



Psychological Safety at Work

Creating psychological safety in the workplace means fostering an environment where employees feel safe to take risks, make mistakes, and express ideas without fear of negative consequences. Employees should feel safe and supported, knowing that their opinions and perspectives are acknowledged by everyone else in their workplace. This is crucial for employee wellbeing and productivity.

To support you, we have provided tips to promote psychological safety in your workplace.

1. Encourage Open Communication

Foster a culture of speaking up; encourage employees to voice their ideas, concerns, and questions openly. Implement anonymous feedback systems where employees can share feedback or concerns anonymously to protect their psychological safety.

Promote frequent one-on-one and team check-ins where employees can freely express how they feel about their work environment.

2. Model Vulnerability and Empathy from Leadership

Leaders in the workplace should act as role models and demonstrate vulnerability by acknowledging their own mistakes and showing that it's safe to be imperfect.

Train managers and leaders to practice empathy and active listening when engaging with employees, showing understanding of diverse perspectives.

3. Clear and Consistent Expectations

Transparent communication of goals is essential - ensure employees clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, minimising uncertainty that can lead to stress. Provide regular, constructive feedback to help employees understand where they stand without unexpected surprises.

4. Promote Inclusivity and Respect

Clearly define and enforce policies against workplace bullying, harassment, or discrimination, adhering to the Fair Work Act and Australian Human Rights Commission standards.

Organisations should also consider conducting diversity, equity, and inclusion training to ensure all employees feel valued and respected.

5. Encourage Risk-Taking and Innovation

Reward innovation, not just success. Recognise employees who take innovative approaches, even if they fail, to reduce the fear of making mistakes.

Cultivate a growth mindset where mistakes are seen as opportunities to learn, rather than moments to assign blame.

6. Foster Collaboration Over Competition

Promote teamwork and encourage collaborative projects over individual competition, in order to build trust and mutual respect within teams. Celebrate both individual and group achievements equally to show that collaboration is valued.

7. Regular Training and Development

Implement regular training programs and workshops that emphasise the importance of a psychologically safe workplace and provide practical tools to support it. Invest in training your managers and leaders on how to lead teams in ways that foster trust, inclusivity, and safety.

8. Encourage Peer Support

Introduce programs buddy systems, mentorships, and other peer support programs where new or less experienced employees can have a safe space to seek advice from peers. Further, implement regular team-building activities that help employees build stronger relationships, fostering trust and communication.

9. Respond Appropriately to Concerns

It's essential to act promptly and sensitively when employees report concerns, demonstrating that their voice is heard and valued. Provide follow-up communications to keep the employee informed about actions being taken.

10. Mental Health Support

Promote work/life balance and encourage employees to take regular breaks and respect work hours to prevent burnout.

Remember that you and your people have access to confidential counselling and mental health and wellbeing support through Acacia EAP 24/7. Legal, financial, nutritional, and manager-specific support services are offered as well.

Final Words

Fostering psychological safety is an ongoing process that requires continuous attention and commitment from both leadership and employees. Implementing these strategies will help build a supportive, inclusive, and high-performing workplace culture.

