

Professional Support Unit

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW), Tŷ Dysgu

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Team Support (2)

Psychological Safety

As managers, from time to time, you may notice increased anxiety in staff members, and you may be concerned about how to support staff around work based distress, loss and broader coping.

This document is part of a series of resources for managers, put together by the PSU, offering tips and tools to support you to support your colleagues. Some of these may also be useful for you to think about yourself too – **your wellbeing is paramount as you care for others.**



We've got this – we're making a difference

Adapted from resources developed by the Staff Wellbeing Psychology Team

North Bristol NHS Trust - staffwellbeingpsychology@nbt.nhs.uk

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Psychological safety

A large study by **Google**, influenced by the Harvard Research Professor Amy Edmonson, looked at what leads to the most high performing teams. They found that 5 factors have been shown to be present in effective teams (the others were being able to depend on colleagues, structure and clarity re: their roles, doing meaningful work, feeling their work makes a difference).

The most important factor is Psychological safety – psychological safety is present when team members feel able to speak up, acknowledge their vulnerability, without being judged or feeling shamed. This is especially important during challenging periods, where people's threat system, is likely to be more triggered.

As managers, you can foster **psychological safety** by:



Demonstrating engagement e.g. be present and focus on the conversation (close your laptop, look away from your phone, listen with intent; be aware of body language)



Showing Understanding e.g. validate what people share 'what I heard you say is..'



Being inclusive in interpersonal settings e.g. express gratitude to your team – both 'down' and 'up'



Be inclusive in decision making e.g. gather feedback from team members and explain reasoning for decisions



Show confidence and conviction without appearing inflexible e.g. support and represent your team

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Your own wellbeing as a manager

It is really important to remember that '**it is ok not to be ok**'.

It's common to focus on the wellbeing of others first but as managers we must look after ourselves and each other as best we can, so that you can be well resourced to support others. As the saying goes 'We need to put our own oxygen masks on before helping others'.

Support and resources available to all (including you as a manager):

A selection of open access, supportive, resources and tools, including playlists, resources and tools available for download here:

<https://psu.walesdeanery.org/support-services/resource-locator>

Wellbeing Resources from Health Boards and Trusts across NHS Wales:

<https://leadershipportal.heiw.wales/go/cp92la> -

Health for Healthcare Professionals: <https://www.hhpwales.co.uk/> or call **0800 058 2738** or email - Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

BMA Doctors-for-Doctors: <http://bma.org.uk/practical-support-at-work/doctors-well-being/about-doctors-for-doctors> or call **08459 200 169 (landline: 01455 254 189)** - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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The resources in this series:

1: Supporting staff: 5 levels of care

2: Psychological safety: How managers can help foster this key area

3: Psychological first aid: How to respond to distress in your colleagues

4: How to support staff with acute anxiety or panic – a brief grounding exercise

5: 3 Step team procedure (including STOP for 15)

6: Team / peer to peer psychological debriefing

7: Other tips for supporting your team

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