



Episode 181: Do You Have Enough Air Cover?

As healthcare professionals, saying no is a struggle many of us had to deal with. Often, our primary concern is caring for our patients and the people around us, and we don't usually want to say no. But setting boundaries are important and saying no is crucial to drawing that line. No one can always say yes to everything without leading to burnout, mistakes, and wrong decisions. At times, you have to say no.

Saying no often makes us, doctors, feel bad. We're guilty, ashamed, and afraid of what denying a request might mean. Air cover can help deal with these feelings. When you're covered by the law, by your colleagues, or by your friends and family, it's easier to say no. Get other people's opinions and check in with them to help with the feelings of guilt, shame, and fear. Find support and reassurance when you have enough air cover.

Do you have enough air cover? If you want to find practical ways you can create air cover for yourself and make saying no easier, this episode is for you.

Podcast links

Check out our [Permission to Thrive CPD membership](#) for doctors!

Find out more about the [Shapes Toolkit Training](#) programme

[Sign up here](#) for more **free** resources

Join the [Shapes Collective FB group](#).

[Email Rachel](#) or reach her on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).

Find more resource from the [British Medical Association](#)





Quote to remember:

‘Air cover can help with that fear and the uncertainty that you have when you think I'm gonna get a complaint, or something's gonna go really badly wrong if I say no.’

What You Will Learn

As providers of care, we want the best for our patients and the people around us. That often means we say yes too much and rarely say no. This can lead to burnout and higher stress levels for already overworked professionals. We need to be proactive about saying no.

This episode and the activity below address the real problem of saying no. It isn't easy. For many, it goes against our core values and principles of helping others. And when we do say no, we feel guilty, afraid, and ashamed that we can't help. However, we learn that with enough air cover, saying no is easier. It deals with these negative feelings that come from declining and rejecting what others ask of us.

Throughout the activity, we cover three different types of air cover- the cover we get from our contract, from our colleagues, and our personal network. Learning about our contract and what we can legally need to say yes or no to can cover us in the law. You'll learn how to further understand this type of air cover when you learn from various resources available.

Air cover from your colleagues gives you the support and accountability you need to make sure you say no. By having a conversation with your colleagues, you can ensure that everyone agrees and knows to say yes or no to certain things.

You'll find that your personal network gives you the reassurance you need to feel less guilty and ashamed about saying no. Checking in with your trusted friends and family can give you an insight into other people's opinions. You'll be able to triangulate what is true from the stories you might tell yourself.

Having enough air cover from these three types can help you deal with the fear of the consequences of saying no. It can lessen the guilt and shame of not being able





to agree. You're covered by your contract, and the people around you, and that makes saying no a whole lot easier.

Activity: Getting Air Cover To Say No

Contractual Air Cover

Legally, you're covered when you know what you can say contractually say no to. Look into different resources that give guidelines on when you need to say yes and when you can say no. You can check out the links in the resources section above.

As you read, take note of what you can say yes or no to.

Need to Say Yes	Can Say No

Air Cover from Your Colleagues

Schedule a time to meet with your direct colleagues and make an agreement on practices and things that you need to say yes to and what you can say no to.

Document how your conversation goes and your resulting agreement.

Colleagues Involved:

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The Agreement:

Need to Say Yes	Can Say No

With your colleague's cover, you've got each other's back. **What can you do to support another colleague's 'Yes' or 'No'?**

How can you hold each other accountable?

Your Personal Air Cover

Your personal network gives you a chance to have someone else validate your choices and check the story you're telling yourself. **Who are the people you can go and discuss your dilemmas with? Include people who aren't in your immediate practice as well.**

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If you're not sure who you can go to for your personal air cover, it's time to seek out your network. **What upcoming events, activities, courses, and more can you find who you can meet with to talk to and share advice?**

Take the time to have a coffee break and a meetup. **Schedule a meetup with your group, whether online or face-to-face.**

When?

Where?

With who?

What do you want to bring up?

Be proactive. Get enough air cover and make saying now a whole lot easier.

CPD time claimed:

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