# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY FOR STAFF

## **WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY?**

Psychological safety is about your ability to take risks in the workplace without fear of rejection or judgement. It means you feel accepted and respected and are comfortable being yourself

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## **WHY IS PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IMPORTANT?**

Working in a team with high levels of psychological safety helps:

* you feel comfortable sharing thoughts, giving feedback and asking for help
* you feel that your skills and talents are utilised and valued
* improve team collaboration, innovation and performance
* reduce stress and improve wellbeing, and
* increase job satisfaction.

## **HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO A PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE WORKPLACE**

Creating a psychologically safe team culture is not something only leaders do. Everyone in the workplace can and should contribute to a better working environment for themselves and for each other.

### **Inclusive behaviour**

Treat everyone with respect and without discrimination. Reflect how you contribute to a positive and inclusive working environment.

* Are you courteous, respectful and polite?
* Do you consider other people’s views and feelings?
* Do you provide constructive feedback that contributes to new ideas and solutions?
* Do your words and actions support a psychologically safe work environment?

### Adopt a growth mindset

* View the team’s and your mistakes as an opportunity to learn and grow.
* Be curious by asking open questions, seeking to understand different perspectives.

### Practice emotional regulation

* Manage your stress response and remain positive, open and approachable.

### Empathy

Putting yourself in someone else’s shoes takes time and effort but it pays off in contributing to a psychologically-safe team. Demonstrate empathy by:

* listening to your colleagues
* summarising what you hear
* being aware of your facial expression and body language, and
* nodding to acknowledge that you hear them.

### Develop self-awareness

When you recognise how you prefer to think and behave you can uncover personal biases that might influence your colleague’s willingness to share their viewpoints. Awareness is the first step to disrupting and challenging personal biases.

### Workplace etiquette tips

* Acknowledge others, smile and say ‘hi’.
* Monitor the volume of your voice.
* Avoid interrupting others.
* Keep your word.
* Be mindful of your language.
* Say please and thank you.
* Don’t gossip.

## **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.

## **FOR SUPPORT**

Discussions around mental health and wellbeing can be emotionally impactful. If you need support at any time, you can contact the following confidential services, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

* [**Beyond Blue Support Service**](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/)– Provides immediate, short-term counselling, advice and referral services.

Phone 1300 224 636, [webchat](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/support-service/chat), or search their [forum](https://forums.beyondblue.org.au/) for free.

* [**Lifeline Crisis Support**](https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/)– This is a confidential service providing you with support for when you feel overwhelmed, for when you have difficulty coping, or are thinking about suicide.

Phone 13 11 14 or chat to a [crisis supporter online](https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/).

* [**13YARN**](https://www.13yarn.org.au/) – Provides crisis support for First Nations people.

Phone 13 92 76 or view their services online at <https://www.13yarn.org>.au

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