

What is a psychologically safe workplace



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Psychological Safety

- Violence and harassment has gained much prominence in Occupational health and safety in the past 10 years, especially personal harassment.
- The National standard on Psychological Health and Safety (CSA Z1003) has been available for almost 10 years and continues to influence the way workers recognize *psychosocial hazards*, including poor behavior and incivility, in the workplace.

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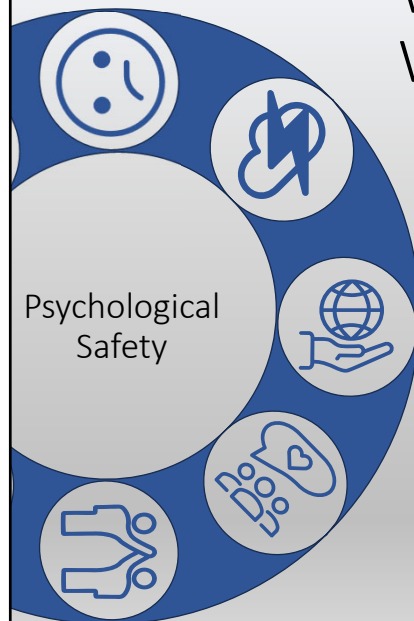
Psychological Safety

- Through CUPE's education and awareness campaigns, and a general awareness of the importance of taking care of psychological health and safety, more members feel as though they can come forth to report concerns around violence and harassment and poor psychological working conditions in their workplace.
- But little has been done to focus on the underlying factors that contribute to unhealthy environments and cultures of our workplaces and even our locals.

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What is a Psychologically Safe Workplace?

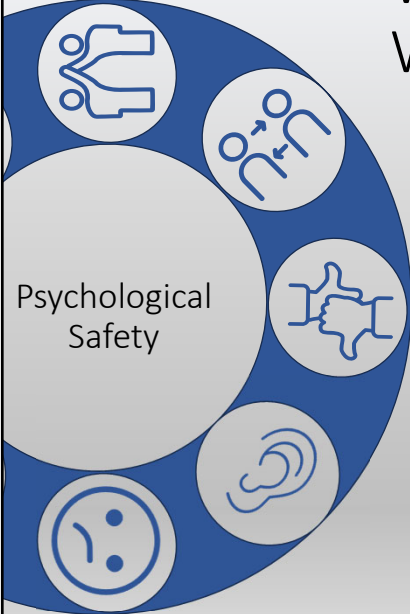


The international standard ISO 45003 breaks down the factors that impact work into three categories.

- aspects of how work is organized (e.g. job demands, autonomy etc)
- work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks (e.g. lack of space, work in extreme hot or cold etc.
- social factors at work (supervision, civility/respect, harassment violence etc.)

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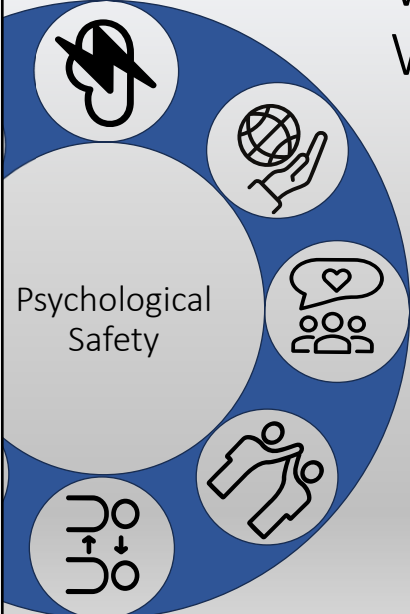
What is a Psychologically Safe Workplace?

Factors = Neutral?

How are the various factors impacting your workplace?

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What is a Psychologically Safe Workplace?

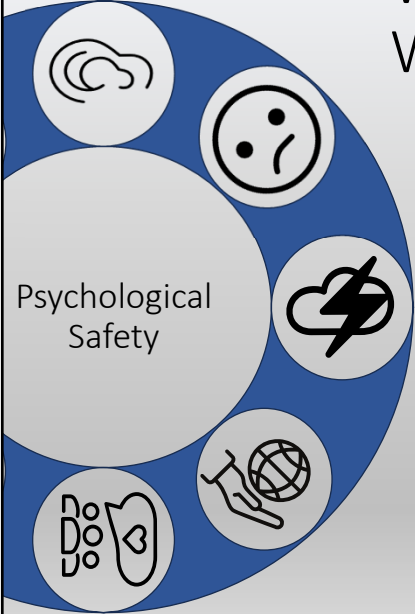
A psychologically healthy and safe workplace is a workplace:

- prevents harm by eliminating or controlling the risks caused by hazards in the workplace that cannot be removed
- promotes and protects psychological well-being

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What is a Psychologically Safe Workplace?




The diagram features a central grey circle labeled "Psychological Safety" surrounded by a blue ring containing six icons: a speech bubble, a sad face, a lightning bolt, a hand holding a globe, a hand holding a heart, and a hand holding a speech bubble.

- Many people believe that a psychological safe workplace can only exist when everyone always gets along, we don't have difficult conversations or everyone is kind and generous.
- This is not correct.

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Being and Feeling 'Psychological safe'

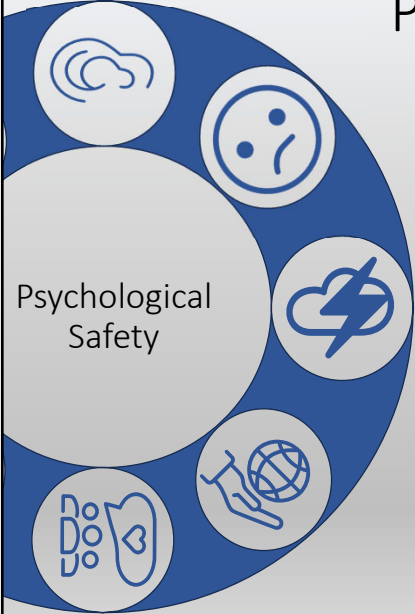


The diagram features a central grey circle labeled "Psychological Safety" surrounded by a blue ring containing six icons: a hand holding a heart, an ear, a sad face, a lightning bolt, a hand holding a globe, and a hand holding a speech bubble.

- Sometimes, due to internal or external pressures, the working relationships of workplaces (or even our union) becomes unstable, and people do not feel safe to participate.

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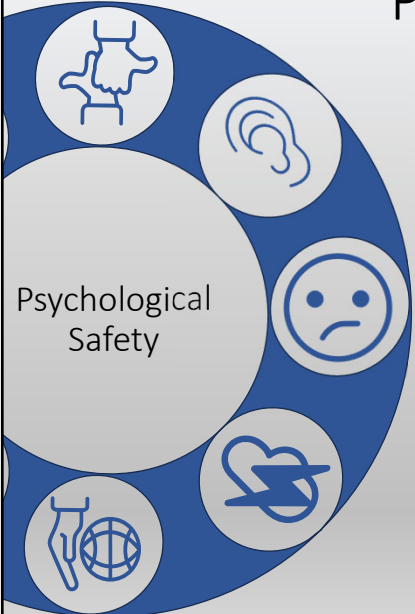


Psychologically Safe ≠ Perfect

- The fact is, negative situation arise
- Constructive conflict is needed
- While everyone should be respectful and control their responses to negative situations, not everyone will be explicitly kind all the time.

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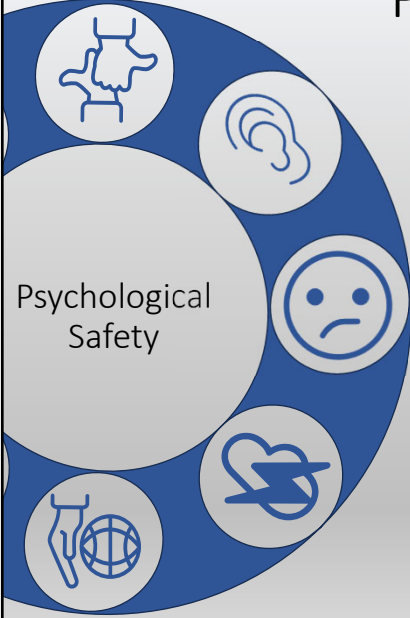
Psychologically Safe ≠ Perfect

- Rather than the utopian vision of never having a problem, a workplace or team with a psychologically safe social structure shares their thoughts and can communicate and have respectful, frank and constructive conversations without fear of ridicule, punishment or other negative consequences.
- Psychologically safe groups accept that it is safe to disagree and that not everyone will be happy with every group decision.

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Psychologically Safe ≠ Perfect




The diagram features a central grey circle labeled "Psychological Safety". Surrounding it is a blue ring containing six icons: a hand holding a heart, an ear, a sad face, a lightning bolt striking a heart, a globe with a hand, and a hand holding a heart.

- Most importantly, a psychologically safe group is one where it is accepted that we are all vulnerable humans who sometimes struggle, and it is **ok to not be ok.**

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What is a Psychologically Safe Workplace?




The diagram features a central grey circle labeled "Psychological Safety". Surrounding it is a blue ring containing six icons: a hand holding a heart, an ear, a sad face, a lightning bolt striking a heart, a globe with a hand, and a hand holding a heart.

There can be no psychological safety on a team without flexibility. We need to be able to:

- Be curious about other's point of view, interests and positions.
- Listen.
- Accept that we can experience the same event differently.

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The diagram features a central grey circle labeled "Psychological Safety". Surrounding it is a blue ring containing six white circular icons: a globe with a hand pointing to it, a speech bubble with a heart and a hand, two people standing together, a hand pointing to a group of three people, a hand pointing to a single person, and a hand pointing to a group of three people.


Being and Feeling 'Psychological safe'

- Workers need to have the ability to show up, participate and take risks without fear of negative consequences.
- This is true for both the workplace, and within the union.

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Four Stages of Psychological Safety



The diagram consists of four circles of increasing size and darker shades of blue, each representing a stage of psychological safety. The first circle is lightest and contains the text for Inclusion Safety. The second is slightly darker and contains the text for Learner Safety. The third is a medium-dark blue and contains the text for Contributor Safety. The fourth is the darkest blue and contains the text for Challengers Safety.

- Inclusion Safety**
Team members feel that they belong to the team.
- Learner Safety**
Team members feel safe to learn through asking questions
- Contributor Safety**
Team members feel safe to contribute their own ideas, without fear of ridicule.
- Challengers Safety**
Team members can question others' ideas without fear of punishment

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Four Stages of Psychological Safety

Challengers Safety
Contributor Safety
Learner Safety
Inclusion Safety

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Inclusion Safety

- We all want to feel included and as people, we long to belong.
- The first stage of psychological safety, inclusion safety, is a prerequisite for everything else.
- To create inclusion safety:
 - Create safe and welcoming space
 - make sure members feel unconditionally included from the very beginning.
 - evaluate your own behaviors - is there a reason that you don't treat everyone as if they are welcome?
- Once we are comfortable providing inclusion solely on the basis that every human being deserves a fundamental level of respect, you we move on to the next stage of psychological safety

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Learner Safety

- Means being able to ask questions, give and receive feedback, experiment, and make mistakes
- Allows team members experiment, make (and most importantly admit) mistakes, and ask for help.
- To create learner safety:
 - minimize the feeling that being wrong is bad.
 - minimize the expectation that feedback only happens as punishment.

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Contributor Safety

- Contributor safety has two different aspects
 - Members feel safe to contribute their own ideas, without fear of embarrassment or ridicule.
 - Members feel safe to do tasks related to the work of the local unassisted.

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Challengers Safety

Contributor Safety

- Like the first two levels, making people feel as though they are heard should be considered a right (everyone should be able to offer ideas without undue criticism),
- Members feel safe to contribute their own ideas, without fear of embarrassment or ridicule.
- This is a more challenging state, because volunteering your own ideas can increase the psychosocial vulnerability of team members.
- To create contributor safety:
 - Set the expectation that everyone will offer suggestions, and that people will be called on and all ideas will be considered.

Inclusion Safety
Learner Safety

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Challengers Safety

Contributor Safety

- Contributor safety in the performance of tasks has to be established and maintained by *both parties*.
 - If we grant contributor safety too early, the decision might backfire. Someone who's not yet ready may end up with way too much responsibility or tasks not suited to their skill set.
 - Simultaneously, you don't want to overdo the gatekeeping and hold people back from reaching their potential. Perhaps someone has the skills and experience needed, but you're still withholding contributor safety because of some other trust issue or personal bias.

Inclusion Safety
Learner Safety

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Contributor Safety

- To create contributor safety:
 - Contributor safety can be earned one step at a time, and by requirement, is continues to build on learner safety as the member shows competence and more tasks can be assigned.
 - Continue to support that member who may have questions (as this is parting of the learning process).

Challengers Safety

Learner Safety

Inclusion Safety

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Challengers Safety

Members can question others' ideas (including those in authority) or suggest significant changes to ideas, plans, or ways of working.

This is the most powerful stage of psychological safety, as it not only allows new ideas to surface and learning from mistakes to occur, but it can prevent potentially bad ideas from wasting time and resources that could be spent elsewhere.

Contributor Safety

Learner Safety

Inclusion Safety

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Challengers Safety

- To create challenger safety:
 - Assign people to look for with finding problems in projects, initiatives, or other topics, or be the one that questions decisions when there has been no debate.
 - Once troubleshooting becomes the norm and not the exception, it'll be that much easier for members of your team to feel comfortable keeping a critical eye out for weak points.
 - Team members will also feel comfortable in conflict, and recognize when the team makes a decision to move on.

Inclusion Safety
 Learner Safety
 Contributor Safety

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Psych Safety Is Intentional



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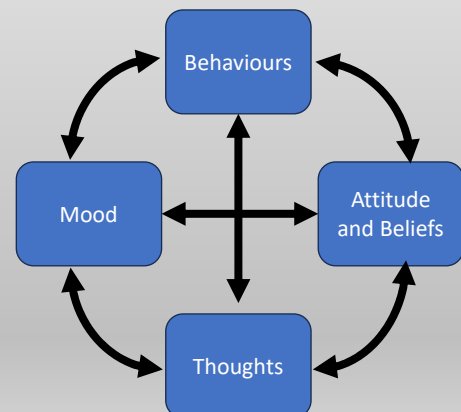
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Psychologically Safe is *Intentional*

Building a psychologically safe team and space doesn't just happen. Rather building a psychologically safe space takes intentional effort from everyone.

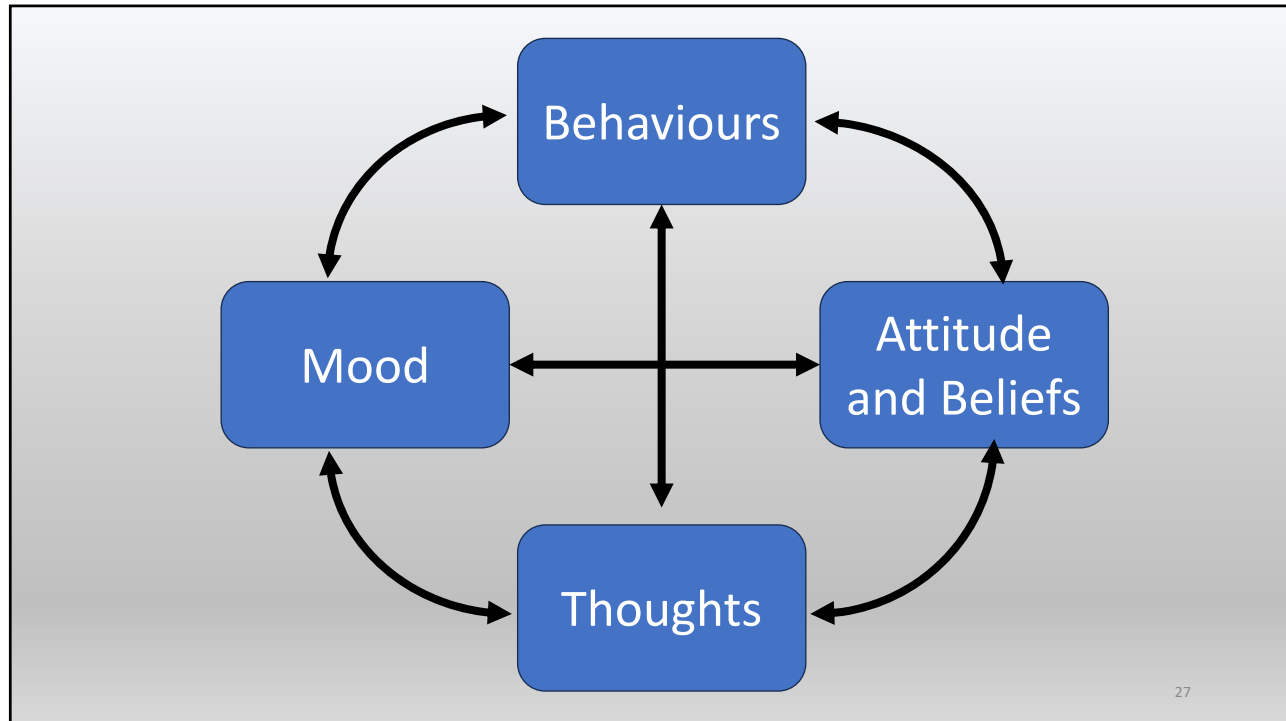
It takes work and intentional effort to:

- Not automatically respond negatively when something happens you don't like.
- Changing your thoughts towards your attitude towards one that is positive.
- Put yourself in someone else's frame of reference to consider their words or action.
- Examine our actions before we take them.
 - Not simply 'pop off' when we are tired or stressed.



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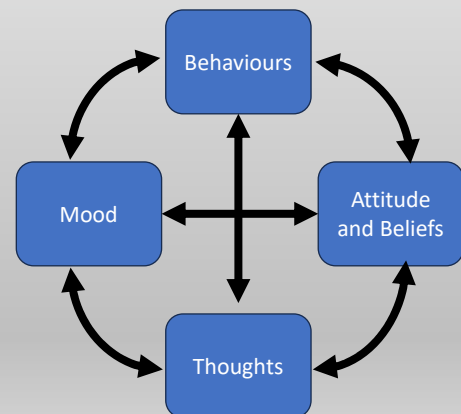
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Psychologically Safe Teams are *Intentional*

Finally, building a psychologically safe team and space doesn't just happen. Rather building a psychologically safe space takes intentional effort from everyone.

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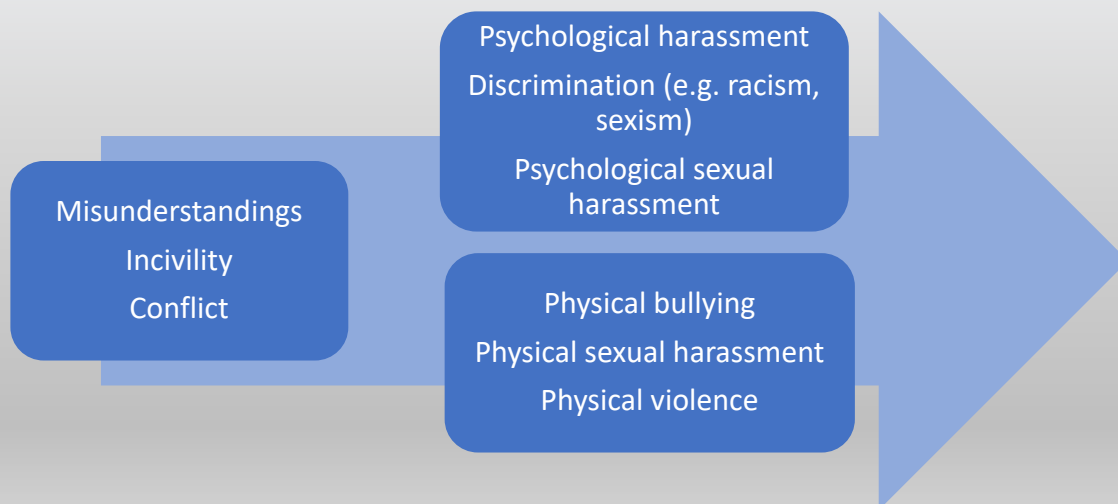
The (Dis)Respectful Workplace Continuum

- CUPE has an excellent Code of Conduct and equality statement that make it clear that poor behavior is not to be tolerated.
- But what happens if
 - We are not intention in our efforts?
 - Poor behavior does happen
 - Poor culture is the norm for a workplace culture?
- Remember: many people don't have the ability or skills to self advocate in stressful, or distressing situations.

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The (Dis)Respectful Workplace Continuum



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