



GP Health Service
Practitioner Health Programme

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
- ▶ Richard.Jones@nhs.net

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