

# Fact sheet

## The business case for positive communication

Psychologically safe workplaces with positive communication have staff with higher engagement and better mental health, plus lower turnover. When there is a culture of positive communication (rather than a **culture of silence**), problems can be raised, issues addressed and accidents minimised or avoided.



### Psychological safety

- = higher commitment to the organisation
- = higher performance
- = higher wellbeing



### High psychological safety

- = higher worker engagement
- = better mental health
- = lower staff turnover



### Low psychological safety

- = disengaged employees (which can lead to more safety risks)
- = high turnover (which leads to less experienced workers and higher costs)



### Teams with higher psychological safety

- = higher performance
- = more likely to achieve their goals



### Open and honest communication, where people are less worried about what other people think

- = saved time
- = more clarity
- = generate new ideas and innovation



### Trusting and respectful relationships

- = ideas expressed and conversations had without fear of embarrassment
- = less conflict

A diverse workforce (including cultural background, age, gender, as well as diversity of experience and expertise) can add to innovation and performance, but only if the workplace is psychologically safe.



**Diversity plus psychological safety = high performance**



**Diversity and low psychological safety = low performance**

Many serious workplace accidents and project breakdowns can be minimised or avoided if staff feel able to speak up or, in some cases, listened to by senior management. In one study<sup>1</sup>, 85% of respondents reported at least one time when they felt unable to raise an issue with their boss even though they felt it was important.

Research shows teams with low psychological safety rely more on 'work arounds' for problems, compared with those with high psychological safety who identify the problem and improve the system, so it doesn't happen again.

<sup>1</sup> Mayfield, J., & Mayfield, M. (2002). Leader communication strategies critical paths to improving employee commitment. *American Business Review*, 20(2), 89–94. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinane.2016.04.021>