

NARRATOR

Siobhan is talking to Rachel, a new HCA in the team who is preparing for her first appraisal. Rachel is very apprehensive as she's never had one before and feels intimidated by the process of 'writing things down'. Siobhan reflects on her own experience of performance appraisal in a bid to reassure Rachel and correct some of her misapprehensions about it.

RACHEL

Oh Siobhan, I just want this to be over!! I hardly slept last night for worrying about this appraisal meeting. Why do they want us to write all these goals and learning needs down – do they just want a reason to tell you off if you don't do it?

SIOBHAN

No, that's not what it's all about! I thought that too when I had to do my first appraisal but it was really useful.

RACHEL

Why, what's so useful about it?

SIOBHAN

Well, it makes you think about all the things you've achieved since your last appraisal – or in your case – since you first started here. When you sit down and look back, you realise you've come a long way!

You also think about what else you want to learn or where you want to develop more skills and the managers help you to put a plan in place to achieve it. If you don't think about it and make a plan, it will never happen!

RACHEL

I never thought about that. What about all these objectives though – don't you get into trouble if you don't achieve them?

SIOBHAN

No, not if there are good reasons why you haven't achieved them. All your objectives are clearly set out – that what that S.M.A.R.T. thingy is for. There won't be anything there that you won't be able to achieve with the right support and if you haven't achieved it, it will be because something happened with the SMART details – maybe they weren't quite right to start with and that will be obvious when you start to discuss why it didn't work out.

Having these objectives also helps you to know exactly what's expected of you and what you have to do. I actually find that really helpful!

RACHEL

Yeah, I can see that, so how has your appraisal helped you then?

SIOBHAN

Well, I wanted to learn how to take blood. My manager agreed it would be useful to the clinic if I had this skill, so she put me on the phlebotomy course and now I have that certificate. It really helped my confidence and I know the nurses in the clinic are really glad I can take blood. It will be a useful skill that I can take with me where-ever I work.

RACHEL

Thanks Siobhan. I can't say I don't still feel a bit nervous, but I'm not dreading my appraisal nearly as much any more.