Differential Attainment case study

How Health Education England North West (HEE NW) are encouraging educators to begin conversations with trainees regarding differential attainment

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What is the problem?
The Associate Dean for General Practice and her colleagues wanted to get trainers and educators to talk about differential attainment (DA) and to explore its possible causes. Their aim was to build trainers confidence to talk openly with trainees earlier, and to raise awareness around how attainment can be affected by different experiences and aspects of a trainee’s life.

What is the solution?
Dr Baron designed a version of the board game *Go* in which a series of risk, luck and support cards affect the players progress across the board mirroring doctors progression through training programmes. This game has been played at GP trainers conferences as a way to get trainers to discuss how trainees may be affected by environmental factors, and how they can offer support.

Examples:

- **Risk**: working far away from home, away from support networks
- **Luck**: receiving a thank you letter from a patient
- **Support**: receiving valuable feedback from a supervisor
What were the challenges?
It was challenging to focus on the wide range of barriers and risks that might contribute to the differential attainment of doctors who share protected characteristics. Having groups work together like this has prompted broader thinking. The aim of the session is to encourage trainers to talk to trainees about problems early and finding ways to support them tailored to their needs. This may be challenging if problems are outside of individuals control.

What were the results?
Dr Baron continues to receive positive feedback that her sessions at GP trainer conferences using this game have raised awareness of differential attainment, and the many environmental factors that can contribute to different outcomes. Many educators have developed their own local initiatives to support trainees and address some of the causes of differential attainment in response.

Want to know more? Please contact Dr Rebecca Baron on: Rebecca.Baron@hee.nhs.uk