

The CUSS Communication Tool

What is CUSS?

Cuss is a technique that uses a graded assertiveness approach to communicating.

Should someone be concerned with a process or intervention being put in place, they can raise concerns, getting more assertive if their concerns aren't listened to.

C – U – S – S

- **C**oncern
- **U**ncomfortable
- un**S**afe
- **S**top

On the left is one variation of the tool. Though the words used may be different, the approach is still the same.

Concern

- If initially, you have some concern with the intervention, treatment or process that is being put in place for a patient, you can raise your **Concern**
- This may simply be saying “*I’m concerned*”, before you explain your concern to your colleagues.

Uncomfortable

- If your initial concern is not listened to, and your concern not addressed, you can restate your concern, but this time with more assertive language.

“I’m uncomfortable”

- Again, restating your reasons why.

unSafe

- If you are still not listened to, or after some action your concern still remains, you can again be more assertive.

“This is unsafe”

- When restating your reasons, it is important to be clear and focused.

Stop

- Finally, if after your previous statements, the intervention, treatment or process is still progressing, you can go to the highest level.

“Stop”

Why CUSS?

The aim here is to agree this tool as a standard way of raising concern. Each of the words is a trigger word and the objective is to embed this into practice so that when one is used, an individual or the team stop to consider concerns raised.