

# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY *at Work*

Psychological safety at work occurs when the environment fosters a sense of comfort for individuals and teams. The culture encourages open communication. And employees feel they can express themselves freely without fear of judgment, failure, or retaliation.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY MATTERS

- It leads to mentally healthier, more productive, and more inclusive teams.
- There's a sense of dependability in one another, role clarity, and an intrinsic incentive to work hard.
- Teams benefit from higher levels of engagement, increased motivation to tackle difficult problems, more learning and development opportunities, and better performance.
- Individuals are free to lean into their best, most creative selves.

## 4 STAGES OF WORKPLACE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

1

### Inclusion Safety:

Fosters inclusivity and has plans in place to combat all forms of prejudice so that employees can show up as themselves without fearing retribution for who they are.

2

### Learner Safety:

Ensures individuals feel secure in being active learners. This means asking questions, making mistakes from time to time, brainstorming, and giving and receiving constructive criticism or feedback.

3

### Contributor Safety:

Encourages people to fully share their expertise and showcase their skills without the culture becoming competitive. People need to believe that their skills and qualities can make an impact.

4

### Challenger Safety:

A safe space for people to air grievances, push back, or be the outlier when it comes to popular opinion.

# TIPS

to Build Psychological Safety at Work

### TIP Discuss openly the importance of psychological safety.

#### Consider:

- inclusive communication
- collaborative thinking
- opening opportunities for contribution
- honoring diverse viewpoints
- feeling safe to verbalize potential flaws

► **Leader's action:** Share personal examples with your team of when something you did went well, and when it could have gone better.

### TIP Acknowledge setbacks to psychological safety.

#### Recognize:

- worries about rejection or retaliation
- discomfort in challenging something that's not working
- hesitance about being wrong

► **Leader's action:** Discuss the barriers that inhibit psychological safety, and what can be done.

### TIP Identify strategies to uphold and prioritize psychological safety.

#### Enable:

- open constructive avenues for honest feedback
- recognize how each employee shares in the effort to make work a better place
- reconsider how "failure" is handled
- find ways to reframe disappointments and what can be learned from them

► **Leader's action:** Incorporate this brief practice into quarterly meetings: "Start, Stop, Continue"

Have each employee submit their thoughts on the following:

- What is something we should **start** to do?
- What are some things we need to **stop** or **change**?
- What has been working that we should **continue**?

Show integrity by making appropriate changes.

Leaders take the lead



## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY FOR REMOTE AND HYBRID WORKERS



### INSPIRE

remote engagement.



### FACILITATE

contributions from everyone.



### EMBRACE

technology tools to encourage virtual collaboration.



### CREATE

space for employees to submit and share new ideas.



### ALLOW

for productive conflict.

## SOMEONE IN DISTRESS?

Understand how to provide initial support for individuals experiencing mental health concerns.

### The Core Components of Psychological First Aid

- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of mental illness
- Know how to approach those in distress with confidence and compassion
  - For tips, view the [Responding to Others in Distress Guide](#)
- Build active listening skills
- Encourage hope and provide appropriate professional resources for support

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#### Sources:

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CCL, Leading Effectively Staff, January 15, 2022, *What Is Psychological Safety at Work?*

