

Psychological Safety in the Workplace: What it Is and the Results You Can Expect



Psychological safety may sound like just a buzzword in the human resources world, but we've found that the value of creating a supportive and transparent environment at work is actually one of the key drivers of organizational success. A great environment created by leaders can have great bottom-line effects, and bad leadership decisions can be even more damaging to organizations. Building a psychologically safe environment starts at the top – which means you'll need to train leaders with the right skillsets. After all, research suggests that leadership skills aren't always innate – they can be developed over time – and equipping leaders with the right training will help them cultivate the environment your organization needs. Here's what you need to know about psychological safety in the workplace, including what it is, as well as the results you can expect to see from implementing it.

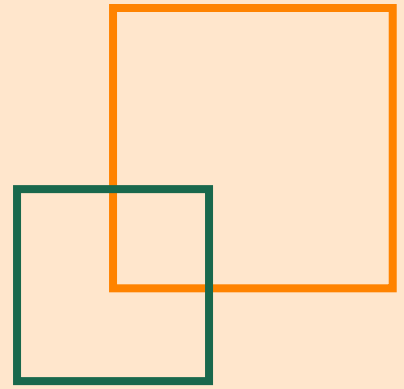
What is Psychological Safety?

Harvard researcher Amy Edmondson explains that psychological safety exists when people in the workplace can fully present themselves, are comfortable taking risks, and can have difficult conversations. But the tricky part about psychological safety is that although we want everyone to be their authentic selves in the workplace, there's a risk people might take that as a license to remove their professional filter. That's why it's integral that team members not only think about being themselves, but also how they're engaging relationally to others in the workplace.



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Edmondson calls it a “shared belief” when team members are able to take part in interpersonal risk-taking while staying true to their authentic selves. In the workplace, that looks like team members understanding that each individual will communicate with each other in a way that validates one another, accepts one another, respects everyone’s identity, and is inclusive in nature.

How do you teach psychological safety to leaders?

In order to teach psychological safety to leaders, they’ll need to have the proper skills training to manage their teams. In our skills training, we focus first on helping leaders and individual contributors identify and build awareness of their position within the organization, the power they yield, and their responsibility in creating psychological safety for all team members.

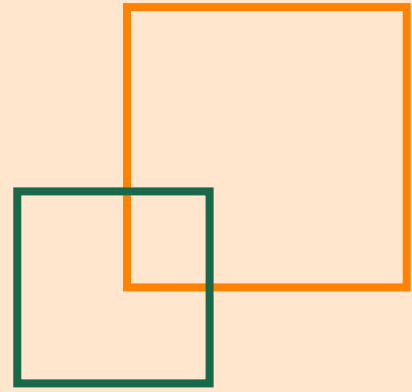
Once we’ve had that conversation, we’re ready to shift to building skills. We teach leaders how to build structure for inclusive discussions and how to recognize psychologically safe behaviors.

For individual contributors that may have limited decision-making powers, we show them the influence they have in a team which can establish psychological safety. For example, how can you build allyship when you’re noticing that somebody is being spoken over? Or how can you gauge alignment when both of you are doing a project but there is a disagreement? Individual contributors often have more influence in creating a positive environment than they realize.



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What are the results you can expect to see from a psychologically safe workplace?

When you focus on building a psychologically safe workplace, you'll start to see that team members are able to engage in healthy conflict and admit mistakes rather than avoiding issues. Most importantly, employees will be able to have open discussions about ideas and challenges, because they feel like they will be heard by leaders and other team members. Even if there are moments where they are not feeling psychologically safe, they can still communicate to their leaders that they weren't feeling heard and ask if there is a process for resolving the issue.

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and the fact is that it really takes a village to create psychological safety. Though it may be easy for leaders and employees to think that they don't have the responsibility to build a safe culture, both management and individual contributors have the ability to make positive change to reap the long-term benefits of psychological safety.

Reach out to us to learn more about creating psychological safety and other topics that we offer in [our leadership development and management skills training](#) solutions.

About Orange Grove Consulting



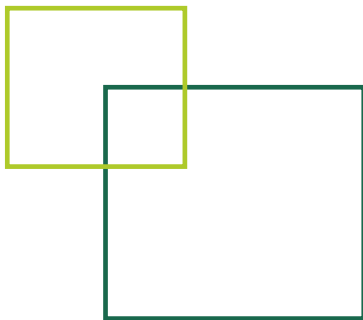
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Focus

We specialize in helping organizations improve culture, engagement, inclusion & belonging through a set of consulting tools and training programs. Our end goal is to uncover and remove the limiting aspects of talent potential and processes to create more innovative, productive and competitive workplaces. Our network of consultants, trainers, and coaches provide a rich skillset, generations of experience, and the highest level of service for our clients. As your talent management and leadership development partner, we have solutions to make your teams effective and your workplace less divided.



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