

The learning environment in General Practice training

A step-by-step approach to structuring and maintaining a high quality general practice learning environment.

Clinical education and training is increasingly being expanded to community general practice settings. Driving this is the demand for integrated management of chronic and complex care. Developing the required health workers to meet such needs, depends on high-quality learning in general practice settings, facilitated by a comprehensive approach to structuring the general practice learning environment. However, until now, there has been limited information to guide the implementation of high-quality learning environments in such primary care settings. Current competency frameworks and curriculum standards to guide learning in general practice do not cover how to structure the learning environment.

GPSA has developed, through research, an approach to structuring the general practice learning environment to strengthen and maintain quality. The step-by-step approach includes a suite of checklists, tools, and strategies to support supervisors and practice managers in creating a learning environment that is safe and supportive for all involved in general practice education and training.

THE APPROACH:

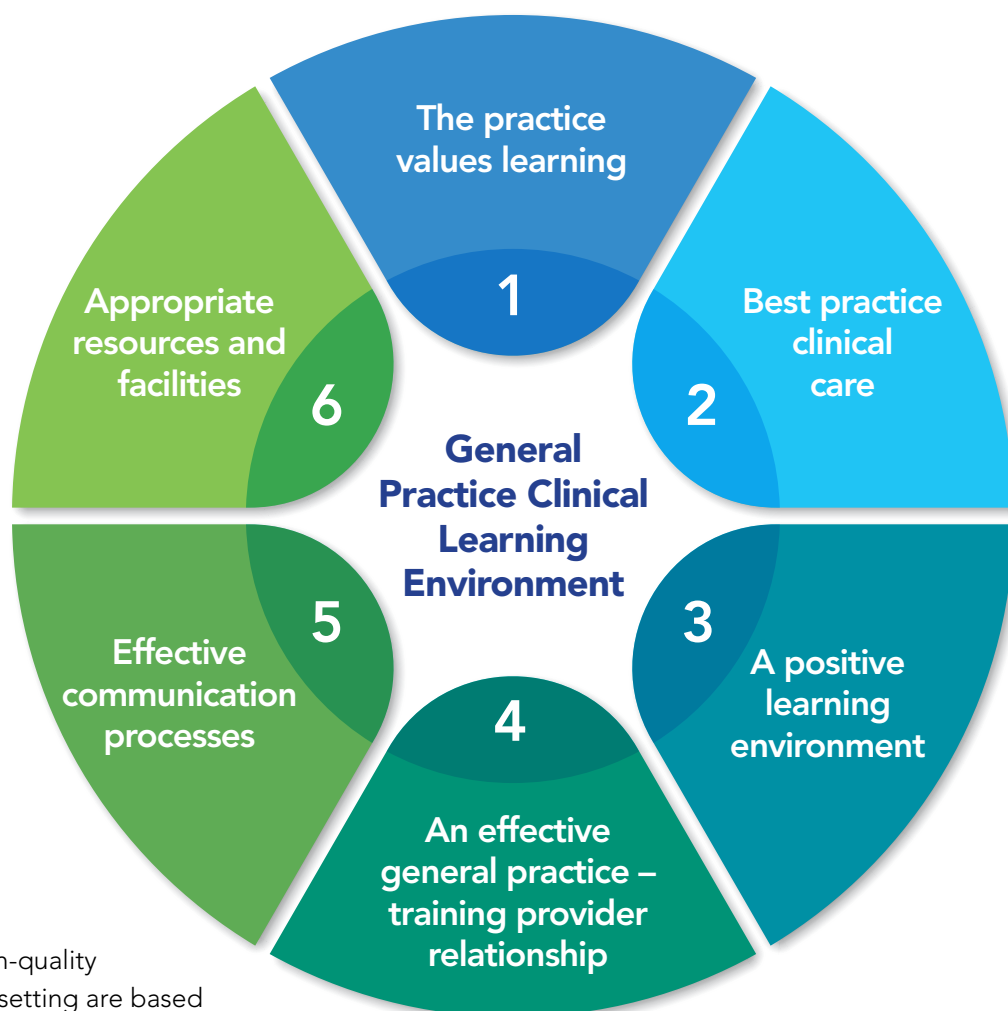
- Guides general practices to plan, establish, and regularly appraise the quality of their learning environment for different types of learners, regardless of context.
- Is applicable for planning and benchmarking best practice learning environments in general practice.
- Can be linked with resources related to practice accreditation as a supportive tool.
- Supports organisations like GPSA and training bodies in the development of resources and exemplar stories to guide improvements
- Is particularly applicable for new teaching practices, new supervisors, and for benchmarking and planning quality improvement in established practices.



STRUCTURING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A comprehensively structured learning environment is important to support seamless educational interactions, observations, and mix of learning interventions. It enables GP supervisors to utilise the whole context to promote learning.

WHO	New teaching practices and new supervisors, and for supporting quality improvement in established practices.
WHY	So practices can plan for, establish, and regularly appraise the quality of their learning environment for improved educational outcomes.
WHAT	Six elements, 19 objectives, and 53 descriptors of quality for the general practice learning environment.
HOW	Completing Learning Environment health check assessment tool/s, & accessing feedback and resources.



BASED UPON RESEARCH

The elements and underlying objectives that make up a high-quality learning environment in a GP setting are based upon published evidence, including feedback from experienced GP supervisors, GP registrars, and practice managers over a 12 month period.

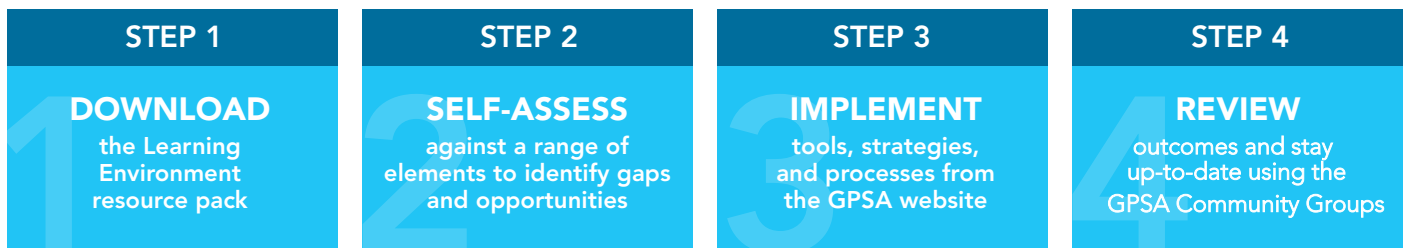
O'Sullivan B, Hickson H, Kippen R, Cohen D, Cohen P, Wallace G. A Framework to Guide the Implementation of Best Practice Clinical Learning Environments in Community General Practice: Australia. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2021; 18(4):1482. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18041482>



IMPLEMENTING THE APPROACH

To establish and/or appraise the structure and quality of a GP learning environment, practices can undertake four simple steps to identify gaps and opportunities, utilising tools and strategies for ongoing quality improvement within the learning environment. A key tool is a self-assessment utilising the 'Learning Environment Health Check', which goes through the six elements, 19 objectives, and 53 descriptors of quality for the general practice learning environment.

STEPS FOR PRACTICES



PREPARE YOUR PRACTICE

WHO	New training practices and new GP supervisors.
WHY	To provide a pathway and guidance, to assist GPs in structuring a clinical learning environment to support quality teaching and learning.
WHAT	It is a discrete off-the-shelf process which includes all the tools and strategies to help establish a learning environment for the quality teaching of GP registrars.
HOW	Following the above four steps to create a quality learning environment.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT HEALTH CHECK

WHO	Established training practices and established GP supervisors.
WHY	To provide a program of quality improvement activities and checks, to ensure that GP supervisors can be confident that their learning environment is best practice.
WHAT	It is a range of checks, resources, and information, that are packaged into 'bite-sized' chunks and delivered to a Practice, so that they can review, assess, update, and implement, as required to support quality teaching and learning.
HOW	Following Step 2 onwards from above to ensure a quality learning environment.

