Psychological Protection

Have you ever had to report a problem to your supervisor at work? What about when you made a mistake? Or even when you wanted to bring up something that you weren't sure would be a popular opinion? What about a time when you felt burnt out at work? Did you feel safe bringing this up? Were you ever afraid that this might affect your job in a negative way?

Does YOUR employer encourage or even appreciate workers who speak up? A workplace where you feel safe sharing ideas or asking questions, without being afraid that something bad may happen is a workplace that models good PSYCHOLOGICAL PROTECTION. Workplaces that value psychological protection value their workers' emotional well-being.

A lot of times, we think of safety as a concept limited to PHYSICAL risks. This could be working with chemicals, in dangerous or high risk environments, or around infectious diseases. Safety isn't always just about what might hurt your BODY, but also what might hurt your MIND. There are situations at work that can be harmful or unsafe for your mental health. Let's look at an example.

This is Deepak. Deepak is not having a great time at work lately. Deepak is a creative thinker and usually has some big ideas. He feels that his suggestions are often brushed aside. He is not sure if that is because of the quality of his ideas or that his supervisor just doesn't want input from the team. Deepak is even staring to think that sharing ideas might be putting his job at risk. He no longer feels safe. What could Deepak's workplace do to make sure that he feels psychologically protected?

Although not everyone may feel comfortable doing so, it's important that we all speak up. It's also important for managers to encourage an environment where workers feel safe to speak up and be heard. Managers can also be the ones to approach workers and ask for their opinions. Allowing employees to contribute positive solutions and ideas leads to reduced conflict, fewer job-related errors, accidents or injuries, better compliance to rules and regulations, and reduced bullying and harassment.

Having processes, policies, and an organizational culture that encourages worker input and feedback is essential. It ensures that workers are contributing to their maximum potential and feel energized in their work. Leaders have a responsibility to promote, model, and reinforce these practices.

Workplace culture makes a big difference in how safe people feel. Embrace new ideas. See discussions as moments of learning, sharing, and collaboration. Embrace mistakes- that's how we learn! Have opportunities for workers to have open and confidential chats with their supervisors. A culture of sharing can be embedded in your daily workplace environment, such as during meetings, while working toward project concepts, or even when working through deadlines.

After watching this video, make a list of the things your workplace does to keep you psychologically protected. What's one thing you can do to make your workplace feel even safer?

Psychological protection is one of 13 factors that support psychological health and safety in the workplace Learn more at: *MentalHealthCommission.ca/NationalStandard*

For more resources for your workplace, check out *haveTHATtalk.ca*.