

Psychological SAFETY

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE COMMITTEE AT LANCASTER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HOSPITAL

What is Psychological Safety?

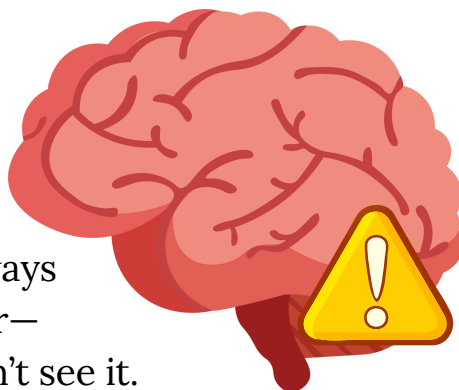
Take a look around you. Are you safe? Or are you in danger? And how can you tell? For some people, feeling safe is the most natural thing.

For many people, though, life experiences have taught them that safety is rare, and the world is dangerous. So dangerous that they always feel that sense of danger—*especially* when they can't see it.

To some of us, this might seem delusional. But it's usually a biologically appropriate response; it's just unhelpful in physically safe settings.

So, how can you help someone who feels a sense of danger with no particular threat? Telling them that the danger isn't real is a bad start. Instead, this is where psychological safety comes into play.

Psychological safety is simply taking someone's sense of danger seriously and attending to it.



ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice and Choice
6. Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues

These are the *Six Principles of Trauma-Informed Care*, identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). As a part of LBHH's commitment to trauma-informed care, our hospital pays special attention to one principle each month.

Psychological **SAFETY**

What is Psychological Safety? continued:

Have a history of feeling trapped? A locked door will likely make you feel unsafe. Have a traumatic history with men? A male physician might make you feel unsafe, too.

These feelings are rooted in real experiences, and should always be taken seriously. At the same time, by building rapport and offering clear, consistent communication, the feeling of danger can subside. Communication is the vehicle for trust.

When someone feels unsafe, they're more likely to behave unsafely. And attending to psychological safety is the first step to preventing unsafe behavior.

Psych**SAFETY** Looks Like...

- Communicating clearly when physical safety makes someone feel unsafe
- Taking someone's sense of danger seriously, even without understanding it
- Recognizing what stirs up a sense of danger in yourself, even if the danger's not present
- Building rapport with someone by learning about what's important to them

Word of the Month

neu·ro·cep·tion *noun*
the neural process that tells the difference between safe and dangerous situations

Next
Month's
Theme

**TRUSTWORTHINESS AND
TRANSPARENCY**