

When should I refer to the PSW?

Spotting the signs

The “disappearing act”:

not answering bleeps; disappearing between clinic and ward; lateness; frequent sick leave.

Low work rate:

slowness in doing procedures, clerking patients, dictating letters, making decisions; arriving early, leaving late and still not achieving a reasonable workload.

“Ward rage”: bursts of temper; shouting matches; real or imagined slights.

Rigidity: poor tolerance of ambiguity; inability to compromise; difficulty prioritising; inappropriate ‘whistle blowing’.

“Bypass syndrome”: junior colleagues or nurses find ways to avoid seeking the doctor’s opinion or help.

Career problems: difficulty with exams; uncertainty about career choice; disillusionment with medicine.

Insight failure: rejection of constructive criticism; defensiveness; counter-challenge.