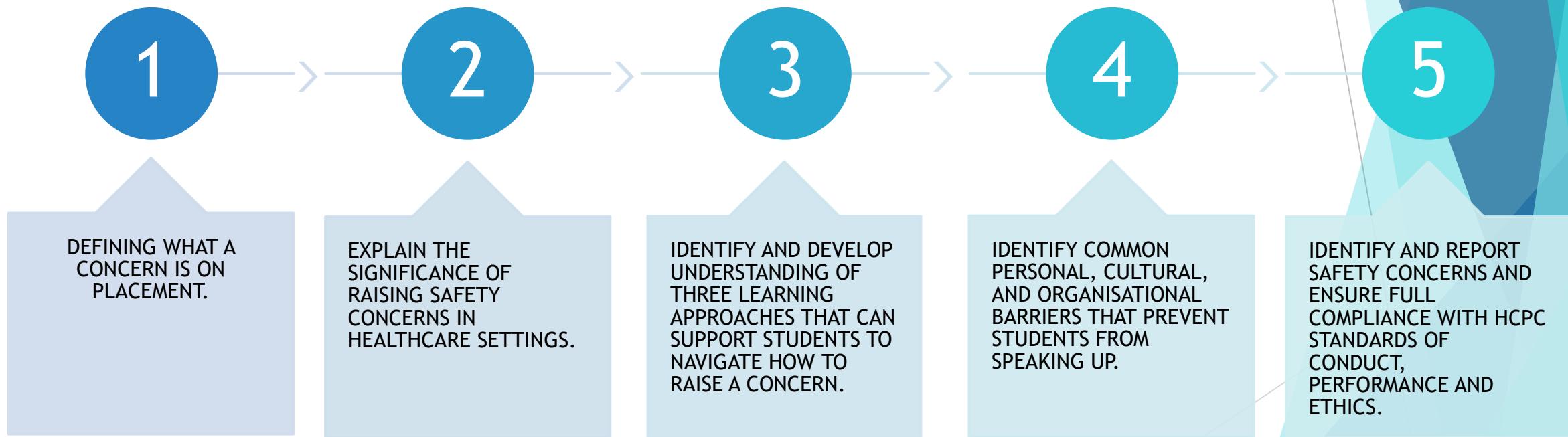




Enhancing Speaking Up And Raising Safety Concerns Among Healthcare Students

Learning Objectives



Session Overview

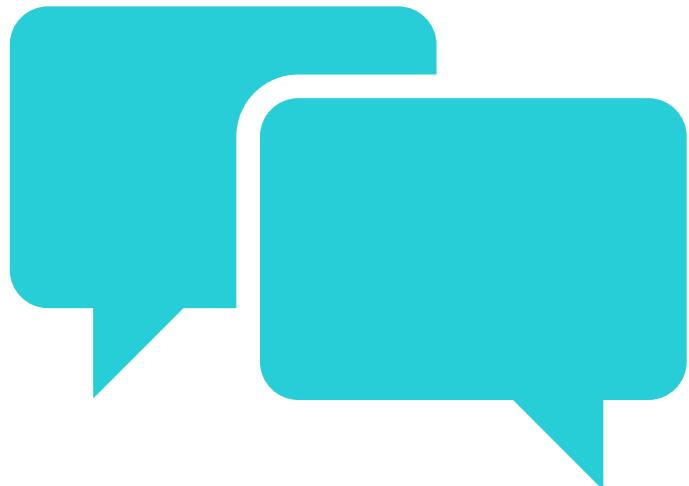
- Understand the importance of speaking up for patient safety and working environments.
- Recognising barriers to raising concerns and approaches to overcome them.
- Familiarisation with reporting raising concerns.
- Promote a supportive, inclusive culture.

MentiMeter Time!



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GROUP DISCUSSION ACTIVITY



WHAT IS
THE
DEFINITION
OF A
CONCERN?

A concern is any issue or barrier that worries you

Inadequate supervision
or unclear guidance

Unsafe practices or
repeated policy
violations

Communication or teamwork
challenges affecting learning

Inadequate patient safety

Personal	Organisational	Cultural
Fear of Consequences	No clear reporting pathway	Hierachal structures
Lack of confidence	Inconsistent responses	Blame Culture
Limited knowledge of process	Lack of feedback	Normalising poor culture
Power imbalances	Time pressures	Fear of peer judgement
Anxiety with effecting future career plans	Lack of leadership support	Unspoken expectation to 'fit in'

What are the barriers of raising concerns as a healthcare student?

The National Education and Training Survey (NETS) 2024

30% of learners considered leaving their training in 2024

Top reasons:

- ▶ Lack of learning opportunities(55%)
- ▶ Inadequate teaching/coaching(54%)
- ▶ Poor learning environment culture (52%)
- ▶ High workload (45%)

HCPC Guidelines on Raising Concerns

HCPC Guidelines - Report concerns early to the placement supervisor, university tutor, or safeguarding lead.

7.5 You must raise concerns regarding colleagues if you witness bullying, harassment or intimidation of a service user, carer or another colleague. This should be done following the relevant procedures within your practice or organisation and maintaining the safety of all involved.

7.6 You must follow up concerns that you have reported and if necessary, escalate them

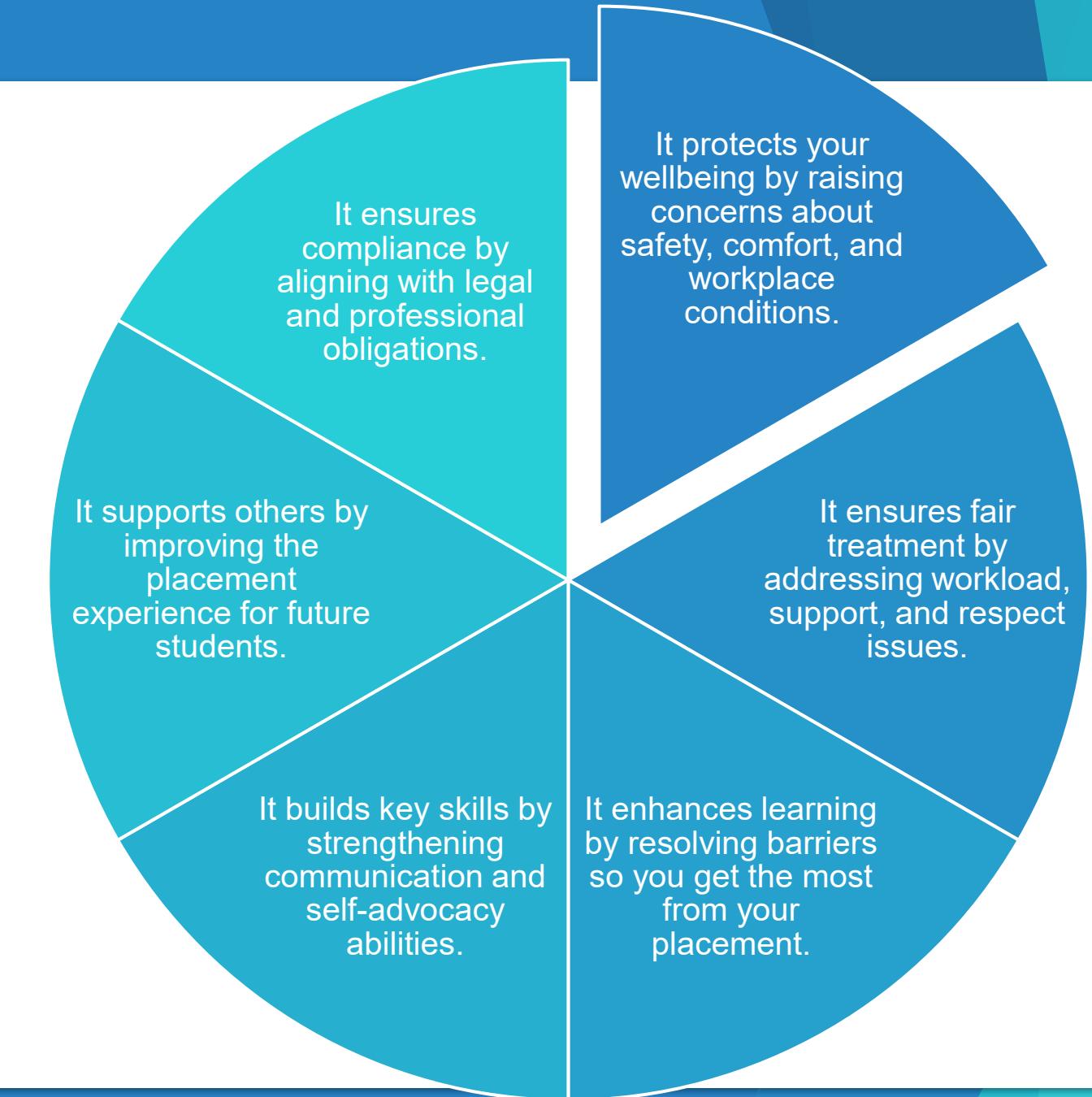
7.7 You must acknowledge and act on concerns raised to you, investigating, escalating or dealing with those concerns where it is appropriate for you to do so.



Ice Breaker Activity - Group Discussion

Why does speaking up matter?

Why speaking up matters



HOW TO RAISE CONCERNS

1. CAUSES FOR CONCERNS

- such as poor quality or unsafe practice ; unethical or inappropriate behaviour

Examples :

- actual or potential patient harm
- Unsafe practice or environments
- Inappropriate behaviour or language from colleagues

2. REVIEW RELEVANT GUIDELINES

- Refer to HCPC standards and your placement/university policies
- Identify the right contact e.g.
 - practice educator
 - placement lead
 - university liaison

3. REPORT CONCERN IN A TIMELY MANNER

- Start with your supervisor or practice educator
- Record everything: note what happened, who you spoke to, and when.
- Be clear, concise, and professional in your communication.

4. FOLLOW UP

- Keep in touch with the person handling the concern to ensure it's being addressed.
- Cooperate with any investigation or discussion.
- Maintain confidentiality and professionalism throughout.

STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING THAT HELP RESOLVE CONCERNS

- ▶ I STATEMENT - A COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUE THAT FOCUSES ON EXPRESSING ONE'S OWN FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, AND NEEDS WITHOUT BLAMING OR ACCUSING OTHERS
- ▶ ERO (EVENT , RESPONSE, OUTCOME)- FRAMEWORK THAT FOCUSES ON CONTROLLING YOUR RESPONSE TO AN EVENT IN ORDER TO CREATE DESIRABLE OUTCOMES.

(Tinker, 2004 & MMC Learning 2023).

ERO Framework example



Scenario 1: Raising a Concern about Rude Behaviour

Event: (E)

A student physiotherapist experiences rude behaviour from a staff member during a clinical placement.

Positive Response (Student & Educator): (R)

- ▶ **Student:** "I felt uncomfortable with the way I was spoken to earlier. I'd like to raise this because I don't feel it was respectful."
- ▶ **Educator:** Listens attentively, acknowledges the student's concern, and reassures them it will be addressed appropriately. The educator then discusses the issue with the staff member, reinforcing professional standards and supporting a safe learning environment.

Outcome:

The student feels heard, supported, and encouraged to continue raising concerns constructively.

Negative Response (Student & Educator) (R)

- ▶ **Student:** Remains silent or avoids addressing the issue, feeling too uncomfortable to speak up.
- ▶ **Educator (if concern is raised):** Unaware of concern, therefore unable to support student.

Outcome: (O)

The student feels intimidated, the behaviour goes unaddressed, and the learning environment becomes less safe and less positive.

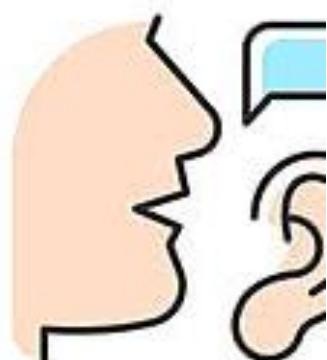
Case Study Scenarios

Case Study 1 - Observed a Communication Breakdown

Olivia, a student occupational therapist, observes a nurse giving rapid, jargon-heavy instructions to a patient. The patient appears confused and anxious but does not ask questions. Olivia realises the patient may not have understood, risking safe treatment.

How would you approach this concern?





Case Study 1 - Observed a Communication Breakdown - ERO Framework

Event: (E)

Olivia, a student occupational therapist, notices a patient looking confused during a ward round while a nurse gives rapid, jargon-heavy instructions. She realises the patient may not have understood, risking safe treatment.

Positive Response: (R)

Olivia politely asks the nurse if she can explain the information in simpler terms. The nurse uses plain language and checks the patient's understanding. Olivia reflects on this interaction positively.

Positive Outcome: (O)

The patient feels reassured and understands their treatment, improving confidence and safety. The nurse appreciates Olivia's approach in demonstrating good advocacy and patient-centred care.

Negative Response: (R)

Olivia notices the confusion but stays silent, assuming the nurse has explained enough. She does not clarify or check understanding.

Negative Outcome: (O)

The patient leaves confused, increasing risk of errors and anxiety. Olivia regrets not speaking up, affecting her professional confidence.

Case Study 2 - Bullying

A senior doctor (Daniel) repeatedly interrupts a student physiotherapist(Ben) during ward rounds, mocks his recommendations, and rolls their eyes when he speaks, making him feel undermined and hesitant to contribute.

How would you approach this concern?



Case Study 2 - Ben raises a concern using the I statement to practice educator

I Statement:

- ▶ "I find it difficult to provide crucial physiotherapy advice for patient care when I am interrupted during ward rounds, therefore I feel undercut. I would value the opportunity to complete my points so that I may properly support the team. I would appreciate guidance in how to manage this situation".



Next Steps



If nothing is done, then you may need to escalate it further through external organisations such as the:



NHS Whistleblowing Helpline - 08000724725



Freedom to Speak Up- independent agency for raising concerns



HCPC Guidelines - <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/concerns/raising-concerns/>

Accessing Resources - Knowing Where to Go for Support and Information

Types of Resources

Clinical: HCPC Policies, NHS Guidelines, NHS trust protocols

Education: University Supervisors, Academic tutors/Course Leaders

Support: Educators, coordinators

Well-being: Peer support, EAP, wellness services

How to Access

Ask educator or university link tutor

Use facility intranet / policy library

Professional organisations & databases

Library or resource centre

Available resources you can use

Freedom to Speak Up

[The National Guardian's Office - Freedom to Speak Up](#)

HCPC Policies, NHS Policies. Supporting learners to speak up and raise concerns

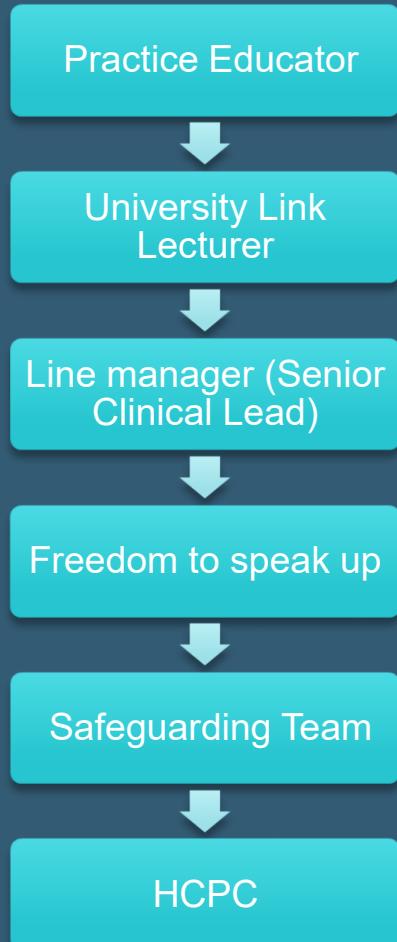
<https://learninghub.nhs.uk/Resource/55526/Item>

Supervisors, Clinical Leads

NHS wellbeing services



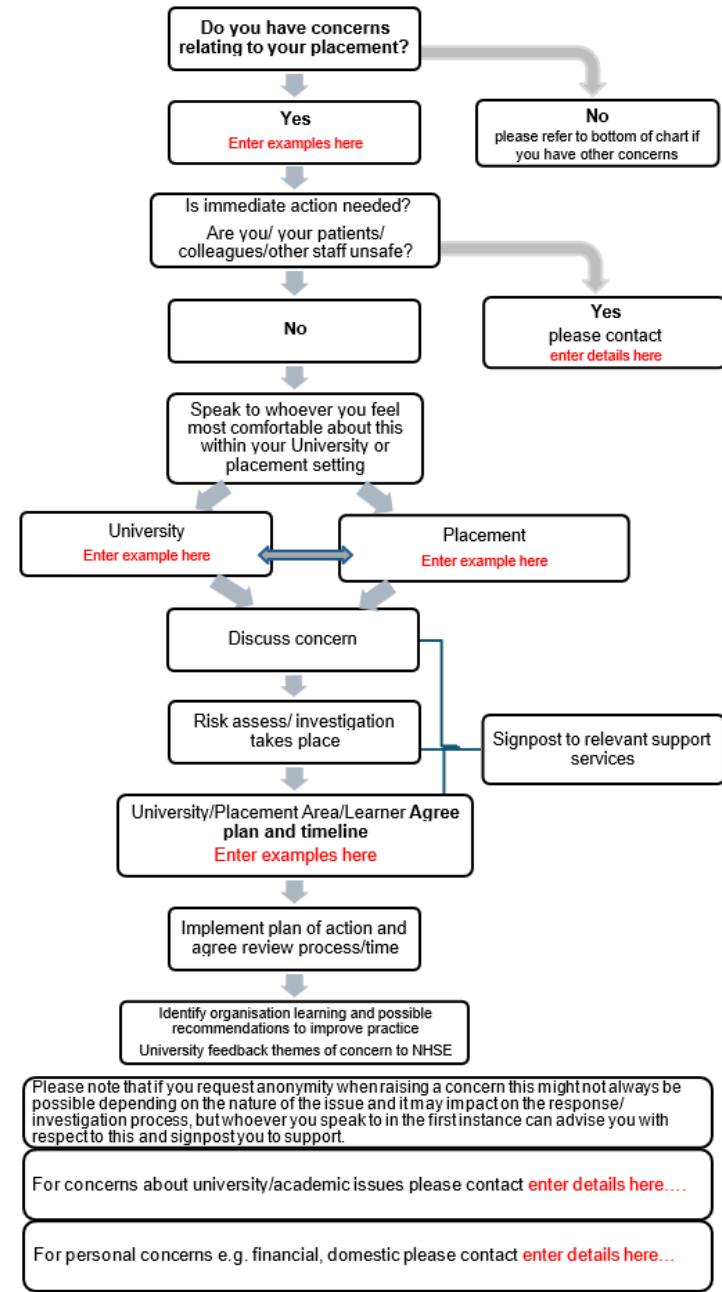
Escalation Process



(Mcguiness,2025)

London regional framework for students raising placement concerns

Trust/ HEI logos here



Conclusion



Raising concerns during placement is essential for ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment.

Students should be encouraged to speak up early and clearly if something feels wrong or unsafe.

Use appropriate channels such as:

Placement supervisor or mentor

University placement tutor or academic advisor

Safeguarding or student support services

References

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THANK YOU

QUESTIONS?