



Safe Training Environments

Joint College Education Committee and College Trainees' Committee Summit

5 November 2021 | Summary Report

“A safe working environment is critical to safe medical practice.”

– Associate Professor Mitra Guha | Chair, College Education Committee

Reports from Members, gathered through activities such as the [Physician Training Survey](#) and [Medical Training Survey](#) (MTS), indicate **bullying, harassment, discrimination, and uncivil behaviours are significant issues within medicine.**

In 2020, 1 in every 5 RACP trainees who responded to the Medical Training Survey experienced these behaviours. The data shows that not all events are being reported and, concerningly, those that are reported are not always addressed. A further concern is the data shows that doctors are the main perpetrators of bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

“Bullying, harassment, and discrimination in our training environments is prevalent, persistent and deeply personal... and, as doctors, we are doing this to ourselves.”

– Dr Elizabeth Keeling | Deputy Chair, College Trainees' Committee

The **Safe Training Environments Summit** on 5 November 2021 brought together members of the College Education Committee (CEC), College Trainees' Committee (CTC), and invited guests to collaborate and agree a **strategic approach to tackling bullying, harassment, and discrimination in training environments.**

Summit participants:

- explored bullying, harassment, and discrimination in the training environment, including discussion of root causes and high-level strategies to address these,
- heard from Dr Sally Langley, President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons on RACS' approach to dealing with bullying, harassment, and discrimination in surgical training programs,
- developed a leadership statement from the CEC and CTC including next steps and areas for strategic actions,
- prioritised key strategic areas for action.

“This Summit marks the start of our work to explore the strategic actions the College can undertake. The College is dedicated to cultivating safer training environments, and I call on all of you to be involved.”

– Professor John Wilson AM | President RACP

Through the Summit, the College Education Committee and College Trainees’ Committee have co-developed a Leadership Statement on Safe Training Environments.

Leadership Statement on Safe Training Environments

The RACP ethos holds that respect and care for our patients and colleagues is our primary goal and thus of the utmost importance.

The RACP has an unambiguous responsibility to lead, promote, and empower Members in delivering safe patient care and facilitating positive learning and work environments.

Reports from our Members indicate that bullying, harassment, discrimination, and uncivil behaviours are significant issues within medicine. Hostile interactions in training and work environments may negatively impact safe patient care, lead to psychological stress and inhibit learning.

Physicians have a critical leadership role in setting the tone and behaviour of healthcare teams to foster respectful behaviour and attitudes. We all need to work together to create safe work and training environments.

Drawing on the outcomes of the Summit, in coming months, a strategic action plan will be formed with input from members of the CEC, CTC, and invited guests.

“We need sustainable and sustained efforts to embed change in physician culture.”

– Associate Professor Mitra Guha | Chair, College Education Committee

“We’ve heard that this will be taken seriously at the highest levels of our College.”

– Dr Davina Buntsma | Chair, College Trainees’ Committee