

You Are Not A Frog

Workbook, CPD & Reflection Log



Episode 80: Complaints and How to Survive: What to Do When You Make a Mistake with Drs Clare Devlin and Dr John Powell

Joining us in this episode of You Are Not A Frog are Drs Clare Devlin and John Powell. Clare is a medicolegal consultant at NPS with a background as a paediatric doctor. Meanwhile, John is currently an employer liaison officer with GMC. He also has a background as a GP partner and trainer. They have both supported multiple doctors in dealing with complaints.

Clare and John share what you should and shouldn't do when facing a complaint from a patient and dealing with a mistake. They guide us through the steps and process of facing these complaints and moving forward as a better doctor. How can we do what's best for the patient and ourselves? This is the question we answer in the episode.

Podcast links

- [Permission to Thrive membership](#)
- You Are Not A Frog Episode 78 - [Complaints and How to Survive Them Series 1: Preparing to Fail Well with Drs Sarah Coope, Annalene Weston and Sheila Bloomer](#)
- [Medical Protection](#)
- [Dental Protection](#)
- General Medical Council [Website](#)
- Reach out to Clare through [Medical Protection](#)
- Connect with John: [LinkedIn](#)
- [Email Rachel](#) or reach her on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).
- [Sign up here](#) for more FREE resources.
- Join the [Shapes Collective Facebook group](#).

QUOTE TO REMEMBER:

'Reflection isn't just a word. It's an important professional attribute where we understand what we're doing and what has happened when things go wrong.'

What You Will Learn from the Activity

Working in the medical field, you do your best to help the people who come to you as patients. You work hard, long hours and do your best so that they can leave the room healthier, happier and on the road to recovery. You've done all this to help them — so what do you do when you realise you've made a mistake?

In the activity below, you can create a comprehensive guide and roadmap that you can use when you find yourself in a difficult situation. From your immediate reaction to the long-term struggle of worrying about the resolution, you can learn to actively apply the helpful advice Clare and John imparted in the episode.

With the help of your colleagues, friends and medical defence organisations, you can find ways to minimise negative consequences, get good outcomes and become a better doctor moving forward.

Activity: Mapping Mistakes

It's okay to be scared to make mistakes. Step by step, you can face and overcome these hurdles and grow from them to become a better person and doctor.

Step 1: Take a step back and breathe.

Panic can cloud our mind. Do you have your own calming techniques or exercises? If not, ask a friend or check trusted websites for calming techniques to help you in this kind of situation.

Write the steps of your chosen technique down below:

Step 2: Find support.

Speak to a medical defence organisation or a trusted colleague for advice and guidance as soon as possible.

List down different people and organisations who could give support and advice, including their contact details.

Name	Contact Number	E-mail Address	Notes

Step 3: Write it down.

Writing it down can keep everything as accurate as possible for future use. This can help you organise your thoughts and reflect on what you can do better.

Do you remember a mistake you've made or complaint you received? Write down what happened in the space below. How did you address the issue then?

Step 4: Communicate with the patient.

The problem is not one-sided. Your patient has also been affected. Clare and John reiterate multiple times the importance of a carefully worded, sincere apology and reassurance.

List down some tips for apologising shared by Dr Clare and Dr John.

- _____
- _____

- _____
- _____

In the space below, write an draft of an apology to a patient who might have been affected by the mistake you reflected on in Step 3. Don't forget the tips you listed above!

Step 5: Reflect, analyse, learn and apply.

Remember the mistake you've reflected on in Step 3? Take a moment to reflect a little more. What did you personally do which contributed to the mistake? What could you do differently next time?

What did you do which may have contributed to the mistake?	What could you do differently next time?

Are there any other learning points for you about how you handled the mistake or complaint?

Now, let's put it all together. From steps one to five, create a roadmap for what you will do the next time you make a mistake or get a complaint. You can note essential things to consider under each step, such as the calming technique to use or how your apology should go. Illustrate your map in the box below so that you could remember them better.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to draw a roadmap for handling mistakes or complaints.

CPD time claimed:

For more episodes of You are Not a Frog, check out our website www.youarenotafrog.co.uk, follow Rachel on Twitter [@DrRachelMorris](https://twitter.com/DrRachelMorris) and find out more about her online and face to face courses on surviving and thriving at work at www.shapestoolkit.com.