Creating Psychological Safety: A Trainee-Led "Speak-Up" Forum in O&G

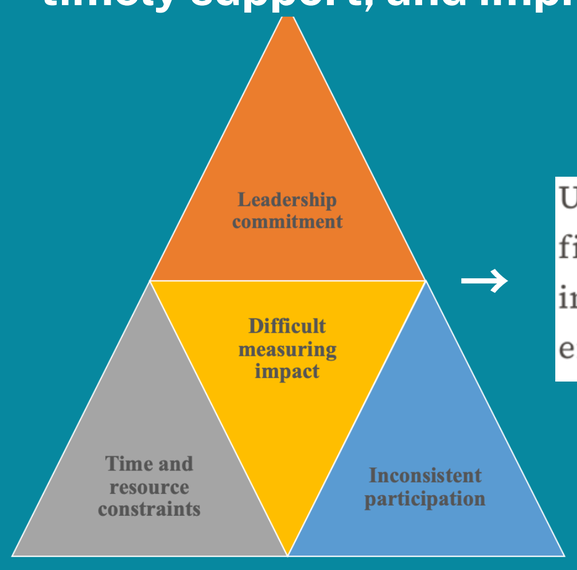
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Problem & Aim

Doctors in O&G often experience psychological danger at work, affecting wellbeing, fuelling perceptions of discrimination & undermining behaviour, and eroding trust in supervisory structures. Traditional escalation routes feel formal, hierarchical, and inaccessible.

To establish a psychologically safe, trainee-led "Speak-Up" forum enabling O&G doctors to raise concerns early, access timely support, and improve departmental culture and training.



→ Understanding what stops people from speaking up is the first step to removing those barriers. Common impediments include both visible obstacles and deeply embedded cultural norms.

Context & Primary Users

- Primary users: - Resident doctors, trainees, SAS/LEDs & IMGs
- Core team: inclusive resident doctors' team & college tutors
- Focus: early concern-raising, timely support & cultural improvement
- Embedding sessions routinely in departmental calendar

What We Did...

- ✓ Regular informal drop-in sessions (once a week) for any trainee to raise concerns.
- ✓ Ground rules: Respect, confidentiality & prompt acknowledgement. Facilitated by trainee with prior day intimation on trainee group of upcoming session.
- ✓ Cases explored with follow-up & escalation via college tutors.

Next Steps

- → Formalising links with trust-wide "Freedom to Speak Up"
- → Incorporating wellbeing representative post in Deanery for sustainability
- → Sharing model with other departments and trusts

Learning

Psychological safety is built through many small, dependable responses

Measures & Outcomes *(Around 20 drop-in discussion sessions over a period of one year)*

Drop-in Forum (Monday 0800 - 0830 am)	Raise Concerns	Agree Actions	Escalate via Tutors	Improved Culture
Accessibility of support & responsiveness to concerns	Feelings of empowerment & inclusion reported by users		Evidence of resolved issues: supervision, rota & induction changes	Qualitative reports of improved interpersonal relationships

Key Message

Structured "Speak Up" sessions are a simple, scalable intervention to improve psychological safety, trainee experience, and service quality. Embedding such forums within routine practice fosters a culture of openness, resilience, and shared responsibility for improvement.

Real cases, real impact... More voices, more change...

Trainees reported feeling heard and supported

Improved induction processes

Practical on-call rota solutions

Positive trainees' feedback at deanery trainee-rep meetings

The forum was supported by college tutors & senior educators, providing psychological safety whilst ensuring concerns could be acted upon.

References:

1. *Is it Safe to Speak Up at work? WorkLife with Adam Grant. youtube.com/watch?v=2PM5N2SWS0g*
2. *Race equity in the workforce. RCOG eLearning. elearning.rcog.org.uk*

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