



Speaking up for Safety - recommendations from the EBA

- Investigation of patient safety incidents has shown that other members of staff present often have private misgivings about what is happening as colleagues drift away from safety.
- There are many reasons why staff do not speak up. There is a natural reluctance to interrupt, a fear of embarrassment (to themselves or others), concern about being misjudged/conflict. There can also be a fear of being wrong and concern for reputation or sometimes a fear of outright retribution.
- Even when these are overcome often staff do not know what to say or how to say it.
- The EBA recommends that all staff should speak up when they believe that safety of the patient is compromised. Two useful techniques for speaking up are:
 - Advocacy / Inquiry – express concern; ask about others ‘frame’; be curious; step up the intensity as needed.
 - Issue/Action/Query – state observations, the facts, and actions to date; make a query or state a plan; close the loop.
- In summary there are 3 important lessons from this recommendation:
 - Lesson 1 - if you are ever “wondering” about safety, it’s time to speak up. Often just starting a conversation about safety encourages other staff to join in.
 - Lesson 2 - in healthcare, physician behaviour is closely observed and imitated, therefore show leadership.
 - Lesson 3 - if you want staff to speak up for safety, leaders must provide full and vigorous support

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