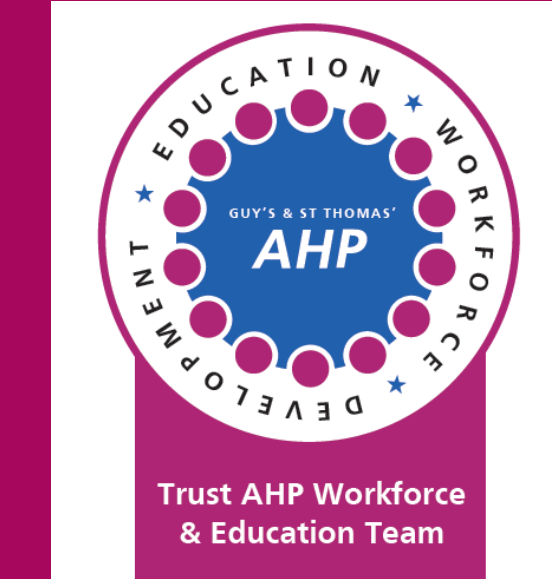


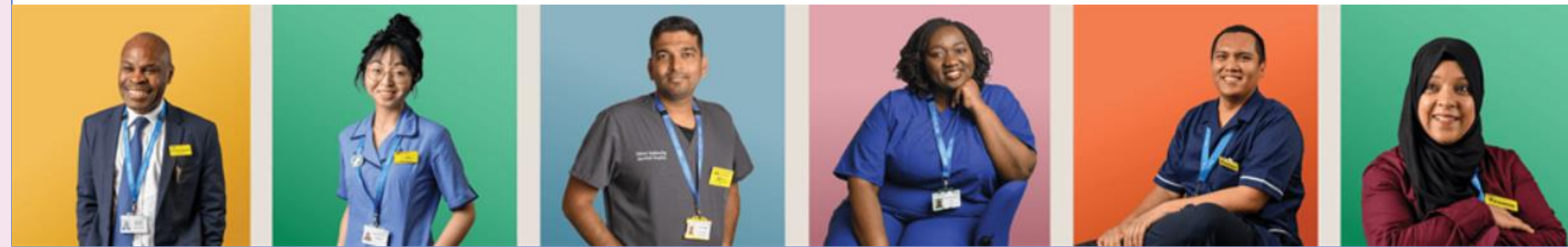
An Initiative to Support the Psychological Safety of Global Majority Allied Health Professional (AHP) Learners

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Background

- Lack of representation - 12.2% of the Allied Health Professional (AHP) workforce identify as Global Majority (GM) individuals
- GM staff and learners experience marginalisation, lack of belonging, fear of discussing race, added emotional burden, and lower levels of psychological safety (Hammond et al., 2019; Brassel et al., 2020; Turner et al., 2025).
- AHP Educators report low confidence / capability in supporting GM learners (Trust-wide Education Survey, 2022).



Methods

- Phase one - identify and understand the distinct psychological needs of GM learners and confidence of educators in meeting these needs.
- Learners – participants were recruited from local universities to participate in focus groups, using a trauma-informed approach. Thematic analysis was utilised to analyse findings.
- Educators – purposive sampling was utilised to select eligible AHP and assistants that provide education as part of their role. A Trust-wide AHP educator survey ran from October 2025 to January 2026.

References

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Results – Phase One

Learner Focus Groups

Themes from the initial focus group, which included six GM learners:

1. Voice, Listening and Relational Safety

- Participants highlighted the importance of being given time and space to articulate their thoughts without interruption. Feeling listened to attentively, receiving constructive feedback, and being treated with respect were central to psychological safety.

2. Cultural Awareness and Avoiding Assumptions

- Participants described how cultural misunderstandings, stereotyping, or assumptions reduced psychological safety. Experiences such as mislabelling religious practices, overlooking cultural observances, or misinterpreting expressive communication styles were reported as unsettling.

3. Past Experiences of Exclusion and ongoing impact

- Several participants reflected on earlier experiences of racism, accent-mocking, isolation, or educational exclusion. These experiences shaped their confidence and expectations when entering new learning environments.

4. Impact on Learning, Confidence and Professional Development

- Participants consistently linked psychological safety with improved learning outcomes. When safety was present, learners reported - increased confidence, greater willingness to attempt new or complex tasks, improved communication within teams, reduced fear of making mistakes, and a stronger sense of professional identity.

Practice Educator Survey

270 respondents:

41% do not feel they have received adequate training to support diverse learners.

71% interested in developing skills in equitable education

High conceptual understanding of psychological safety (over 90%)

High self-confidence in inclusive behaviour — however 58% state a lack of training in this area

Gaps in intervention skills - 17% lack confidence in addressing microaggressions.

Conclusion

Learners: Early findings highlight the importance of trauma-aware facilitation in learning environments and suggest that psychological safety has a direct impact on learner engagement, motivation, and future development.

Educators: Findings suggest a culturally positive attitude among educators, including a strong conceptual understanding of psychological safety, high self-confidence in delivering inclusive learning, and awareness of personal bias.

However, 58% state that formal training is insufficient, which may result in inconsistent learner experience and variable safeguarding of psychological safety.

Confidence in addressing microaggressions is lower relative to other items, indicating a skills gap despite high awareness of bias.

Recommendations

Phase One: Complete further learner focus groups.

Phase Two:

- Develop practice-based training that covers psychological safety for ethnically diverse learners, anti-racism, and microaggressions.
- Establish routine reflective practice (e.g. peer observation, case reflections) to turn bias awareness into consistent behaviours.
- Track capability longitudinally and triangulate with learner feedback.

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