



# Laying the Foundation: Trust's Role in Psychological Safety







## Trust's Role in **Psychological Safety**

Driven by a deep commitment to their most valuable asset—their employees—companies are increasingly adopting psychological safety as a pivotal component of a safe, healthy, and productive workplace. While psychological safety programs provide a framework of strong vertical and horizontal support structures of methods, strategies and resources, a foundation rooted in trust is critical in the engineering of an effective, accepted and solid construction. DEKRA experts have created this white paper to present actionable insights, enabling you to build a nurturing and trusting work environment that aligns with your business objectives and ensures the well-being, satisfaction and psychological safety of your workforce.

### Key Facts:

- ▶ Psychological safety is fundamental for employees to feel confident in speaking up, sharing opinions, and engaging in creative risk-taking without fear of negative consequences.
- ▶ Trust within the workplace enables effective communication, collaboration and the fostering of a positive and productive work culture.
- ▶ Trust is a strong foundation upon which other factors of psychological safety can be built whilst also being nurtured by them through engagement and interaction.



# Trust-Building Strategies for Enhanced Psychological Safety at Work

Psychological safety is essential for enabling open expression, opinions, and risk-taking without fear of ridicule or exclusion. Trust, the foundation of successful interactions, empowers employees at all levels to communicate, collaborate, and respect each other's contributions. A lack of trust can lead to escalated conflicts, decreased productivity, increased injuries and reduced morale, highlighting the importance of building and maintaining trust for a positive and effective work environment. The following behavioral strategies can make a significant contribution to sustainably increasing the trust of your employees.

## Trust's Role in Psychological Safety

### 1. Communicate Effectively

Regularly share information about company decisions, changes and challenges in efforts to promote the transparency needed to help employees understand the direction of the organization and the context of their contribution.

Make sure words are backed up by actions and ensure consistent behavior and policies to increase credibility and build strong trust over time.

Encourage all staff to demonstrate respect by actively listening to the concerns and ideas of others so they can thoughtfully respond and show they value the input of their colleagues..

### 2. Empower Employees

Provide employees the autonomy and authority they need to confidently make decisions in their areas of expertise to verify trust in their abilities and judgement.

Ensure employees have access to the necessary support, training, mentorship and wellness resources they need to do their jobs effectively.

Lead by example demonstrating trustworthiness, reliability and openness to encourage similar behavior among employees so they can mature in their professional role.



## Trust's Role in Psychological Safety



### 3. Inspire a Winning Team

Uphold high ethical standards in all business practices to nurture a culture of trust based on honesty, fairness and integrity.

Facilitate opportunities for team members to work together and get to know one another so they can form strong relationships fostering a sense of trust and camaraderie that encourages collaboration and innovation.

Create an inclusive environment where all employees feel valued and respected regardless of their background to reinforce trust while celebrating diverse perspectives and experience.

### 4. Respond in Kind

Contribute to a transparent and supportive environment by regularly providing constructive feedback, both positive and developmental, to help employees understand their overall performance and where they can grow to achieve personal and professional success.

Approach mistakes as learning opportunities instead of assigning blame, handling failure constructively to demonstrate valuing growth and development over punishment.

Acknowledge hard work and achievements with recognition and rewards showing appreciation and reinforcing trust in the company's commitment to its employees.



## Trust as a Foundation and Product of a Psychologically Safe Workplace

Trust is a vital prerequisite for cultivating a workplace environment where all critical components of psychological safety can thrive. Without a foundation of trust, employees may hesitate to speak up, share feedback, admit mistakes, propose new ideas, or seek personal growth and recognition.

- ▶ Trust enables **questionability**, where employees feel secure to inquire and express curiosity.
- ▶ It ensures **feedback** is given and received constructively, as trust creates a buffer for the message to be interpreted as intended.
- ▶ When it comes to **error management**, trust removes the fear of retribution, encouraging individuals to report and address mistakes transparently.
- ▶ For **challenging the status quo**, trust is the safety net that allows employees to present new ideas without fear of dismissal or negative repercussions.
- ▶ **Learning and recognition** flourish in a trusting environment, where opportunities for development are sought after and people feel valued and respected.

Thus, while trust is indeed a prerequisite for these five factors of psychological safety, it is also nurtured by them. In a symbiotic relationship, each act of interaction and engagement — posing a minor question, offering a piece of feedback, reporting a slight concern, suggesting a modest change, or extending respect and value to a colleague — not only requires trust but also serves to build it further, creating a cycle of continuous reinforcement. This ongoing exchange solidifies trust as both the foundation and the product of a psychologically safe workplace.



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# DEKRA Program for Psychological Safety at Work

Focused on individual employee needs and unique company goals, the DEKRA Psychological Safety Program implements initiatives designed to promote trust throughout your work environment and corporate culture. We take a proactive, holistic approach helping you to implement psychological safety strategies and measures in four program modules.

### 1. Assessment

After evaluating the psychological safety questionnaire, our experts hold discussions, conduct personal interviews, run focus groups, report findings and make recommendations.

### 2. Development

Training and one-on-one coaching designed to motivate leaders, managers and team supervisors to increase sensibilities and accept wellbeing responsibility.

### 3. Sustainability

In efforts to maintain a long-lasting culture supporting trustworthy psychological safety, our specialists provide solid advice and effective solutions for continuous improvement.

### 4. Re-Assessment

To answer your question of "Where are we now?", DEKRA consultants conduct renewed evaluation to determine change and verify your success.

# Earning Your Trust

Our psychological safety program offers a customizable approach that ensures sustainable success and continuous improvement tailored to your unique needs. Seasoned DEKRA experts deliver high-impact leadership and workforce training, coaching your teams through real-world scenarios that affect your business. We prioritize regulatory compliance and industry standards while aligning our program to support your company goals to balance safety strategies and objectives. Our psychological safety specialists are on the ground ready to provide assistance helping you to build a trusted work environment in which your employees can thrive.

**Lay a foundation of trust to support your psychological safety success!**

**Contact Us!**



A photograph showing two workers in green safety suits and white hard hats at an industrial facility. They are looking upwards and to the right, with one worker pointing towards a large piece of machinery. The background shows complex industrial structures with pipes and tanks.

# DEKRA

## Health, Safety & Environment (HSE)

Our services aim to help organizations optimize workplace health & safety, protect the environment and foster a culture of care. With our broad ranking expertise from consulting through state-of-the-art training & education solutions, supported by digital tools and innovative software applications, we actively change the behaviors and decision-making processes that have the biggest impact on major accident prevention.

[www.dekra.com](http://www.dekra.com)

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