



Less Fear of Speaking Up

↳ More Psychological Safety



Less fear of speaking up means creating a caring environment where teammates feel confident and encouraged to share their thoughts, ideas, and concerns without worrying about negative repercussions. It involves building a culture of trust and openness, where all teammates feel their voice matters and is respected. This shift promotes active participation and ensures that valuable insights and feedback are not withheld due to fear.



More psychological safety means fostering a workplace where teammates feel safe to make mistakes and express themselves without fear of judgment or punishment. It involves creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and support, where teammates feel comfortable being vulnerable and authentic. This shift encourages innovation, collaboration, and a sense of belonging, as teammates know they are valued, and their well-being is prioritized.

Example Scenarios

Nurse Addressing a Medication Error

Less Fear of Speaking Up: A nurse notices that a clinician has prescribed a medication dosage that seems unusually high for a particular patient. The nurse is concerned that the dosage could lead to adverse effects. Despite feeling apprehensive about questioning the clinician's decision, the nurse decides to speak up to ensure patient safety.

More Psychological Safety: The nurse approaches the clinician in a respectful manner, saying, "Dr. X, I am concerned about the patient's medication order. I am uncomfortable with the dosage; it seems higher than expected. I'd like to confirm since this could be a safety issue. Could we review the patient's chart together to ensure the dosage is appropriate?"

The clinician listens to the nurse's concern and appreciates the vigilance. They review the patient's chart together and realize that an error was made in the prescription. The clinician thanks the nurse for catching the mistake and encourages the nurse to continue raising any concerns in the future. This reinforces a culture of psychological safety where team members feel empowered to speak up for the well-being of patients.

Encouraging Innovation in Patient Care

Less Fear of Speaking Up: A hospital administrator wants to improve patient care by encouraging teammates to share innovative ideas. They create an open forum where teammates can present their suggestions without fear of criticism or negative consequences. The administrator actively listens and values each contribution, fostering a culture of trust and openness.

More Psychological Safety: The administrator ensures that the forum is a safe space where teammates feel comfortable taking risks and proposing new ideas. They provide positive reinforcement and constructive feedback, emphasizing that mistakes are part of the learning process. The administrator appropriately reinforces if there are concerns or comments that could erode patient or teammate safety. This approach encourages continuous improvement and innovation in patient care.

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more about this culture shift.

