October 2026 Trauma Tip Sheet

OCYF Trauma Team

Psychological Safety Vs. Comfort in the Workplace

Psychological safety is not the same as feeling comfortable in your work environment. In fact, sometimes it can mean quite the opposite. Psychological safety means that employees are given the space to:

- Challenge ideas in a constructive manner;
- Speak up respectfully about new ideas or challenges faced in the workplace without repercussion; and
- Discuss mistakes, work challenges, and confusion with leadership without punishment.

In the workplace, working through new ideas and mistakes together may mean having tough conversations. Naturally these conversations may become uncomfortable, and the relationship may need repair at times to maintain the psychological safety between coworkers.

Evaluating Psychological Safety

When evaluating psychological safety, the following prompts may be considered:



1. If an employee makes a mistake, it tends to be held against them.
2. Employees value each other's unique skills and talents.
3. Employees are comfortable bringing up problems and tough issues.
4. Employees sometimes reject others for being different.
5. Employees feel safe taking risks.
6. Employees feel comfortable asking others for help.
7. Employees sometimes act in a way that deliberately undermines the efforts of others.

What's Next?

Over the next several months, a series of tip sheets will be developed on the topic of psychological safety in the workplace to include the following topics:

- Why is psychological safety important in the workplace?
- How to promote psychological safety in the workplace and beyond.
- What is your role in workplace psychological safety?

This tip sheet was created with information from: 2024 Work in America Survey: Psychological Safety in the Changing Workplace
Psychological Safety vs Psychological Comfort at Work