

For Leaders:

Psychological Safety in the Workplace

For organizations, culture is the unseen and immersive energy of a workplace. When that culture is a positive one, it supports employees and their performance and creates a strong framework for employee well-being and engagement. Even in the best work environments, however, one aspect of culture is often overlooked: psychological safety.

Psychological safety is the shared belief that it's safe to discuss ideas, take risks, give feedback and learn from mistakes on the job. It promotes openness and creativity and also ignites positive emotions, such as trust.

Typically, psychological safety can be broken down into four areas:

- 1. Inclusion Safety:** This is when colleagues feel safe, valued and treated fairly, and believe that their experiences and thoughts matter.
- 2. Learner Safety:** With learner safety, colleagues feel safe to learn and grow. They can ask questions and give and receive feedback without anxiety or hesitation.
- 3. Contributor Safety:** Employees feel safe contributing their ideas and believe they can use their talents and abilities to make a difference.
- 4. Challenger Safety:** Speaking up against the status quo can be hard. With challenger safety, colleagues feel safe to voice concerns and to point out opportunities for positive change.

Managing the modern workforce is hard. If you're feeling overwhelmed, stressed or anxious about your responsibilities, talk to your Employee Assistance Program. We have the guidance, tools and resources you need to be your best.

Fostering Psychological Safety

Creating a culture of psychological safety requires the effort of leaders and employees alike. These simple techniques can help:



Approach conflict as a collaborator.

When a conflict arises, seek to achieve a mutually agreeable and desirable outcome rather than a victory.



Replace blame with curiosity.

Blame and criticism only escalate conflict. Adopt a learning mindset and approach the problem or the person with curiosity.



Speak human to human.

Even during contentious discussions, remind yourself that you are colleagues and collaborators rather than competitors or opponents.



Change your perspective.

Looking at a topic from a third-party perspective can help you see weaknesses in your own position and open yourself to compromise.



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