The NHS Practitioner Health Service
England

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Supporting the health of health professionals
Doctors and their defences
Themes of psychological distress

- Fear of making mistakes
- Fear of being viewed negatively
- Fear of harm coming to patients.
Fear of making mistakes

- Doctors ‘cope’ by placing demands on themselves

- “I must not make a mistake- if I do it’ll be 100% awful
-I cant stand making mistakes
-If I make mistakes it’ll mean I’m a failure

Results in Anxiety
When Anxious we...

Think Anxiously
- Overestimate threat
- Underestimate coping ability
- Create an even greater threat than the original one.
- Have task irrelevant thoughts

Behave Anxiously
- Avoid
- Seek reassurance
- Ward off threat
Developing a helpful emotional response

Fear of making a mistake

I don’t want to make a mistake, but I might. If I do, it’ll be:
- Bad but not 100%
- Hard to tolerate, but I’ll survive
It’ll mean I’m a fallible human being

How might this change your reaction?
Any Questions?

- www.php.nhs.uk
- www.gphealth.nhs.uk
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Fear of making mistakes

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- “I must not make a mistake- if I do it’ll be 100% awful
  - I can’t stand making mistakes
  - If I make mistakes it’ll mean I’m a failure

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