

Creating Psychological Safety: Strategies for Managers in Supervision

Psychological safety is essential for fostering open communication, trust, and collaboration during supervision. This checklist provides actionable steps for managers to create a safe and supportive environment for their staff.

1. Building Trust and Respect

- **Start with Transparency:**
 - Clearly explain the purpose and goals of supervision sessions.
 - Outline expectations for both parties.
- **Show Consistency:**
 - Follow through on commitments made during supervision.
 - Be dependable and reliable in your actions.
- **Model Respectful Behaviour:**
 - Actively listen without interrupting or judging.
 - Validate staff concerns and experiences.

2. Encouraging Open Communication

- **Create a Safe Space:**
 - Begin sessions with a check-in to gauge how staff are feeling.
 - Use neutral and supportive language.
- **Ask Open-Ended Questions:**
 - Encourage staff to share their thoughts and feelings freely (e.g., "What challenges are you currently facing?").
- **Acknowledge Vulnerability:**
 - Normalize discussions about mistakes or challenges by sharing your own learning experiences.

3. Providing Constructive Feedback

- **Balance Feedback:**
 - Highlight strengths and achievements before addressing areas for improvement.
 - Frame feedback around behaviours, not personal attributes.
- **Offer Solutions:**
 - Collaboratively develop action plans to address challenges.
 - Focus on opportunities for growth and development.

4. Promoting Inclusion and Equity

- **Ensure Equal Participation:**
 - Give all team members an equal opportunity to speak and share their perspectives.
 - Avoid favouritism or bias in decision-making.
- **Recognise Diverse Needs:**
 - Adapt supervision approaches to meet individual preferences and needs.
 - Be culturally sensitive and aware of potential barriers to communication.

5. Supporting Well-Being

- **Monitor Stress Levels:**
 - Ask staff about their workload and stressors during supervision.
 - Be alert to signs of burnout or secondary trauma.
- **Encourage Self-Care:**
 - Discuss strategies for maintaining work-life balance.
 - Provide resources, such as access to mental health support.

6. Encouraging Reflective Practice

- **Facilitate Reflection:**
 - Ask questions that encourage staff to think critically about their work (e.g., "What did you learn from that situation?").
- **Celebrate Learning:**
 - Recognise growth and improvement as part of ongoing development.
- **Foster Problem-Solving:**
 - Support staff in brainstorming solutions to challenges rather than offering prescriptive advice.

7. Following Up After Supervision

- **Document Key Points:**
 - Summarise discussions and agreed actions.
 - Share notes to ensure mutual understanding.
- **Check Progress:**
 - Follow up on action items in subsequent sessions.
 - Provide additional support or resources if challenges persist.