Psychological Safety, Organisational Culture and Wellbeing



How psychologically safe, inclusive workplaces drive wellbeing, engagement and performance.

Dante Frederick, EDI Specialist
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Think about the last time you didn’t speak up at work, when you probably should have.

Why didn’t you?



What do we mean when we say ‘psychological safety?

"A belief that one can speak up, take interpersonal risks, ask questions, admit mistakes and contribute ideas without fear of punishment or humiliation."

Amy Edmondson
Harvard Business School
Author of ‘The Fearless Organisation’

What are those of us who work in EDI actually trying to accomplish?

What are the outcomes we're striving for?



Where do EDI and Psychological Safety align?

- Delivering **DIVERSITY** is primarily about processes – bringing talent in the door.
- Delivering **INCLUSION & BELONGING** are primarily about culture, environment - convincing people to stick around.
- The role of **PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY** is to support these and is primarily about behaviours, it's *local* - managers, teams, colleagues; convincing people to contribute, challenge, and progress.
- Research* tells us that the result of this work is increased **PERFORMANCE, INNOVATION** and **SUSTAINABILITY**.

The Psychological Safety Playbook: Leadership Behaviours

From *The Psychological Safety Playbook* by Karolin Helbig and Minette Norman

1 Communicate Courageously

- Welcome other viewpoints: 'What am I **missing**?
- Solicit diverse perspectives: 'That's one viewpoint – let's hear some **dissent**'
- Take off the mask of perfection: '**I don't know** yet

2 Master the Art of Listening

- Listen to **understand**: Develop the discipline of not preparing a response
- Be fully **present**: Tame your wandering mind
- **Clarify** your understanding: Articulate what you've heard
- Commit to **curiosity**: 'Tell me more'

3 Manage Your Reactions

- Model **non-defensive** reactions
- Watch out for blind spots: 'What **stories** am I telling myself?'
- Appreciate being **challenged**: Thank people for their courage
- **Build** on others' ideas: 'Yes, and…'

4 Embrace Risk & Failure

- **Normalise** failure: 'This is new to us so we will experience some failure.'
- **Reframe** failure as learning opportunities
- Model learning behaviours: **Admit** mistakes and share lessons learned
- Celebrate continuous learning: Implement **blameless** postmortems

5 Design Inclusive Environments

- Respect all voices: Establish a '**No Interruptions**' Rule
- Take turns: Explore 'No one speaks twice until **everyone speaks once**'
- Continuously gather **feedback** to check for psychological safety of your teams
- Appreciate the Team: Express **Gratitude**



Takeaways

- Start with Leadership Behaviours
- Psychological Safety is local
- Communicate the impact of getting it wrong
- Make Speaking Up a strategic imperative
- Embed inclusive rituals
- Build feedback loops and check in regularly



Thank you!



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