



Integrity and psychological safety for leaders

Psychological safety is necessary for building a culture of integrity within the APS. When employees are enabled to provide frank and fearless advice, express concerns, ask questions, or seek help, risks can be identified and managed appropriately.

What is psychological safety?

Psychological safety exists when there is interpersonal trust and mutual respect within a team, and staff feel free to express their views and contribute to discussions. Staff also feel they can make mistakes or take risks in their work without fear of judgement or humiliation.

Importance of psychological safety

In teams with high psychological safety, staff:

- feel comfortable being themselves
- feel their skills and talents are utilised and valued
- see mistakes or failures as an opportunity to learn
- invite others to give feedback and ask for help, and
- show respect for each other's opinions and ideas.

Benefits of psychological safety

High psychological safety:

- improves team collaboration, innovation and performance
- increases job satisfaction and staff retention, and
- contributes to reduced stress and higher levels of wellbeing.

“Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.”

Dr Amy Edmondson (Harvard Business School)



How to foster psychological safety

Psychological safety is about uniting your team and creating an environment that sets everyone up for success.

Include your team in decision-making

- Ask them for their thoughts and feedback before making a decision.
- Staff appreciate leaders who are honest and transparent about how a decision is made. Explain:
 - how their feedback factored into the decision, and
 - what other factors you considered.

Foster respectful debate

- Promote open, thoughtful and respectful conversations.
- Encourage, listen to and empathise with different perspectives.
- Encourage contributions from all team members.

Create trust

Have open conversations with the team and give staff the chance to talk. To foster trust:

- tell the truth, explain your thought processes
- admit when you are wrong, and
- if you say you will do something, do it.

Set clear expectations

- Staff feel more confident when they know what they are doing and why
- Communicate clear and realistic expectations.

References

Page, L., Boysen, S., & Arya, T. (2019). Creating a culture that thrives: Fostering respect, trust, and psychological safety in the workplace. *OD Practitioner*, 51(1), 28-35.

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