

Everyday Practices that Support Health-Promoting Culture

Small actions do not replace the need for organizational accountability or systems-level change. However, everyday interactions, communication practices, and team behaviours can meaningfully influence how safe, supported, respected, and included people feel within academic medicine. These experiences also influence teamwork, learning, communication, and the quality and safety of patient care.

The following examples highlight practical approaches that may help support healthier learning and work environments across academic medicine.

Supporting Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is strengthened when individuals feel comfortable asking questions, seeking support, acknowledging uncertainty, and raising concerns without fear of humiliation or retaliation.

Examples may include:

- Responding respectfully to questions or uncertainty.
- Inviting quieter team members into discussion.
- Acknowledging learning as a shared process.
- Avoiding ridicule, dismissive comments, or targeted humour.
- Thanking others for teaching, support, or feedback.

Practicing Respectful Communication

Communication practices strongly influence team culture, collaboration, learning, and conflict resolution.

Examples may include:

- Using curiosity-based questions to support learning and discussion.
- Practicing reflective listening and clarifying expectations.
- Using respectful “I-statements” during low-level conflict or misunderstanding.
- Encouraging collaborative problem-solving and open dialogue.
- Using respectful, person-centered, and trauma-informed language.

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Supporting Peers and Allyship

Everyday acts of allyship, collegiality, and peer support can meaningfully influence belonging, inclusion, and team culture.

Examples may include:

- Checking in with peers after difficult experiences or stressful events.
- Sharing learning resources, opportunities, or support.
- Supporting colleagues who experience exclusion, discrimination, or mistreatment.
- Encouraging help-seeking and normalizing uncertainty.
- Recognizing contributions and celebrating small successes within teams.

Promoting Reflection and Debriefing

Reflection and debriefing can support learning, emotional processing, communication, and continuous improvement.

Examples may include:

- Debriefing difficult cases, interactions, or team experiences.
- Creating opportunities for reflective discussion and shared learning.
- Acknowledging emotional responses without shame or judgment.
- Encouraging respectful discussion about communication, teamwork, and culture.

Participating in Culture Change and Continuous Improvement

Culture change is strengthened when learners, staff, faculty, and teams participate in reflection, feedback, and improvement efforts.

Examples may include:

- Participating in committees, feedback processes, or quality improvement initiatives.
- Providing respectful and constructive feedback about learning or work environments.
- Identifying recurring barriers, inequities, or harmful norms.
- Supporting initiatives related to wellbeing, inclusion, mentorship, or psychological safety.
- Advocating for supportive and equitable learning and work environments when safe to do so.