

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

A Monthly Newsletter from CONCERN-EAP

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Ring in the New Year by Staying Psychologically Safe in 2026

"Psychological safety is the belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking."

— Amy Edmondson, 1999

Psychological Safety

We often focus on creating physically safe environments—clear walkways, ergonomic chairs, emergency procedures. But are we paying enough attention to psychological safety?

Psychological safety, a concept developed by Harvard professor Amy Edmondson, refers to the experience of feeling safe to take interpersonal risks—like offering ideas, asking questions, or acknowledging concerns—without fear of negative social or professional consequences. While this matters in every relationship we have, it's especially essential in the workplace, where trust and communication directly influence productivity, learning, and wellbeing.

Psychological safety requires commitment from leadership and participation from every member of the team. When it is present, people speak honestly, share openly, and collaborate more effectively. When it's missing, individuals stay silent, creativity stalls, and mistakes multiply.



Work

Consider these questions about your daily work experience:

- Are you comfortable asking for help?
- If you make a mistake, how confident do you feel about telling your manager?
- If you have a new idea, how at ease are you when sharing it with your team?

If your answers were mostly "yes," you're likely experiencing a psychologically safe workplace. If several answers were "no," it may signal that your team has opportunities to strengthen trust, communication, and support.

Safe Work Environment

For Leaders: Psychological Safety Starts at the Top

- **Framework as a learning process.** Encourage curiosity, exploration, and growth rather than perfection.
- **Acknowledge your own fallibility.** Leaders who admit what they don't know create space for others to do the same.
- **Model curiosity.** Ask questions, seek input, and welcome differing perspectives.



For Employees: Everyone Contributes to Safety

- **Focus on collaborative solutions.** Ask, "What can we all do to help solve this problem?"
- **Invite feedback.** Try: "I'd love to get your thoughts on this idea."
- **Practice active listening.** Engage with colleagues' ideas respectfully and thoughtfully.
- **Show kindness during disagreements.** Respectful debate strengthens teams; dismissive reactions shut people down.
- **Build self-awareness.** Understand your triggers and patterns so you can communicate more effectively.

Why Psychological Safety Matters

Cultivating psychological safety isn't just a "nice to have"—it drives meaningful personal and organizational benefits:

- **Improved learning and continuous improvement**
- **Stronger risk management and problem solving**
- **Greater innovation and willingness to take healthy risks**
- **Higher job satisfaction and team morale**

As you step into 2026, consider how you can contribute to a more supportive, curious, and courageous work environment—one where everyone feels safe to bring their full selves to the table.

References & Resources

- Edmondson, A. C., & Bransby, D. P. (2023). Psychological safety comes of age: Observed themes in an established literature. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 10(1), 55–78. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-055217>
- Edmondson, A. C. (2018). *The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth*. John Wiley & Sons.
- [How to Ensure Your Team's Psychological Safety at Work](#)
- [11 Ways to Create Psychological Safety at Work | Achievers](#)
- [What is psychological safety at work? Here's how to start creating it](#)

If you feel you or someone you know may harm themselves or someone else:

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988

The Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQIA+ Youth: 1-866-488-7386

Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988 and Press 1

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) 24/7 Hotline: 1-800-656-4673

Dial 211: 211 provides callers with information about and referrals to social services for every day needs and in times of crisis

ADDICTION RESOURCES

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and [Spanish](#))

[Also visit the online treatment locator](#). Call: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Alcoholics Anonymous - [Northern New Jersey AA - Meeting Finder \(nnjaa.org\)](#)

Narcotics Anonymous - [NA Meetings in NJ \(narcoticsanonymousnj.org\)](#)

NJ Self Help Clearinghouse 800-367-6274 - [FIND A GROUP | NJSHGCH \(njgroups.org\)](#)

Atlantic Behavioral Health

ACCESS Center:

888-247-1400

Atlantic Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention
Services **24/7 Hotlines:**

Chilton Medical Center: 973-831-5078

Hackettstown Medical Center 908-454 -5141

Morristown Medical Center: 973-540-0100

Overlook Medical Center: 908-522-3586

Newton Medical Center: 973-383-0973

Website: www.atlantichealth.org