

Supporting learner wellbeing

Reflective scenario

About this learning resource

This reflective scenario is designed to help you consider learners' wellbeing and available support mechanisms by taking you through a structured process that supports you to clarify your thoughts, deepen your understanding and plan your next steps.

This resource related to Principle 3 of the [AHP principles of practice-based learning](#) (CSP 2023):

Practice-based learning environments must be inclusive and welcoming to all

This resource supports the Facilitation of Learning Pillar of our [Career Development Framework](#). It is designed for occupational therapists working at Career Levels 4 and higher.



You can use this resource in a way that suits you. You might work through it on your own, use it in supervision or explore it as part of a group. You could also take a blended approach – starting with your own reflection and then coming together to share ideas and learn from others.

As you work through the reflective scenario, remember there are no right or wrong answers. The aim is to support you to reflect, learn and apply your learning in your own professional context. For this reason, we haven't provided set answers.

Take your time. You don't need to complete everything in one go, and you may find it helpful to revisit sections more than once. Work at a pace that supports your learning.

Developed with Nina Phoenix, Practice Placement Facilitator

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Scenario

Your student has disclosed to that they are experiencing anxiety and depression whilst on placement. This is having an impact on their learning. They experienced a panic attack and needed to leave a meeting and have also had a day off sick due to low mood. You want to ensure you offer them the right support.

Initial thoughts

Capture your initial thoughts on this scenario. What is your first reaction? Do you have ideas about what you should do? Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, just record what occurs to you.

Reflective questions

Consider the following questions and record your answers.

Refer to the resources listed at the end of the document if you need to.

You might want to come back to these questions more than once before going to the next stage. Remember that the list is not exhaustive.

1. What coping strategies does the learner usually use? Are they able to utilise/access these within the duration of this placement?
2. Using your occupational therapy skills and knowledge, what practical day to day routines such as time keeping and planning can you support learners to apply for positive mental health on placement, while ensuring you are not providing therapy?
3. How might you encourage the learner to engage with their education provider for support? How might you engage with the education provider for support?
4. Where can you signpost the learner to for additional support? For example, what does the workplace offer, what does the education provider offer and are there any suitable free NHS apps?
5. How might client work within this practice-based learning setting impact on your learner's mental health? Could seeing others in distress be a trigger?
6. What are considered reasonable adjustments for this learner whilst on placement? What is already in place, and what impact is this having?
7. Is there anything else you need to know about the learner?

8. Do you need to consider boundaries? Will the learner disclose their mental health issues to service users?
9. How do you ensure that, with reasonable adjustments in place to support their mental health needs, your learner is assessed fairly and is given opportunities to meet their competencies?
10. What will you do if you think the learner is too unwell to work and/or be assessed? Who will you speak to?

My answers

Revisiting your initial thoughts

Now look at your initial response in relation to your answers to the reflective questions.
What gaps have you identified?
Have your thoughts changed on what you feel are the priorities?
What have you learned through reflection about your practice?

Action planning

What are your next steps?

Plan your learning

As a result of your reflection, have you identified any knowledge gaps? How will you go on to develop your knowledge and skills? When will you do it? What support will you need?

See end pages for suggestions on further information and support.

Use this section if you have further thoughts/actions or to take discussion notes.

Review your learning

Set a date when you will come back to this resource and think about the impact it has had on your practice.

Set enough time to allow you to engage in any further learning you have identified that you want to take, and to give you time to apply your reflections into your practice.

Add this learning to your [CPD portfolio](#).

Date that I will review my learning:

Further learning I engaged in to deepen my skills and knowledge on this professional topic:

Situations and ways in which I have applied my learning in practice:

Further information and support

Sources of support

Link up with your placement link contact at the learner's education provider; they will be able to advise you both of university resources the learner can access.

Explore what resources are available to the learner within the placement setting.

Battye A (2022) *Self-care for allied health professionals: from surviving to thriving*. [e-book].

Abingdon: Routledge. Available to RCOT members through the RCOT website

at: <https://cot.soutron.net/Portal/Default/en-GB/RecordView/Index/17811>

Accessed on 06.07.26

Clouston TJ (2015) *Challenging stress, burnout and rust-out: finding balance in busy lives*. [e-book].

London: Jessica Kingsley. Available to RCOT members through the RCOT website

at: <https://cot.soutron.net/Portal/MembersOPAC2024/en-GB/RecordView/Index/18128>

Accessed on 06.07.26

Grant T (2021) *Occupational therapy placements. A pocket guide* [ebook]. London: Lantern Publishing. <https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/search-library-catalogue>
Accessed on 6.8.26

Fosslien L, Duffy MW (2024) *Big feelings: how to be okay when things are not okay*. [e-book]. Edinburgh: Canongate Books. Available to RCOT members through the RCOT website at: <https://cot.soutron.net/Portal/MembersOPAC2024/en-GB/RecordView/Index/20592>
Accessed on 06.07.26

Hughes R, Kinder A, Cooper CL (2019) *The wellbeing workout: how to manage stress and develop resilience*. [e-book]. Cham SZ: Palgrave Macmillan. Available to RCOT members through the RCOT website at: <https://cot.soutron.net/Portal/Default/en-GB/RecordView/Index/19759>
Accessed on 06.07.26

Headspace (n.d.) Headspace for NHS. Available at: <https://www.headspace.com/nhs>
Accessed 06.08.26

Health Education England E-Learning Hub (2026). *Educator training resources*. London: NHS. Available at: [NHSE elfh Hub](#)
Accessed 06.08.26

Health Education England (nd) *AHP practice-based learning*. London: NHS. Available at: [AHP Practice Based Learning | NHS England | Workforce, training and education](#)
Accessed 06.08.26

Health Education Improvement Wales (nd) *Supporting future AHPs to build confidence in mental health and wellbeing*. Nantgarw: HEIW. Available at: [Supporting future AHPs to build confidence in mental health and wellbeing - HEIW](#)
Accessed on 06.06.26

Royal College of Occupational Therapists *Lift Up Your Everyday – Improving your sleep*. Available at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/learn-about-occupational-therapy/ot-advice/lift-up/sleep>
Accessed on 06.07.26

Student Minds (2026) Available at: [Mental Health Support – For UK University Students | Student Minds](#)
Accessed on 06.08.26