

You Are Not A Frog

Workbook, CPD & Reflection Log



Complaints and How to Survive Them Episode 5: What Should I do When I Think a Complaint is Unfair? And other Questions with Drs Sarah Coope, George Wright, Samantha White, and Andrew Tressider

No one goes to work expecting to fail. Yet, making mistakes in your job is pretty normal. After all, no one has a perfect success rate. As a practitioner, you will likely encounter complaints from patients throughout your career. And going through them can be one of the most stressful things you can experience.

In this episode, Rachel invites a panel of medical professionals to talk about how to deal with complaint processes. We will discuss the skills and mindset clinicians should develop to manage themselves and their patients. We also tackle how to recognise malicious complaints and handle our own response when we think it's grossly unfair. Finally, we examine how we can have a constructive conversation to support a trainee or colleague.

If you want to understand why complaints are mostly about emotions rather than facts, listen to the full episode.. Even when it can be an overwhelming process, complaints will pass eventually, and they can be good opportunities for you to grow.

Podcast links

- [Sign up](#) for our FREE live webinar where we teach doctors some practical strategies to help with challenging times.
- Check out the [Permission to Thrive CPD membership](#) for doctors!
- [E78: Preparing to Fail Well with Drs Sarah Coope, Annalene](#)
- [E82: Surviving the Process with Drs Jessica Harland, Caroline Walker, and Heidi Mounsey](#)
- [E84: Creating a Workplace Where It's OK to Fail with Prof Susan Fairlie and Dr Jane Sturgess](#)
- Dr Sarah Coope: [website](#) | [Twitter](#)
- Dr George Wright: [website](#) | [Twitter](#)
- [The Chimp Paradox](#) by Prof Steve Peters
- [Getting to Yes](#) by Roger Fisher
- [The Four Agreements](#) by Don Miguel Ruiz
- [The Fifth Agreement](#) by Don Miguel Ruiz, Don Jose Ruiz, and Janet Mills
- [Sign up here](#) for more FREE resources.

- [Weston and Sheila Bloomer](#)
- [E80: What to Do When You Make a Mistake with Drs Clare Devlin and John Powell](#)
- Dr Samantha White: [email](#)
- Dr Andrew Tressider: [website](#) | [email](#)
- [Email Rachel](#) or reach her on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).
- Join the [Shapes Collective Facebook group](#).

QUOTE TO REMEMBER:

'We're not here to win complaints. That's not the aim of the game; the aim of the game is to resolve complaints.'

What You Will Learn from the Activity

The goal of this workbook is to help you develop the mindset you need to handle complaints well. Specifically, it aims to teach you how to seek a resolution rather than a win. The following questions ask you to reflect on your experiences as a clinician, and some items focus on the takeaways you have learned in dealing with complaints.

For example, one of the discussions emphasises recognising your emotions first before addressing the issue at hand. You will learn why this is key in handling complaints. When you are threatened, you are more likely to go on the defensive. Being in this state can be counterintuitive to finding a solution.

By the end of this activity, you will also identify strategies and approaches to handling and coping with complaints. Ultimately, you will appreciate the importance of building rapport, providing assurance, and agreeing to disagree in certain situations.

Activity: Reflecting on emotions in complaints

Complaints are often not about facts but feelings. Think back to a complaint you've received (either 'official' or just someone talking to you) How did listening to the patient and acknowledging their feelings contribute to handling their complaint?

How do policies and procedures help in preventing the escalation of complaints? How easy is it for patients to access the complaints procedure in your workplace? Is there anything you need to do about this?

When you feel threatened, you tend to lose yourself in the fight or flight response. In this case, you often cannot hear what your patient is really trying to say. What strategies have you learned to recognise your feelings and control your emotions?

What are some other strategies or techniques that you can use to manage yourself when faced with a complaint that you feel is unfair or unwarranted?

Perspective is crucial when faced with malicious complaints. How can you depersonalise issues?

As a practitioner, your goal is not to win against the complainants but to resolve the issue. Why do you think many clinicians still fall into the trap of wanting to win? How can you stop yourself from falling into this trap?

There will be instances where you need to agree to disagree with your complainant. Recall a time you and your patient didn't meet eye-to-eye. What have you learned from that experience?

How can you provide assurance, support, and a safe space for your trainees and / or colleagues who are dealing with a complaint?

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, and find out more about her online and face to face courses on surviving and thriving at work at www.shapestoolkit.com