

Reflecting on Psychological Safety in Teams

Psychological safety refers to environments where individuals feel able to ask questions, acknowledge uncertainty, seek help, provide feedback, and raise concerns without fear of humiliation, retaliation, or exclusion. It is strengthened through respectful communication, supportive leadership, inclusion, trust, and shared accountability within teams and organizations.

Psychological safety may help support:

- Learning, reflection, and professional growth.
- Team communication and collaboration.
- Speaking up about patient safety or workplace concerns.
- Inclusion, belonging, and wellbeing.
- Continuous improvement within learning and healthcare environments.

Examples of practices that may support psychological safety include:

- Inviting questions, feedback, and multiple perspectives.
- Responding respectfully to uncertainty, mistakes, or differing viewpoints.
- Encouraging inclusive participation within discussions and decision-making.
- Acknowledging hierarchy and power dynamics within teams.
- Modeling openness, accountability, and respectful communication.

Reflection Questions

- Do individuals feel safe asking questions or acknowledging uncertainty?
- How are mistakes, feedback, or differing perspectives typically responded to?
- Are there barriers that make it difficult for individuals or groups to speak up?
- How do leadership behaviours and team dynamics influence trust and inclusion?
- What small changes could help strengthen psychological safety within this environment?

Strengthening psychological safety requires both supportive everyday interactions and organizational cultures that value inclusion, learning, respect, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Informed by foundational work on psychological safety by [Amy Edmondson](#), and Canadian healthcare resources, including the [National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#).