

Complete Clinician Model

Psychological Safety for Teams

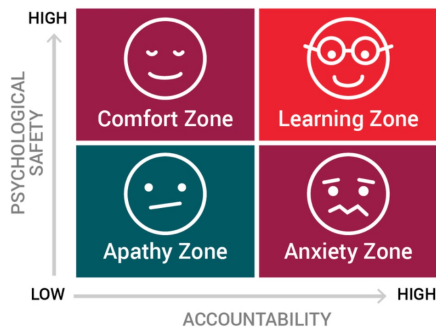
DEFINITIONS

Psychological safety: The belief that one should not be ridiculed and punished for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes. It's about cultivating a work environment where people feel comfortable being and expressing themselves. Teams that practice psychological safety function safely, learn from mistakes and innovate.

Common knowledge effect: When information is propagated in order to maintain the status quo. If no one steps up to challenge that information and offer new insight, effective decision-making and innovation will grind to a halt.

*In systems that encourage **psychological safety**, people feel comfortable admitting mistakes. Everyone is expected to share their mistakes, so that the team can learn and grow from that failure. Decisions inherently become more effective and creative.*

PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT



Learning zone: This is the ideal learning environment for innovation and growth. Even though members are responsible for their actions, their team offers continuous support.

Comfort zone: While this zone is more relaxed, almost like a vacation, there is no push for creativity and growth.

Apathy zone: There are no repercussions for mistakes, teams lack adequate communication and support, and individuals struggle to care about their work.

Anxiety zone: Communication breaks down. When mistakes are made, people are too scared to take responsibility. Opportunities for learning and innovation are scarce.

PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE TEAM DYNAMICS



Learner safety: Team members should feel comfortable asking questions, experimenting, and learning from mistakes.

Collaborator safety: Team members should participate in open dialogue, have mutual access to each other, and engage in constructive debates.

Challenger safety: People should feel comfortable challenging the status quo and should be encouraged to speak up and expose problems.

Inclusion safety: Team members need to feel valued. Everyone should know that their experience and ideas matter equally, regardless of their title or rank.

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SIX BEHAVIORS OF PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE LEADERS

- 1. Set the stage:** First and foremost, acknowledge your own mistakes. Fallibility isn't a crime and showing your team that it's okay to be vulnerable will encourage them to be transparent with their mistakes too.
- 2. Frame the work as a learning process:** There is a lot of uncertainty in health care. We must rely on each other and be open and responsive to feedback.
- 3. Establish norms:** Make behavioral norms explicit and develop clear roles and processes, especially with new team members. Ask and respect how your employees prefer to communicate and receive feedback.
- 4. Model curiosity:** Ask questions, and express genuine interest in the answers. Reinforce those who ask questions by thanking them and encouraging participation. Try to approach conflict through a lens of curiosity, rather than confrontation. For instance, if one of your team members is struggling to complete a project, say: "Oh, I see you missed your deadline for this, what can we do to get you back on track?"
- 5. Use strengths-based approach:** Ask your team: What can we count on each other for? A person might think that one of their strengths is something that everyone has or might not even be aware that it is a strength. Help each member understand what they bring to the team.
- 6. Take care of each other:** Check in on teammates, even if that just means being aware if they need space to take care of their own needs. Also, assume positive intent. If one of your team members seems distracted, give them an opportunity to explain themselves.

Fostering a psychologically safe environment leads to better learning opportunities, increased innovation, and improved patient safety.