Boost Patient Safety and Provider Well-being by Enhancing Psychological Safety

Kari S. Bernard, PA-C, PhD

Associate Director of Research and Capstone Activities, ATSU-ASHS DMSc Program

Psychiatric PA, Orion Behavioral Health Network

Disclosures

- Non-Declaration Statement: I have no relevant relationships with ineligible companies to disclose within the past 24 months.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants should be able to:

Recognize how psychological safety influences patient safety and provider well-being.

Evaluate behaviors that may undermine psychological safety on healthcare teams.

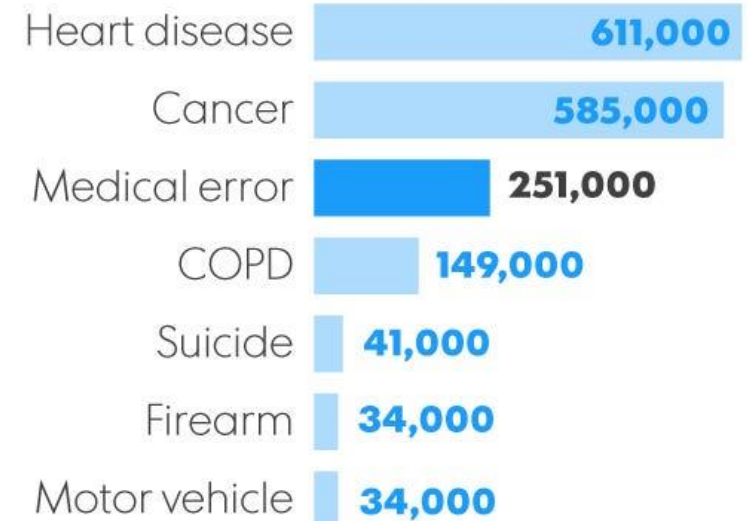Formulate action plans to increase psychological safety on healthcare teams.

Imagine…

Breaking News!

MEDICAL ERRORS NATION'S THIRD BIGGEST KILLER IN 2013

Heart disease	611,000
Cancer	585,000
Medical error	251,000
COPD	149,000
Suicide	41,000
Firearm	34,000
Motor vehicle	34,000

Source: Martin Makary, Michael Daniel study at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Jim Sergent, USA TODAY

USA TODAY

Victims of Medical Errors

1st	Patient and Family
2nd	Healthcare Worker
3rd	Hospital Reputation
4th	Subsequent Patients

Ozeke et al 2019

Second Victim Syndrome

- Committed the error
  - Traumatized by the event

- Reactions
  - Psychological, cognitive, and physical symptoms

- Many suffer in silence
  - Fear of litigation
  - Absence of well-defined reporting system

Ozeke et al 2019

Reporting of Errors Aviation

- Low error occurrence across time despite high consequence operations

- Systematic & transparent evaluation of errors

- Other industries more likely to assign blame and punishment

Rimayanti & Wijaya 2018

Reporting of Errors Across Industries

- Study of employees from 5 non-healthcare industries:
  - 2.48 unreported events for every reported event
- Study of 8 units in 2 hospitals
  - High functioning teams reported higher error rates
  - More likely to report errors, not more likely to commit errors

Applebaum et al 2016; Rosenbaum 2019

Barriers to Reporting Medical Errors

- Fears of:
  - Reprisal
  - Litigation
  - Loss of status
  - Damage to career
- Others individual factors:
  - Time constraints
  - Lack of knowledge of what's reportable
  - Belief that reporting won't change anything
- External factors:
  - Unsupportive colleagues
  - Power differences hindering communication
  - Culture of silence

Applebaum et al 2016

Accurate and Timely Reporting of Medical Errors

- Mitigates current and future harm
- Allows for root cause analysis
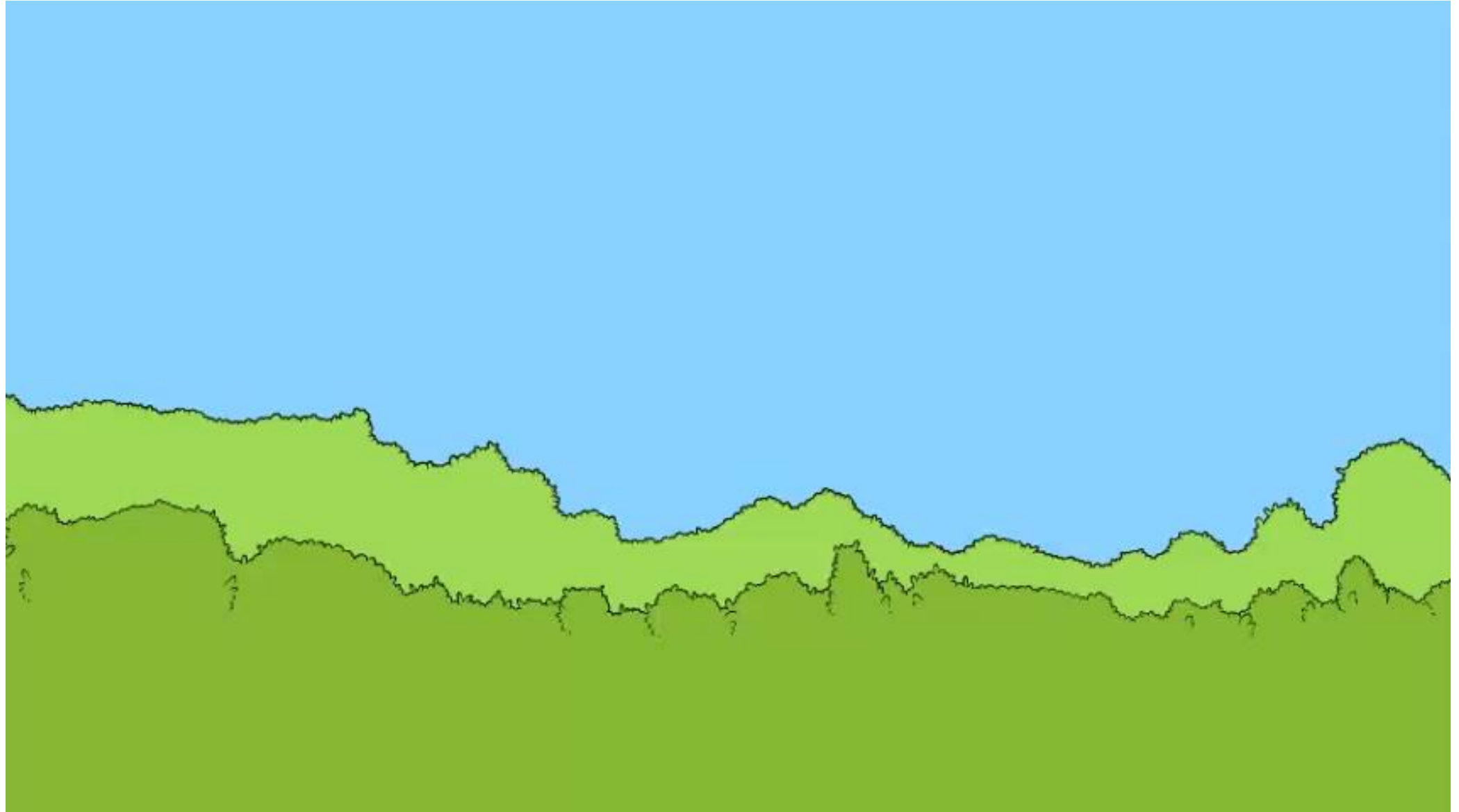- Facilitates recovery for second victims

Psychological Safety

The degree to which team members feel that their environment is supportive of asking for help, trying new ways of doing things, and learning from mistakes
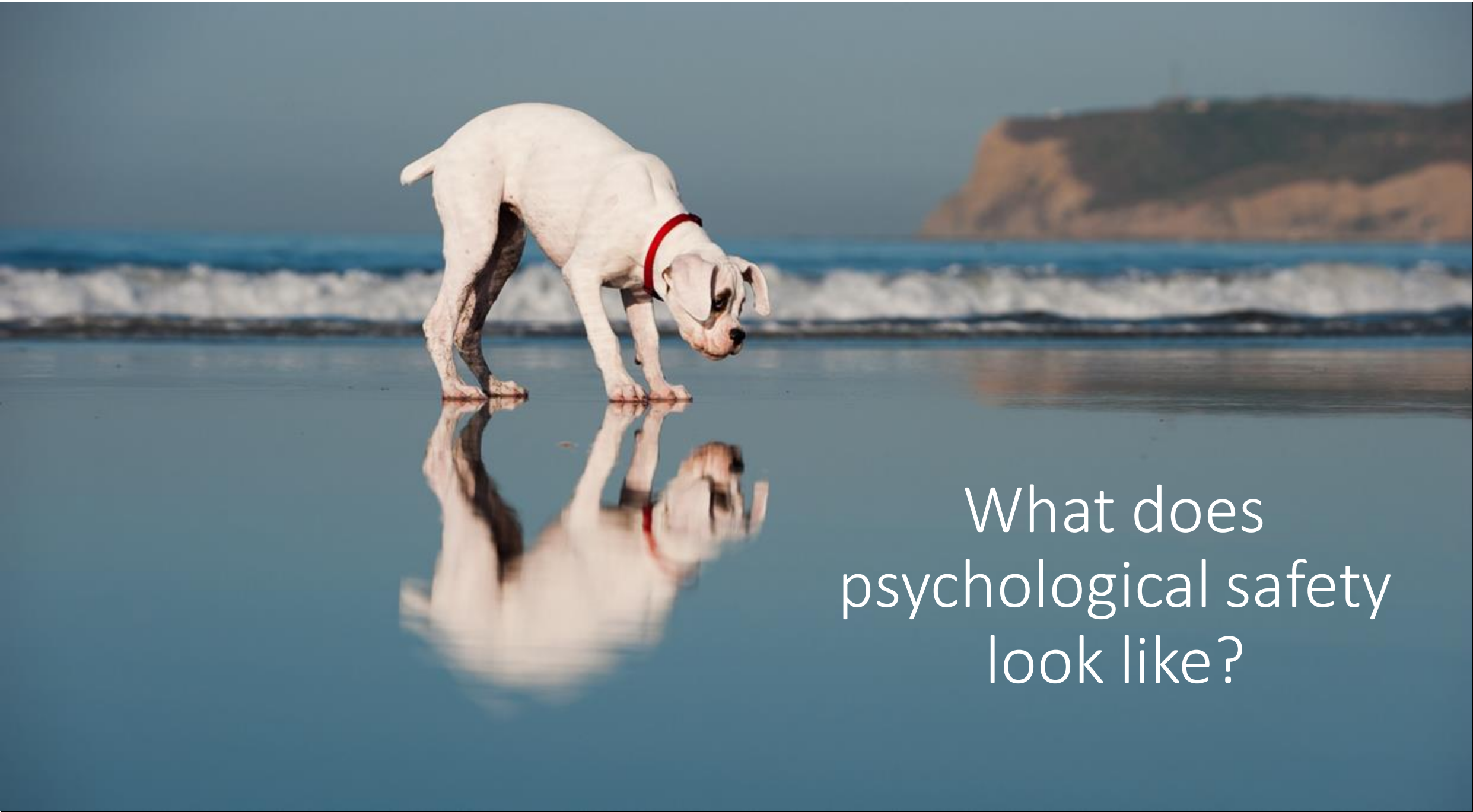
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Why is Psychological Safety Important in Healthcare?

Learning

Risk Management

Innovation

Job Satisfaction and Meaning

Edmondson, IHI Open School video

What does psychological safety look like?

Seven Categories of Behaviors

- Productive Voice Behaviors
- Supportive Behaviors
- Learning or Improvement-oriented Behaviors
- Familiarity-type Behaviors
- Defensive Voice Behaviors
- Silence Behaviors
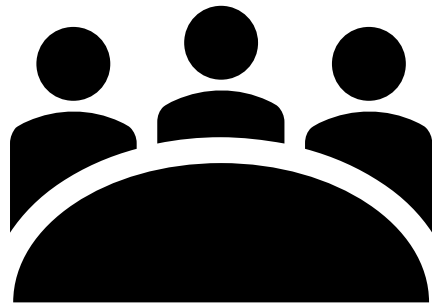- Unsupportive Behaviors

O'Donovan et al. 2020

Behaviors that Promote Psychological Safety

Productive Voice Behaviors

- Communicating opinions of others even if they disagree
- Asking questions
- Providing information, feedback, help or solutions
- Correcting others

O'Donovan et al. 2020

Useful phrases during team meetings:

"Let's call each other by our first names."

"Let's go around and hear everyone's reaction."

"It's fine to disagree."

"Maybe someone has a different perspective."
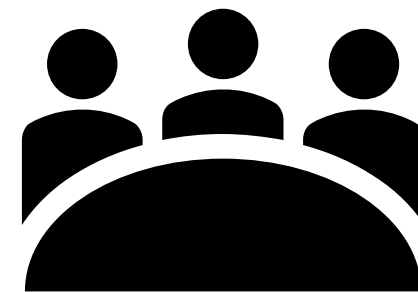
AHRQ EvidenceNOW Initiative

Useful phrases during team meetings:

"If you see anything amiss, please speak up."

"Is anyone concerned about anything we just talked about?"

"What a great observation. Let's think as a team about how we can solve this problem."

"Brainstorming is about throwing out a lot of ideas. We're not judging now whether they're good or not."
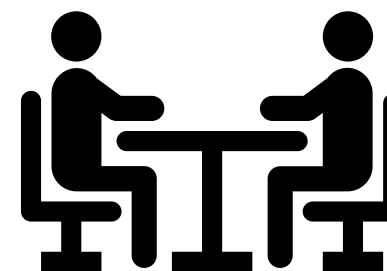
Useful phrases during one-on-one meetings:

"Thanks for pointing out my mistake. You just saved me from a big blunder."

"I'm not sure we're following the protocol correctly. Let's check."

"That's a great point. Can you bring it up at our huddle tomorrow morning?"

"As long as I'm not with a patient, feel free to grab me anytime."

Frame the Work:

- Underscore what makes working in healthcare meaningful
  - Even if it seems obvious
  - It should be stated and regularly repeated
  - **Working in healthcare has a profound impact on others!**
- Emphasize the high consequence nature of healthcare
  - High potential for error
  - Uncertain outcomes
  - Interdependence on other team members

Edmondson, IHI Open School video

Supportive Behaviors

- Sharing knowledge, experience, and future plans

- Active listening

- Using inclusive language

- Agreeing/responding positively to input

- Acknowledging achievements

- Delegating tasks

O'Donovan et al. 2020

Leader Behaviors

Inclusiveness

Change-orientation

Trustworthiness

Ethical

Aranzamendez et al. 2015

Significant Leader Inclusiveness Relationships

- Leader inclusiveness:
  - Positively predicted psychological safety ($\beta = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$)
- Psychological safety:
  - Positively predicted intention to report medical errors ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$)
  - Significantly mediated the direct relationship between leader inclusiveness and intention to report adverse events (indirect effect = 0.17, $p < 0.001$)

Applebaum et al. 2018

Significant Power Distance Relationships
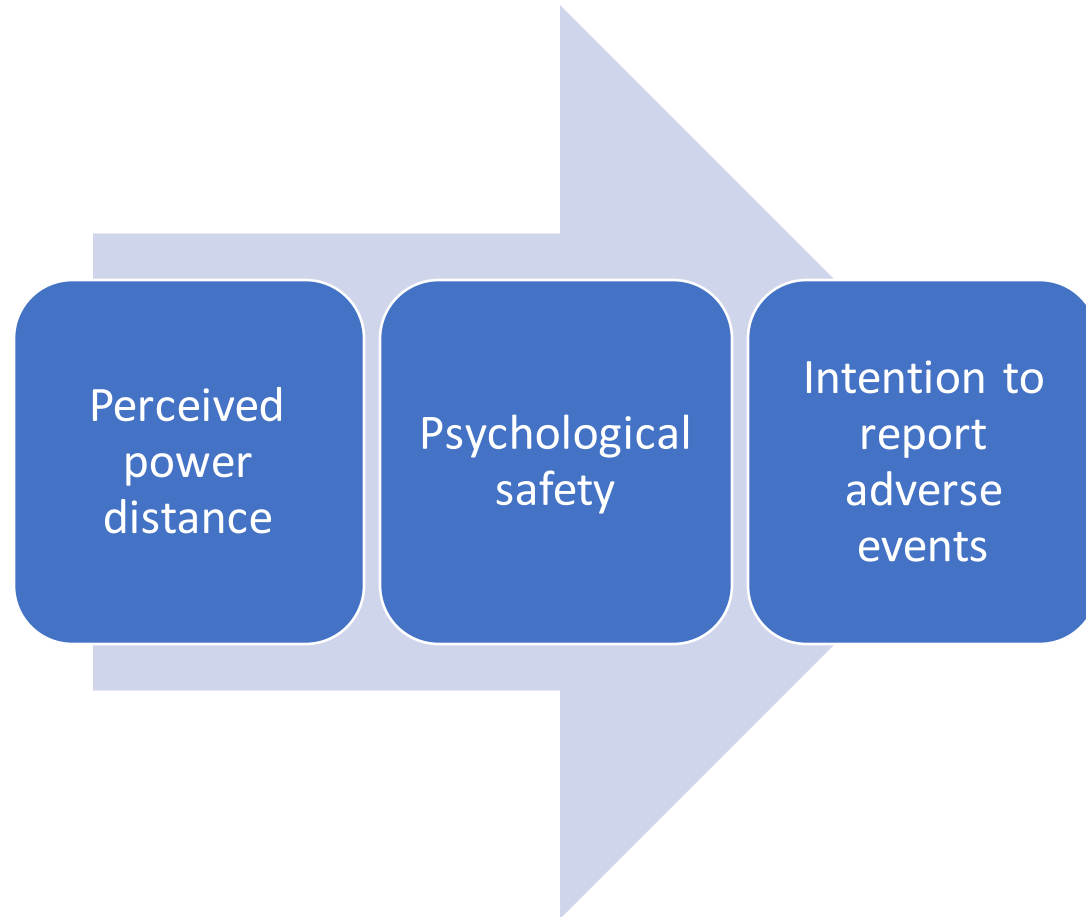
- Perceived power distance:
  - Negatively predicted psychological safety (β = -0.26, *p* < 0.001)
- Psychological safety:
  - Significantly mediated the direct relationship between power distance and intention to report adverse events (indirect effect = -0.09, *p* < 0.001)

Applebaum et al. 2018

Learning or Improvement-Oriented Behaviors

- Reviewing own progress and performance

- Asking for feedback or help from all meeting participants

- Informing the team about patient safety concerns

- Acknowledging own mistakes

- Looking for improvement opportunities

O'Donovan et al. 2020

Model Fallibility:

- Admit to being imperfect and exhibit congruent behaviors

- Emphasize that it takes everyone to ensure patient safety

- Lower the psychological risk of speaking up by asking direct and genuine questions

Edmondson, IHI Open School video

Embrace Messengers

- Incentivize speaking up
- When people openly share, make it a positive experience
- Close the loop by responding to input

Familiarity-type Behaviors

- Talking about personal, non-work matters
- Laughing about a joke

O'Donovan et al. 2020

Behaviors that Detract from Psychological Safety

Defensive Voice Behaviors

- Denying faults or blaming others
- Showing aggression by raising one's voice or using large gestures
- Evading confrontation by only focusing on the positive

O'Donovan et al. 2020

Silence Behaviors

- Facial expression of fear or disengagement
- Closed body language like arms closed or leaning backwards

O'Donovan et al. 2020

Unsupportive Behaviors

- Interrupting
- Discussions within small sub-groups
- Reacting cold/ignoring a joke

O'Donovan et al. 2020

Cultivate Psychological Safety Indirectly

Team Mindfulness or a Climate of Authenticity

Team Mindfulness

Applying an intrapersonal skill in an interpersonal manner

Yu & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2017

Intrapersonal Practice of Mindfulness

- Directing attention to points of focus, like one's breath or bodily sensation

- Maintaining an attitude of nonjudgment and openness to what is happening in the present moment.

- Recognizing that one is separate from their physical, emotional, or mental experiences

Yu & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2017

Interpersonal Application of Mindfulness

A commitment to interact with the following principles:

- Focus on the present moment so that details are clear and accurate

- Apply an attitude of tolerance, responsiveness, and openness when processing together

- Maintain a kind and compassionate intention

Yu & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2017

Team Mindfulness

Especially helpful after a mistake has occurred

Emotions are HIGH

Team mindfulness allows better processing and learning from mistakes:

| Improved communication | Decreased conflict | Increased teamwork |

Yu & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2017

Climate of Authenticity

- Allows for expression of authenticate emotions

- Without fear of embarrassment, rejection, or retaliation

- Within the safety of the team

Grandey et al., 2012

Emotional Labor

Felt Emotions

vs.

Display Rules

Correlated with

Emotional Exhaustion & Burnout

Grandey et al., 2012

Climate of Authenticity

- Helpful in workplaces with high conflict and emotional labor

- Provides a respite from emotional labor

- Enhances team trust

- Buffers the development of burnout from emotional labor

Grandey et al., 2012

Circumstances Requiring Psychological Safety

- Asking a question
- Requesting help
- Saying: *I don't know*
- Seeking feedback
- Proposing a novel idea
- Admitting an error

PAs are Healthcare Leaders

Advocate	Advocate for psychological safety
Adopt	Adopt behaviors that will facilitate psychological safety on your teams
Break down	Break down power distance to encourage open sharing

Take Home Points

Medical errors cause significant harm to patients and their families, but also create second victims in the health care workers directly or indirectly responsible for the error.

Creating a psychologically safe environment increases the sense of safety when mistakes occur, which has a downstream effect on learning from mistakes and preventing their recurrence.

Psychological safety can be cultivated with key leadership behaviors like using open and inclusive language, minimizing power distances, modelling fallibility, and responding with gratitude to feedback.

Psychological safety can also be indirectly cultivated through the principles of team mindfulness or by generating a climate of authenticity.

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Questions?

kari.bernard@atsu.edu