Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace

In April 2023 new legislation was introduced by Safe Work Australia that increased the obligations of organisations and senior leaders for creating psychologically safe workplaces. Essentially this legislation means that as a senior leader or executive you can now be held personally accountable for the safety of others.

There are many factors that can impact employees' mental health and it's important to understand key psychosocial hazards, which include:

- job demands
- low job control
- poor support
- lack of role clarity
- poor organisational change management
- inadequate reward and recognition
- poor organisational justice
- traumatic events or material
- remote or isolated work
- poor physical environment
- violence and aggression
- bullying
- harassment, including sexual harassment
- conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions.

While there is no 'one size fixes all' approach for ensuring psychological safety for your employees, one of the key determinants of a safe and productive organisation and culture is strong leadership.

How safe is your workplace? How strong are your leaders? We've created a quick self-audit for you to complete for your organisation that will help you assess just how psychologically safe your culture and workplace are.

Psychological Safety Audit

On a scale of one to five (1 = poor, 5 = outstanding) how would you assess your organisation on the following attributes?

Attribute	Your Score
Clarity of job descriptions, key performance indicators and performance management processes.	
Well-trained leaders, specifically with regards to: 1. prioritising and planning 2. delegation and holding individuals and teams accountable 3. coaching competency (versus telling or directing) 4. change management 5. feedback and managing conflict 6. awareness of their own biases and actions when it comes to behaviours that promote diversion and inclusion 7. adaptive leadership approach 8. basic understanding of legislation and what is acceptable and legal, or not.	
The time leaders allocate to regular work-in-progress and catch-up meetings to discuss more than just tasks.	
Formalised mentoring and buddy system opportunities, especially for remote and new employees.	
Acceptance of 'testing and learning', and of failure.	
Commitment of leaders to investing in training, development and building the capability of emerging and developing leaders.	
Respect of and trust in your HR team.	
Effectiveness and utilisation of your EAP program. (If you do not have an EAP program, this is probably a first step towards psychological safety.)	
Clarity of the psychological safety strategies by leaders, and open communication about these.	
Self-awareness of leaders regarding the impact they have on others, and their level of care about this impact.	
YOUR TOTAL	

Psychological Safety Audit

What your results mean

Score 0 – 20

Your organisation has a lot of work to do in regard to the psychological safety of your team. Take action now to ensure that not only is your team safe but you aren't held personally accountable for failing to provide a psychologically safe workplace and culture.

Score 21 -40

You've made inroads into building a safe culture for your team. There's still work to do, so identify key areas that can be improved and continue to work towards being an organisation that offers its people a psychologically safe culture and workplace.

Score 41 – 50

Congratulations on creating a safe space for your team. Identify any areas that didn't quite reach a 5 and work on those so that every aspect of your organisation is contributing to a psychologically safe culture and workplace.

Next Steps

Strong and capable leaders will go a long way towards helping your organisation create a safe workplace for your employees.

Peeplcoach is already working with many organisations to improve the leadership capabilities of emerging and developing leaders.

We can help you too. If you're ready to find out more, please contact us here.

Further Reading

- Managing Health & Safety
- What does psychological safety mean, anyway?