

A Support Framework for CAI Trainees who may benefit from Extra Support in Passing Exams”.

Psychological support.

NOTE:

There is a legal obligation by line managers (including consultants) to respond to a worker who has reported they are experiencing work related stress. They need to manage and mitigate psychosocial stress of the worker in line with their organisational stress policy, which will follow the relevant health and safety legislation. Exam stress while they are an employed trainee could fall under this category.

Educationalist Contact.

It is advisable that contact of a trainee by the college educationalist on the 2nd failure of an exam to discuss the exam experience and give feedback on areas to concentrate on for future study, take place.

Psychological support available via Employee Advice Programme (EAP).

If there is a cause for worry about a trainee's mental health consequent on failing an exam or as a result of stress approaching an exam the Director (Co-Directors of Training) can encourage the trainee to contact the EAP (available 24/7).

This includes after the 2nd and subsequent failure of an exam.

Psychological support is available on a strictly confidential basis is available by trained individuals in the EAP.

The EAP is a voluntary service and trainees must engage directly with it themselves - they cannot be mandated.

Morgan Lucey, Director EAP, can be contacted directly by Training Director (or Co-Directors of Training) if there is cause for concern regarding the mental health of a trainee at eap@hse.ie (attention Morgan Lucey), including approaching or after an exam and a phone call can be arranged to request and receive advice regarding how to support (on an anonymous basis) trainees who have caused them concern regarding their mental health.

Tools and practical tips can be offered as part of the EAP services and these are focussed on helping doctors cope with individual situations eg how to improve ability to sleep, to focus on study, how to improve confidence and other tailored advice.

There are 6 free sessions available from the EAP per issue. There is no limit on the number of issues per year. Sessions can be attended over a short or longer period of time. They can be conducted as a face-to-face consultation or by telephone, depending on the preference of the trainee. All doctors with a HSE contract are eligible for support from the EAP service, including those working in voluntary hospitals.

College leaders and all consultants should be as open as possible about the use of the EAP service and advocate it's use widely, including the sharing of information about their own use of the service if they feel comfortable doing so. This can be very helpful in removing a perceived stigma attached to contacting the service.

A detailed description of what the EAP is and how it can help is available on <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-and-services/employee-assistance-programme-staff-counselling/>

Peer support through study groups.

Support via exam study groups could to be set up in each hospital under the direction of the tutors / examiners / senior trainees who have already passed the exam and regular study meetings should be instituted in each dept. These study groups can be an important source of peer support.

All those taking the exam could be actively encouraged to take part in study groups with the aim of preventing embarrassment or feelings of isolation that may discourage the trainee who has failed on multiple attempts.

Senior trainees who have previously passed the exam could be encouraged by the Hospital Anaesthetic Dept Tutor(s) and Examiners in each Hospital Anaesthetic Dept to get involved in study groups and support those taking the exam, especially those who have previously failed it.

Do not share information about health (including mental health) of trainees, including time off due to stress or sickness, without the consent of the trainee

It is advisable that, if consented by the trainee, a three-way conversation could take place between tutors (in hospital being exited and hospital being rotated to) and trainee.