

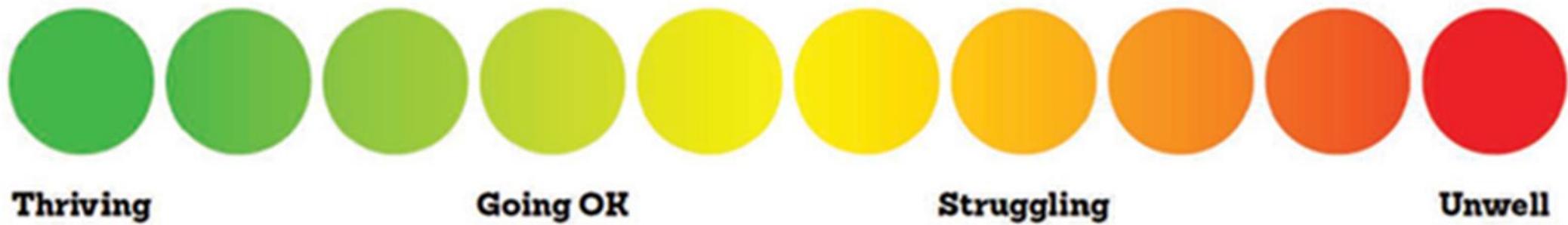
# Leading Wellbeing: Mindset and Practices.

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# Mental Wellbeing Is...

- An individual's ongoing state which enables a person to thrive or not.
- On a continuum.
- Universal, subjective, dynamic and holistic.



## ***Reflection:***

Is your organisation's focus more on supporting workers who are struggling or unwell or enabling workers to thrive?

# Psychological Safety

- Mental Wellbeing and psychological safety are both important, but they are different.
- Currently a strong focus on psychological safety and its link to wellbeing.
- And for good reason as it is a protective factor of wellbeing.
- Research has shown psychological safety supports ***a sense of belonging, connection and inclusion in a workplace and enables workers to thrive.***
- It has also been linked to a range of positive organisational outcomes e.g.,
  - Increased reporting and learning
  - Improved relationships at work
  - Improved collaboration and knowledge sharing
  - Improved engagement and more.....



# What Is Psychological Safety?

- The term was coined by Edgar Schein and Warren Bennis in 1965 as “providing an atmosphere where **one** can take chances without fear and with sufficient protection”.
- Popularised by Professor Amy Edmondson of Harvard Business School, who defined it as “a shared belief amongst **group** members that the group is a safe place to take risks, admit mistakes, and learn new things”.
- Psychological safety exists when people feel included and safe to learn, contribute, and challenge the status quo, without fear of being embarrassed, marginalised, or punished. (Clarke, 2019).

## No one wants to look...

- Ignorant → Don't ask questions
- Incompetent → Don't admit weakness or mistake
- Intrusive → Don't offer ideas
- Negative → Don't critique the status quo

# Psychological Safety Is Not....

- A shield from accountability. It's not niceness, coddling, consensus decision making, unearned autonomy, political correctness, or rhetorical reassurance. (Clarke, 2021)
- Wrapping people in cotton wool or political correctness, freedom to say whatever one likes or stay in your comfort zone.



# Lack of Psychological Safety

Leads to people protecting themselves. They:

- Are reluctant to stand out
- Do not ask questions in meetings
- Provide general rather than specific feedback i.e., “things are fine”, “it’s all good”.
- Keep silent i.e., not sharing their views openly
- Fear being wrong, so keep quiet
- Fearful of offending the boss or colleagues
- Hold back rather than share
- Are afraid of being embarrassed or looking bad
- Try to fit in and go along with the status quo



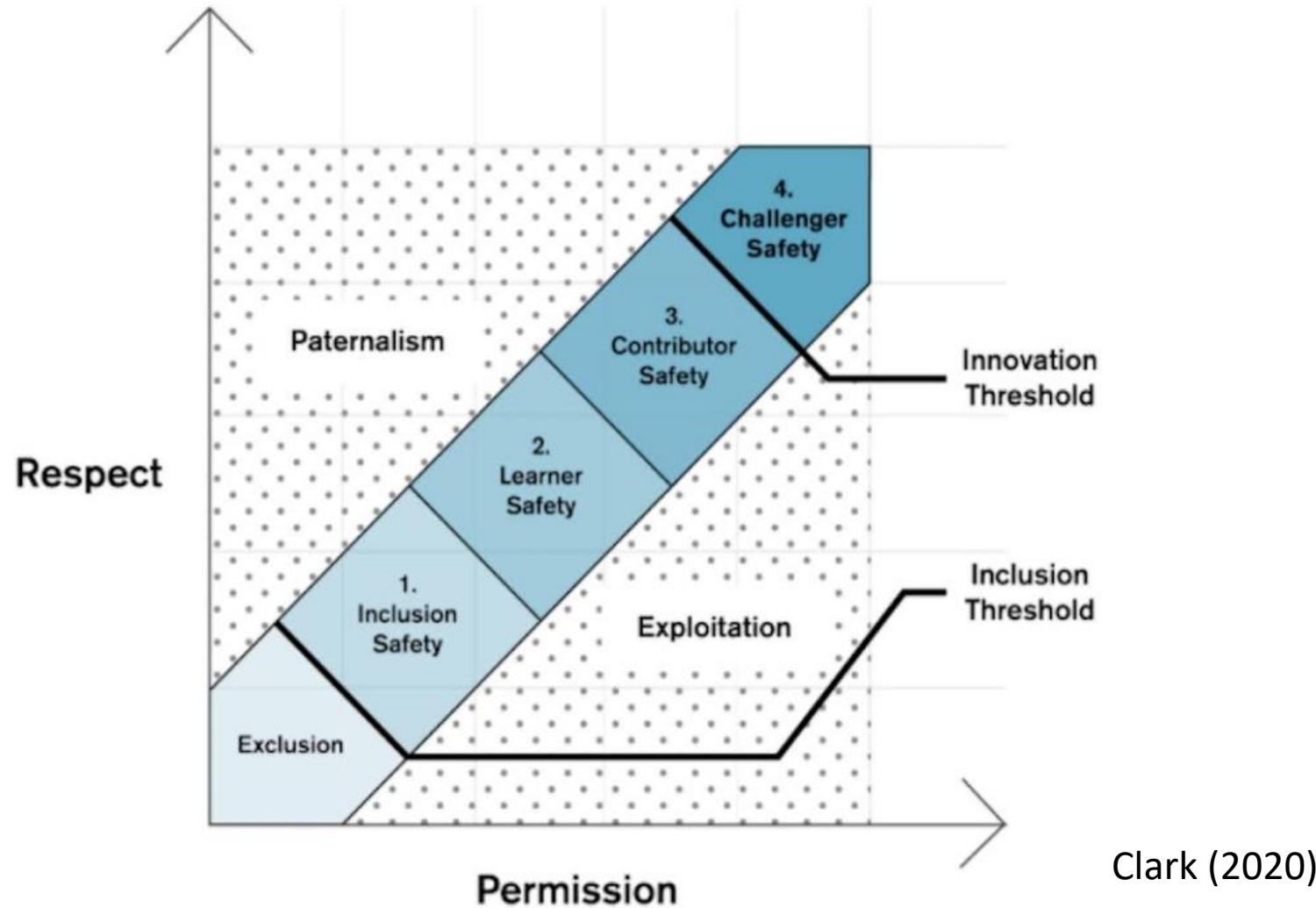


Leaders build psychological safety by creating the right climate, mindsets, and behaviors within their teams.

Building psychological safety takes self awareness, focus and deliberate effort.

# Psychological Safety: Not A Binary Concept

Note: All models are wrong, and some are useful.



## INCLUSION SAFETY

Members feel safe to belong to the team.

**Safe to:** Know that you are valued, Treat all people fairly, Feel your experience matters, Include others regardless of title/position

## CONTRIBUTOR SAFETY

Members feel safe to contribute their ideas.

**Safe to:** Engage in an unconstrained way, Interact with colleagues, Have mutual access, Maintain open dialogue, Foster constructive debate



## LEARNER SAFETY

Members are able to learn through asking questions.

**Safe to:** Discover, Ask questions, Experiment, Learn from mistakes, Look for new opportunities

## CHALLENGER SAFETY

Members can question others' ideas or suggest significant changes.

**Safe to:** Challenge the status quo, Speak up, Express ideas, Identify changes, Expose problems

# Psychological Safety: The Engine Not The Fuel

## Antecedents

- *Leadership mindset and practices*
- Team behaviours e.g., sharing skills, knowledge, seeking and sharing information
- Consistent practice of empathy by everyone
- Onboarding with intention
- Clear roles
- Fair and consistent processes
- Honest, candid conversations

## Psychological Safety

A shared belief amongst group members that the group is a safe place to take risks, admit mistakes, and learn new things.

## Outcomes

- Positive wellbeing
- Improved performance
- Greater sharing of information
- Willingness to challenge unsafe conditions
- Less incidents
- High quality relationships
- Learning
- Engagement
- Creativity and innovation
- Just culture



# Leadership Mindset & Practices

## *Mindset*

- Everyone makes mistakes, so it's important we can admit, and learn, from them.
- Speaking up shows you're committed to a safe workplace.
- Everyone has a contribution to make.

## *Practices*

- Be curious, open-minded and invite diverse perspectives. Make sure everyone's voice is heard.
- Be willing to see things from other people's points of view and value their opinions, even if they differ from your own.
- Be modest about own capabilities and shortcomings, normalise 'I don't' know'.
- Promote responsible failure and learning from mistakes.
- Promote sincere dialogue and constructive debate.
- Be empathic.
- Speak less and listen more. Listen to understand, not to judge.
- Set explicit norms and expectations
  - What do we expect from each other?
  - What do we need from each other to get the work done?
  - What needs to be in place to feel safe to speak up?

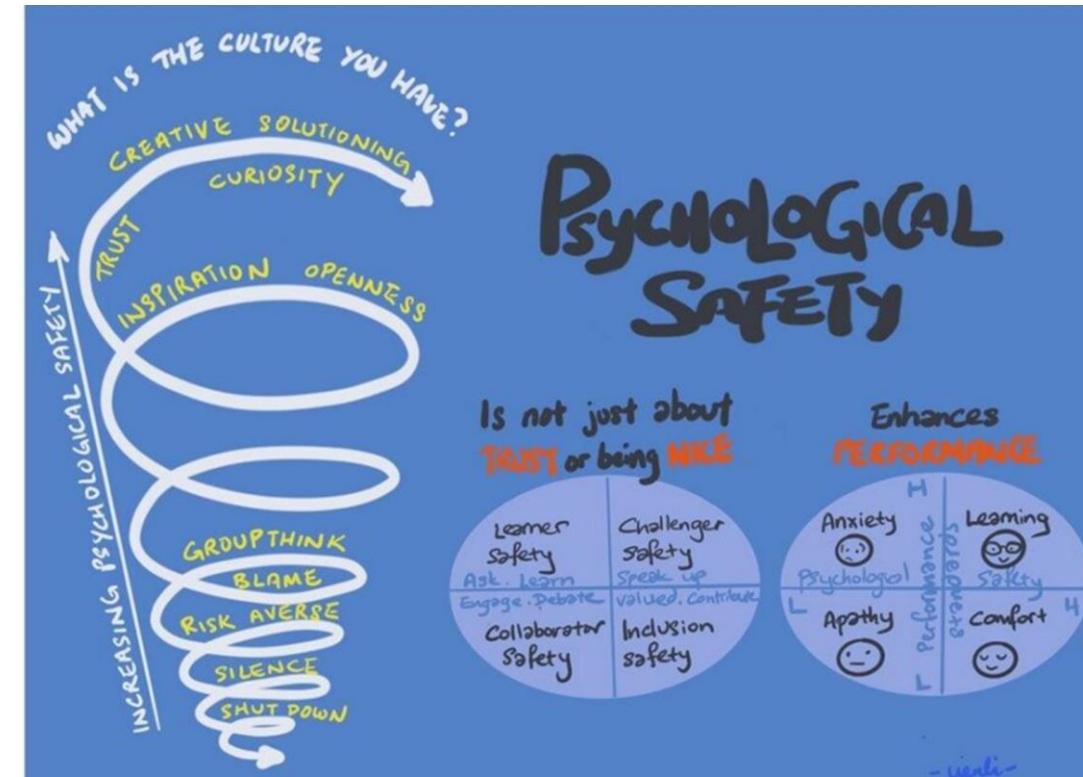


# Leadership Mindset & Practices

- Challenge the status quo. What do we need to change?
- Ask genuine questions (i.e., invite people to have a voice). Make it more difficult to stay silent than speak up.
- Thank people for their contribution.
- Encourage dissent. What haven't we considered?
  - Do you have any nagging questions?
  - Who can give us a different opinion or suggestion that we haven't yet discussed?
  - Who can poke holes in this idea for us?
  - What could make this a bad idea?
  - How would rate this idea on a scale of 10?
  - If this idea is a 7, what could make it a 10?
- Don't put people on the spot. Sharing a view is being vulnerable. If someone is not ready to be vulnerable don't push them
- Ask for feedback and avoid being defensive when responding to questions or feedback.

# A Critical Endeavour But No Easy Feat

- Psychological safety is not a silver bullet. It doesn't just happen. It needs to be at the forefront of strategy.
- It requires courage and commitment to challenge the status quo and build a culture where people are willing to use their voice, knowing that there will not be negative consequences.
- It requires a shift in the mindset and practices of leaders and supportive organisational processes.
- It is a process and can be slow – patience is important.
- Psychological safety isn't created overnight. It is delicate and dynamic. It's perishable, not permanent. It takes time and requires intention.
- It is not a substitute for effective psychosocial risk management. It is the foundation of good work design.



# Leading Wellbeing

Leaders are the directors and actors in nurturing mentally healthy workplaces

To enable workers to thrive, leaders need to build psychological safety

To do this, they need to:

- Challenge their thinking and develop practices to create psychological safety
- Design work to support psychological safety.

