentist know why they are doing it?
 - Does the Foundation Dentist know when to do it?
 - Does the Foundation Dentist know how to do it?
 - Does the Foundation Dentist know when to ask for help?
8. Is the conduct and behaviour of the Foundation Dentist satisfactory?
9. Does the Foundation Dentist have insight into their performance issues?
10. Is the Foundation Dentist likely to engage with a support process?
11. What evidence do you have to substantiate your concerns?

Who else might help alert me to early signs?

- Another team member and/or a Training Programme Director (TPD)



HOW DO I
EVIDENCE THE
CONCERN TO
SUPPORT
THE FOUNDATION
DENTIST?

Keeping the eportfolio contemporaneous

There must be evidence to support any concerns that an Educational Supervisor raises about a Foundation Dentist. The ePortfolio is designed to serve as a robust evidence base of a Foundation Dentist's progress or lack of over the course of the training year. Contemporaneous completion of the eportfolio greatly enhances the availability of evidence to support a Foundation Dentist's progress and can also be supportive when managing performance concerns.

Clear, well evidenced ePortfolio records will support the Educational Supervisors' decision making process and also provide the Foundation Dentist with some protection against an irresponsible decision.

Entries to the ePortfolio should verify any concerns and illustrate how the concerns were identified and what actions were taken to try and address them.

- Clinical concerns - evidence will be available in: DOPS, ADEPTs, CbDs, clinical activity logs, record keeping audit and significant event log
- Confidence, resilience and insight - reflective logs, clinical activity logs, MSF, non-working day logs, significant event log
- Engagement with educational process - tutorials, study days, non-working day logs
- Communication, teamwork and conduct - MSFs and PSQs, reflective logs, significant event log

Complaints

Patient complaints should be recorded in the significant event log within the ePortfolio. Any written complaints should be copied and held on record appropriately. It is important that any patient or team member raising a concern is fully supported. Verbal complaints must be listened to carefully and discussions documented, signed and dated by all parties to be valid. **It is important that a Foundation Dentist is made aware of any complaint involving them.** It is appropriate that whilst the management of the complaint will be practice led, the Foundation Dentist should be encouraged to contact their indemnity organisation and be kept fully informed of the progress and direction of travel of the complaint.

Attendance

Details of self-certified periods of absence should be maintained in the practice but the non-working day log should also detail these periods of absence. Sick notes from medical practitioners should be stored appropriately. Hospital appointment letters should also be stored in the practice but the period of absence recorded in the portfolio under non-working days.



SHOULD I CONSIDER
OTHER SOURCES
OF EVIDENCE?

How do I assess the Risk?

The level of concern and risk posed needs to be established from objective and thorough analysis of robust evidence. This assessment will determine the level and type of support offered to both the Educational Supervisor and Foundation Dentist.

This risk assessment process should be done in conjunction with the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD to avoid challenge from a Foundation Dentist.

Levels 1-3 can be used when there are no patient safety concerns.

- Level 1 (low) starting as isolated incidents and/ or lack of self-efficacy
- Level 2 (medium) increased levels of incidents and patterns of behaviour developing
- Level 3 (high) inability to resolve concerns despite support

Fig 3. Risk assessment: scale of concern

Level 1 Low Level Concerns	Level 2 Medium Level Concerns	Level 3 High Level Concerns
Failure to maintain E-pdp	Disengagement from or disruption of the educational process	
Lack of confidence	Serious untoward incidents	
Borderline assessments	Lack of insight, performance notably below peer group	
Punctuality issues	Behaviour or issues around bullying and harassment	
Lack of availability	Poor performance clinically, managerially or interpersonally	
	Low levels of motivation and individual agency	
	Complaints from patients, relatives or healthcare professionals	
	Absence from the workplace	

- Level 4 : Incidents or behaviour which pose a risk to patient safety are recorded as level 4

Issues relating to conduct should always be treated as a high risk because these concerns frequently prove to be the most difficult to manage.

How do I manage Risks?

Managing potential risk to patients is the first priority. This should be accomplished by the Foundation Dentist and Educational Supervisor agreeing what the Foundation Dentist can safely do. Ensure support and supervision from the whole clinical team to allow the Foundation Dentist to practice safely in the areas where he or she is experiencing difficulty.

If there is a serious or immediate risk to patients, the Foundation Dentist should be referred immediately to the Postgraduate Dental Dean through the Dental Foundation Training

Scheme Adviser/ TPD. All possible steps should be taken to identify and act on early signs and symptoms of problems. Colleagues who identify a problem need to be aware of their own professional responsibilities in reporting a concern.

Risk management of level 1-3 requires:

1. Full Educational Supervisor and Foundation Dentist engagement with the process
2. Agreement as to the nature and level of concern
3. Collaborative working towards the shared goal of satisfactory completion of training within the normal timeframe if possible
4. Information gathering to be open, supportive, documented carefully and fully shared with the Foundation Dentist. If formal disciplinary procedures are being considered then the Educational Supervisor should seek HR advice and NIMDTA should be consulted prior to any action being taken.

Fig 4. Level 1 : Low Level Concerns

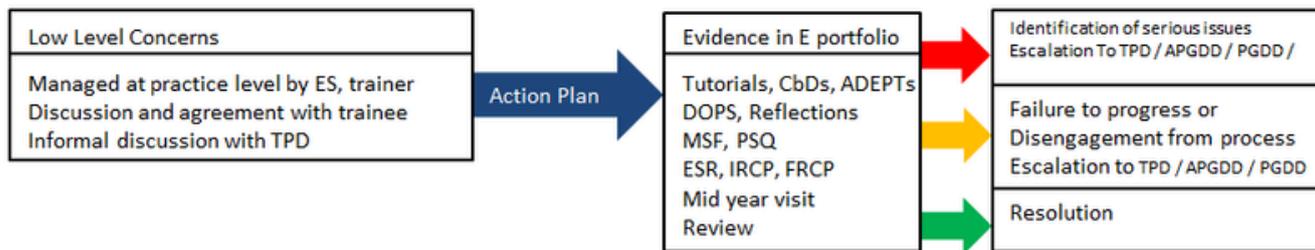
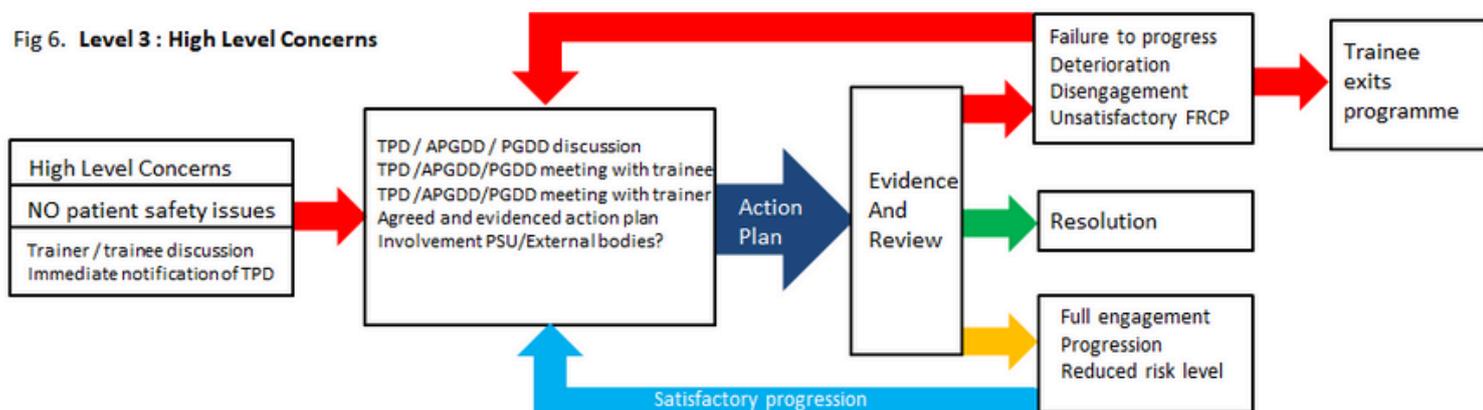


Fig 5. Level 2 : Medium Level Concerns



Fig 6. Level 3 : High Level Concerns

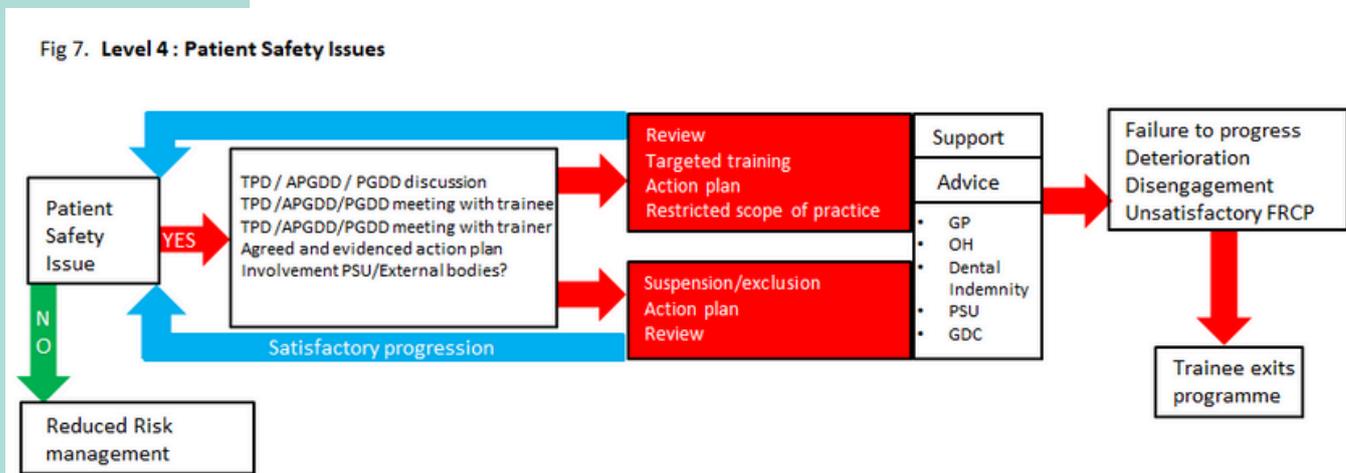


Risk management of level 4 concerns:

1. Alert the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD immediately
2. Provide the Scheme Adviser/ TPD with all documented evidence of concerns and details of any discussions concerning these issues
3. You must treat the Foundation Dentist strictly in accordance with employment law, practice governance, local and national guidelines at all times.

What will happen?

1. The Scheme Adviser/ TPD will escalate the concerns and evidence to NIMDTA for evaluation
2. It may be appropriate to limit scope of practice or suspend the Foundation Dentist This decision will be taken jointly by the ES and the PGDD with appropriate advice
3. Referral to the Professional Support Unit and liaison with external bodies is likely to be required



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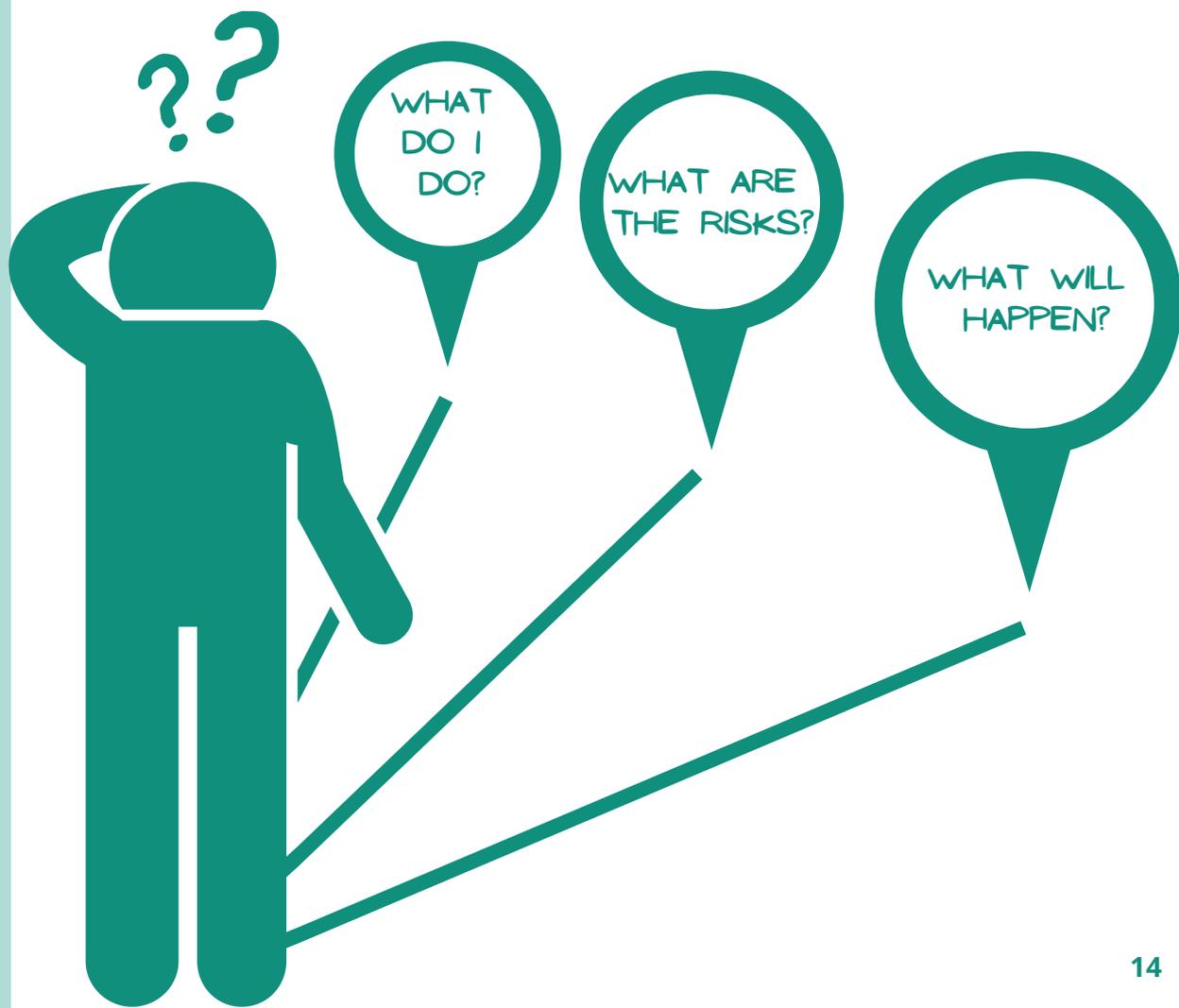
How do I write an Action Plan to address concerns?

The action plan should be based on the tools within the ePortfolio. It is important that the Foundation Dentist assists in the development of the action plan as they are more likely to engage with it when they have contributed to the solution.

1. Explore the Foundation Dentist's understanding of the issues raised by asking open ended questions
2. Emphasise common ground
3. Keep discussions on track and focused on the common goal of achieving satisfactory completion within the normal time frame
4. Focus on the positive possibilities
5. Set realistic performance improvement milestones but ensure the Foundation Dentist fully understands final expectations over specified time frame
6. Offer strategies for improvement
7. Reinforce the value of the Foundation Dentist
8. Maintain a hard copy record of the action plan and ensure it is signed by both Foundation Dentist and Educational Supervisor as well as being documented within the ePortfolio

The Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD will provide assistance in developing and monitoring a suitable action plan.

If the Foundation Dentist makes suitable progress and the issues are deemed no longer to be of concern, it is still important to have a review meeting to 'sign-off' on this phase of training and acknowledge the progress made. Normal monitoring of the Foundation Dentist will continue for the remainder of the training year.

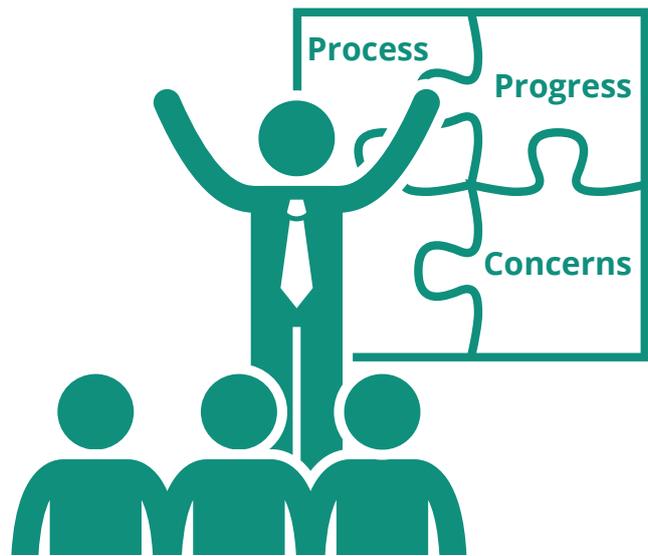


How do I Conduct a Review Meeting?

All evidence should be prepared and shared with the Foundation Dentist prior to the meeting. Normally the Educational Supervisor, Foundation Dentist, Dental Adviser/ TPD and Dental Training Manager will attend this meeting. The PGDD or deputy may attend this meeting if it is considered that their input would be beneficial. In any case, they would be fully briefed about the progress that the FD is making.

Factors for consideration during the meeting include:

1. Background information
2. Relevant issues identified during selection and allocation of placement - Foundation Dentist rank score at assessment centre and their ranking of practice allocation - SJT score is good indicator of future performance
3. Evidence of any pre-existing concerns e.g. dental school references and
 - Evidence that concerns have been recorded
 - Evidence that the Foundation Dentist has been made aware of concerns
 - Evidence of attempts to address concerns
 - Evidence of Foundation Dentist's response to these attempts
4. Evidence of previous satisfactory performance
5. Mitigating circumstances
6. Remedial training time since commencement of Dental Foundation Training
7. Details of issues that have resulted in the meeting:
 - Supporting evidence and results of further investigations
 - Learners' awareness of concerns and transparency of the process
 - Attempts to address concerns
 - Progress to date
 - Evidence of underlying cause e.g. health
 - Unresolved educational issues
 - Proposed attempts to address these - including an estimation of any extra time or resources that might be required
 - Proposed methods to assess progress



What Support will I Have?

The main source of support for the Educational Supervisor will be the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD and you should expect to work closely with them throughout the assessment and management phases. The nature of the support offered will be determined by the issues raised.

- Environment issues: organisational, practice team, Educational Supervisor, practice owner
- Clinical issues: education, training and pastoral
- Capacity and additional issues: OH, GMP, PSU, pastoral
- Conduct issues: education and training, pastoral, PSU

The phantom head provided at the outset of the year should be utilised by the Educational Supervisor in a structured way to address any skills deficiencies. Contemporaneous logs should be maintained of tasks set by the Educational Supervisor and the Foundation Dentist's performance in these tasks.

In the event of a level 3 or 4 concern being raised, the Scheme Adviser/ TPD and a second Adviser/ TPD will visit the practice to carry out at least two additional ADEPTs to triangulate the assessments. The outcome of these external assessments will be discussed with the Foundation Dentist and Educational Supervisor and may lead to modification of the action plan in place. With level 3 and 4 concerns, it is likely that external bodies will be involved and this will be managed with full engagement of the Educational Supervisor and Foundation Dentist, PGDD and Scheme Adviser/ TPD.

Top Tips when dealing with performance concerns

1. Follow the guidance and frameworks
2. Do not deal with performance concerns on your own
3. Gather robust objective evidence
4. Document all conversations making sure verbal information is dated and signed
5. Talk to your Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD
6. Maintain confidentiality-do not discuss within the Educational Supervisor group
7. Be open and honest with the Foundation Dentist
8. Reassure the Foundation Dentist that the common goal is to get them to satisfactory completion within the normal timeframe
9. Discuss the support process with the Foundation Dentist so that they know what to expect
10. Work with the Foundation Dentist to come up with solutions rather than listing problems
11. Use the ePortfolio to evidence your concerns and to identify and address Foundation Dentist's learning needs
12. Use the tools within the ePortfolio as an integral part of your action plan and evidence base

Who does what in monitoring concerns relating to a Foundation Dentist?

Educational Supervisor:

- Manage educational progress
- Collate evidence
- Manage single problems locally
- Identify and refer complex issues to Dental Adviser/ TPD

What should be documented?

- Everything; factual, detailed, dated and shared with Foundation Dentist
- Background contributing factors, personal improvement plan, timescale and review
- Discussions, meetings, phone calls and emails
- Accurate statement on the potential impact of difficulties on completing training

Dental Adviser/ TPD:

- Deal with patient safety issues, launch formal investigation
- Ensure practice has applied their policies and procedures
- Escalation to APGDD

Remediation and Review

Locally

- Educational Supervisor, Dental Adviser/ TPD, Occupational Health and GP

NIMDTA

- PSU
- Trainee Review Group - Career and personal development for advice and counselling



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