Training principle 2: Complex care provides rich learning opportunities
Introduction to this principle

• In paediatrics we frequently come across complex cases
• These cases can be both the most interesting and frustrating parts of our job and they tend to push us outside of our comfort zone
• It is important to reflect on these cases - complex care provides rich and diverse learning opportunities
• We often find these cases offer us several learning points and help shape us into more confident, considerate and holistic doctors
Step 1: Select your case

Examples of factors that make care complex may include...

- Environmental, cultural or psychosocial barriers
- Multiple or significant comorbidities
- Diagnostic uncertainty
- Unexpected complications
- Input required from a large multi-disciplinary team
Step 2: Reflect on what you learned from the case

• Consider what it was about the case that you found challenging and ask yourself why this was.
• Did you see anybody involved in the case do something particularly well that you might change your approach in future?
• Did you gain a different perspective by listening to the patient and/or family's experience?
• Did you have an opportunity to carry out a role in the case that was different to your usual role?
• Did you have an opportunity to carry out a procedure or examination in which you were less confident?
Step 3: Translate your experience into a learning opportunity

• The role of the trainer is to encourage the trainee to consider the wider learning points from the case.

• The trainer may complete a mini-CEX or ACAT, if the trainee was directly observed managing an aspect of the case or a CBD if discussing case retrospectively – find out more about assessment methods at www.rcpch.ac.uk/assessment-guide.

• A DOC or HAT may also be a useful way of encouraging the trainee to develop skills in communication of complex cases with other professionals.

• For trainees, personal reflection on complex cases can be beneficial, particularly in looking at human factors and how they may have influenced your approach.
Step 4: Link to the curriculum

• Look at the Progress curriculum and link your assessment to the relevant domains
• It's worth looking through all domains to see if there are any aspects of your complex case that you hadn't considered
• **Top tip**: It is often complex cases that provide opportunities to cover domains that you have struggled to find links for!
See our case studies and more on the RCPCH website

www.rcpch.ac.uk/training-principle-2
www.rcpch.ac.uk/progressplus