

Psychological safety and repair: practices, not personality

People speak when speaking is safe and useful. Safety is built through observable practices: how disagreement is handled, how mistakes are treated, who carries repair, and whether input changes anything.

Why it matters

DSD staff described limited psychological safety, performance pressure, and doubt that their input changes decisions. Those are practice problems with practice answers.

Content

Make disagreement normal. Ask for the strongest case against your own idea before deciding. Thank the person who raised the concern, in front of others.

Separate unfamiliarity from intentional harm. Most harm at work comes from not knowing. Respond to unfamiliarity with information and a chance to change. Respond to intentional harm through the confidential channel.

Put repair on the person with more power. When a comment or decision lands badly, the leader names it and takes responsibility for repair. The person harmed should not have to explain, educate, or forgive on a schedule.

Show that input changed something. Every month, say what changed because someone spoke up. If nothing did, say why.

Watch the grind. Constant urgency silences people. Protect time for thinking and for saying no.

None of this replaces the confidential channel. Complaints, harassment, and discrimination go to Employee Culture, Human Resources, or the civil-rights channel.

Next steps

- **Team climate basics** — program page </library/lm-workplace-climate>
- **Strengthen team climate (Practice path)** — program page </practice/gp-4>
- **Accessible and culturally responsive meetings** — program page </library/ja-accessible-meetings>

Practice paths this supports

- Workplace culture and team climate