

Definitions of Emotional and Psychological Safety

Emotional safety can be defined as "a perceived freedom from psychological harm that can be measured on a continuum from feeling threatened to feeling safe. An individual's position on the continuum at any given moment is dependent on the amount of trust he/she has in himself/herself and in the group members."

Vincent, S. (1995). Emotional safety in adventure therapy programmes: can it be defined? Journal of Experiential Education, 18(2), 76-81.

"Emotional safety" - security; willingness to reveal how one really feels,

From: Psychological Sense of Community: Theory of McMillan & Chavis (1986). The literature review chapter of Dr. Stephen Wright's doctoral dissertation, "Exploring Sense of Community in Living-Learning Program~ and in the University as a Whole". <http://www.wam.umd.edu/~stwrigh/html/psych/sense-of-community.html>

Psychological safety is defined as 'feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career'.

Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. Academy of Management Journal, 33,692-724, P 708.

Team psychological safety is defined as a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking. For the most part, this belief tends to be tacit - taken for granted and not given direct attention either by individuals or by the team as a whole. Although tacit beliefs about interpersonal norms are sometimes explicitly discussed in a team, their being made explicit does not alter the essence of team psychological safety. The construct has roots in early research on organisational change, in which Schein and Bennis (1965) discussed the need to create psychological safety for individuals if they are to feel secure and capable of changing. Team psychological safety is not the same as group cohesiveness, as research has shown that cohesiveness can reduce willingness to disagree and challenge others' views, such as in the phenomenon of groupthink (Janis, 1982), implying a lack of interpersonal risk taking. The term is meant to suggest neither a careless sense of permissiveness, nor an unrelentingly positive affect but, rather, a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject, or punish someone for speaking up. This confidence stems from mutual respect and trust among team members.

Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behaviour in work teams. Administrative Science Quarterly, 44, 350-383.

We have defined an emotionally safe classroom as "a place where I can

- a) be myself and express my feelings and share my circumstances without fear
- b) connect with a person (adult) and a group who value and respect me."

Laurens, B. (2004). Places of Emotional Safety: Creating classrooms where "I can ". ChildrenFirst, Issue 53. www.eye-net.org/cyc-online/cyeol-0304-childrenfirst.html