

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY

GUIDE

A SHORT, PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

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What is psychological safety?

Psychological safety is about creating a space where people feel valued and able to contribute to the team and take risks to improve performance, without the fear of negative consequences for their careers.

Creating psychologically safe environments benefits both employees and organisations. Higher levels of psychological safety are associated with higher levels of:

- Work engagement
- Task performance
- Learning behaviours
- Satisfaction
- Information sharing
- Job commitment

> ***Psychological safety is a blend of trust, respect for each other's competence, and caring about each other as people.***
>
> - Amy Edmondson

Creating psychological safety at work

Be consciously inclusive: Create opportunities for everyone to contribute. For example:

Situation	Say this	Why it works
A colleague seems hesitant to speak up	"What's your take on this? I'd like to hear it."	Invites input directly, instead of waiting for someone to volunteer.
Someone flags a mistake or a risk	"Thanks for flagging that. What should we do next?"	Signals the concern was welcome, and keeps focus on the fix, not the blame.
You want to check you've understood someone	"Let me check I've got this right. You're saying ...?"	Confirms understanding out loud, instead of assuming.
A mistake has already happened	"What happened, and what can we learn from it?"	Focuses on the event, not on whose fault it was.
A customer/client raises a concern	"I appreciate you telling me. Let's sort this out together."	Validates the concern without getting defensive.
You want to check people understand the information shared	"I am going to pause now for questions. But if you have any which come to you later, please reach out."	Avoids filling silence and gives people space to ask questions in a way that suits them.

Encourage challenge: Create an environment where people feel comfortable questioning ideas and highlighting risks. Ask questions such as:

> Who has a different view on this?

> "Where do we see potential risks in this approach?"

> "What have we learned from this project that we could improve on next time?"

Shift the view of 'getting things wrong': Mistakes are normal and often provide good learning opportunities.

When something goes wrong:

- Focus on what happened rather than whose fault it is.
- Discuss what can be learned to prevent the same mistake from happening again.
- Be mindful of how these conversations are approached and whether the conversation would be more appropriate to have in an individual or team setting.

Build relationships: Strong working relationships can help create trust, making people more comfortable sharing ideas, asking questions, and raising concerns.

- Take an interest in the people in your team - how they are, who they are.
- Give full attention to the work you are undertaking and the conversations you are having; avoid answering emails/calls/texts during them.

When employees feel valued, listened to and respected, they are more likely to speak up and contribute openly.

Conclusion

Psychological safety is built through consistent everyday behaviours, not one-off actions. When people feel safe to ask questions, share ideas, challenge respectfully, and learn from mistakes, they are more likely to contribute fully and help create a healthier, more effective workplace.



Business in the Community (BITC) champions responsible business as essential for long term economic growth and resilience. We convene, campaign, and consult with business to tackle society's most pressing challenges—from climate change and place-based regeneration to inequality, workplace wellbeing, and inclusive growth.

Founded by His Majesty King Charles III in 1982, BITC has over four decades of experience in engaging business and delivering measurable impact in both business and in communities through evidence-based interventions. As a trusted partner to business and government, BITC convenes leadership, influences policy, and accelerates action—helping shape a future-ready economy that works for everyone.

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