

Top Three Psychologically Safe Behaviours

Psychological safety in the workplace not only makes good business sense but it is also a legal requirement under new Work Health and Safety laws.

Dr Amy Edmondson, The Fearless Organisation (2019) defines psychological safety as,

'... people feel comfortable sharing concerns and mistakes without fear of embarrassment or retribution. They are confident they can speak up and won't be humiliated, ignored or blamed. They know they can ask questions when they are unsure of something'

Let's be clear, it's different to psychosocial safety ...which is the management of hazards like poor work design, work overload, poor role clarity and workplace behaviours that can lead to psychological harm and risk to workers. The harm can show up as stress, fatigue, burnout or bullying.

The strategic consequences of poor psychological safety can be costly. This shows up as avoidable failures impacting sick leave, workers compensation, turnover, errors/accidents, recruitment costs, legal exposure, business continuity, innovation and employer brand. The list goes on...

If psychological safety is a problem in your workplace, a good place to start is educating all staff on what it means (behaviour wise), to create a psychologically safe space with your colleagues.

Dr Amy Edmondson, describes the top three behaviours for psychological safety.



1. **Be open to learning by reframing failure as a learning opportunity.**

- *What can we learn from this?*
- *I made a mistake and what I learnt was...*
- *How can we fix the system, not the individual?*

2. **Show your vulnerability to give others permission to do so.**

- *I don't have all the answers....*
- *That's not a strength of mine...*
- *I'm not on my A game today, as I was up last night with a sick child...*

3. **Be curious by asking questions to include and value other views.**

- *Can you say more about what you mean by that?*
- *How have you come to think that?*
- *Does anyone else have a different perspective?*

Did you know?

It is not enough to educate staff on behavioural expectations. Check out the *Five Pillars of Workplace Behaviour Change®* for other essential strategies.