A Practical Toolkit for Leaders

Fostering Psychological Safety in the Food and Beverage Service Sector

Contents

The current issue

The Canadian food and beverage (F&B) sector has been struggling with staff turnover and high vacancy rates, a trend worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. In early 2020, job vacancies in this sector were 4.4%, but by early 2022 they had leaped to 11.9%.[1] In December 2023, Alberta's F&B sector had the highest vacancy rates in the province.[2]

One promising solution is to focus on hiring and retaining newcomer young adults—those aged 18 to 29 who arrived in Canada within the past five years. In 2020, this group had a unemployment rate of 19.8%.[3] By fostering inclusivity and psychological safety in the workplace, businesses can attract newcomers and boost overall staff retention and well-being.

The Government of Alberta is working in partnership with the Government of Canada to provide employment support programs and services.

Introduction

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit provides F&B sector leaders with practical tools to foster an inclusive and psychologically safe work environment. It is part of a training and capacity-building initiative to create workplaces that support newcomer young adult employment, aiming to help improve employee hiring and retention in the F&B sector. This toolkit is intended for supervisors, operators, managers, and executive chefs, who will be referred to as "leaders" throughout. This toolkit was developed to support newcomer young adult workers, but improving psychological safety benefits all staff.

This toolkit was informed by focus groups with supervisors, chefs, managers, and newcomer youth with experience in the F&B sector. Two focus groups were held with four newcomer youth, and one focus group was held with six leaders of F&B businesses. Their experiences, narratives, and lived-experience scenarios are featured throughout this toolkit. Quotations with a name attached are from community partners who were part of the Project Planning Team.

This toolkit will help you to:
- Understand psychological safety
- Learn about the impacts of a psychologically safe workplace
- Develop skills to advocate for psychologically safe business practices
- Build psychologically safe leadership skills
- Learn about ways to care for your team's mental well-being
- Learn strategies to evaluate your workplace's level of psychological safety

You can navigate this toolkit at your own pace and in any order. You can choose where to begin based on your current needs, goals, or challenges. In the first section, you'll find background information about psychological safety and its importance to the F&B sector. In the second section, you'll learn promising practices across four action areas: creating strong business practices, building leadership skills, providing your team with access to well-being supports, and evaluating your workplace's progress. The toolkit also contains reflection questions and supporting resources. You are not expected to apply every strategy or try everything at once. To get the most out of the toolkit, we encourage you to share and discuss it with your staff and management teams. You can return to this toolkit to review content and strategies as needed.

Introduction to psychological safety

What is psychological safety?

The term psychological safety was coined by Dr. Amy Edmondson, who defines the concept as "...a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking".[4] Psychological safety can be more broadly defined as a workplace climate where all team members feel included, safe to learn, safe to contribute, and safe to challenge the status quo – all without fear of embarrassment, rejection, or punishment.[5] This assurance is built on mutual respect and trust within the team.[6]

Employees experience psychological safety when they feel free to openly communicate by sharing their ideas, taking initiative, pointing out problems or challenges, and having the courage to question assumptions.[6] An inclusive and psychologically safe work environment also means reduced distress and harm experienced by employees while at work.[7] If employees are less fearful, they can focus on learning, doing their job, and preventing problems.

Integrating actions to support psychological safety in the workplace is key to supporting newcomer young adult well-being. It fosters a culture of inclusion, learning, growth, and a sense of belonging.

Why is psychological safety important?

The F&B sector can be a high-stress, high-pressure environment with long work hours.[8] Many F&B leaders want to redefine their workplace culture away from the misconceptions of bullying and other unkind behaviours shared in mainstream media.

Building psychological safety can create a work environment that supports well-being and employee retention and is critical for effective teamwork.[9]

What are the key considerations?

Dr. Timothy Clark's four stages of psychological safety provide a framework to guide this toolkit. You can use this framework to assess the stage of psychological safety in any workplace.[5, 10] Employees can feel psychologically safe once all stages of safety are addressed.

The stages are:

* **Inclusion safety.** Inclusion safety means that team members feel they belong. This involves feeling respected, having a voice, and fostering workplace diversity and inclusion.

* **Learner safety.** Learner safety includes feeling secure and able to make mistakes without fear. Fostering a culture where employees are encouraged and supported to take risks and learn from their mistakes builds learner safety.

* **Contributor safety.** Contributor safety means feeling valued for your contributions. This includes being able to share ideas without fear. It involves building a culture where individuals are empowered to use their unique qualities, experiences, and perspectives to contribute to the workplace.

* **Challenger safety.** Challenger safety is about feeling comfortable questioning the status quo and voicing potential issues or concerns. It includes creating an environment that encourages individuals to voice their opinions, offer different viewpoints, and seek continuous improvement.

Each action shared in this toolkit aligns with one or more stages of psychological safety. Consider each of these four stages as you learn about and try the promising practices below.

"As manager... I'll talk, I sit down and talk to my whole staff about... how there's no yelling, no screaming in your kitchen. There's different diversities, there's different things. My door's always open. Come discuss with me before it gets too crazy, because what they think and what is actually happening, you know, is the total two different things...."
– Food and Beverage Manager

What are the impacts of improved psychological safety?

Fostering psychological safety is a key business strategy. F&B businesses with lower levels of psychological safety tend to have high employee turnover rates, low employee engagement, employee reluctance to voice their thoughts and opinions, and employee resistance to business changes.[11]

Creating an inclusive and psychologically safe work environment in the F&B sector can lead to improved outcomes in many areas, including:

* **Improved customer service.** Enhanced employee attitudes and focus on work can lead to increased customer service and customer satisfaction.[12]

* **Greater innovation and creativity.** Reduced anxiety and fear at work can foster learning, creativity, and growth, driving business innovation.[13]

* **Increased employee engagement.** Better work attitudes,[13] improved teamwork, and greater problem-solving skills boost productivity and efficiency.[12]

* **Improved employee well-being.**
  Strengthened relationships with management and colleagues[12] and less workplace anxiety[6] contribute to improved mental health and a stronger sense of well-being. Psychological safety also helps prevent issues related to workplace discrimination and harassment.[12]

* **Higher employee retention rates.**
  Highly satisfied employees are more likely to stay long-term.[12] Psychological safety also encourages engagement in future business decisions, directions, and transformations.[12]

Areas of action

The first section of this toolkit covered what is psychological safety, why it's important, and the potential impacts of improving psychological safety in your workplace. The next section contains strategies for you to put into action. There are four areas of action:

- Creating strong business practices
- Building your leadership skills
- Providing your team with access to well-being supports
- Evaluating your workplace's progress

For each area of action there are promising practices, real-world examples, and valuable resources. The strategies emphasize newcomer young adult experiences and centre equity, diversity, and inclusion practices.

Area of Action 1

Create strong business practices

Take a moment to read this lived experience story on the impact of strong business practices:

Just over a year ago, 19-year-old Dalia moved from Egypt to Canada. She landed a job at a fast-food restaurant and was pleasantly surprised by the organized training structure. Paired with another newcomer young adult as a peer-buddy, Dalia received not just training but also support settling into the workplace. This experience empowered her, helped her master her new job, find a friend in her peer buddy, and greatly aided her integration into the workplace and Canada.

Creating strong business practices can support a psychologically safe workplace. This training topic offers business decisions and policies you and your leadership team can implement.

As part of Occupational Health and Safety legislation in Alberta, employers are required to identify and eliminate or control workplace hazards, including psychosocial hazards.[9] Psychosocial hazards are elements in the work environment that cause workers stress, strain, or interpersonal problems. Identifying a workplace hazard is the first step in eliminating the hazard or controlling the impact of the hazard on employees.

To create strong business practices, you can:

Develop clear workplace discrimination, harassment, and bullying policies and procedures

Workplace policies can help ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment. These policies can support employee management and responding to issues. It's important to note that policies do not have to be long, complex documents. They can be simple and outline a few key guidelines to follow.

Supporting resource: The Canadian Human Rights Commission has an Anti-Harassment Policy Template that can be used to create your own policies.

* **Here are some promising practices:**
- Create new or ensure current policies outline zero-tolerance for discrimination, harassment, incivility, and bullying in the workplace.[14]
- Ensure policies are communicated to all employees through handbooks, training sessions, posters, at orientation, and throughout the term of employment.
- Establish a system for reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination or harassment promptly and fairly. All employees should understand how to report adverse workplace behaviours.
- Policies should include:
  - Purpose of the policy
  - Definition of workplace discrimination, harassment, and bullying
  - Rights and responsibilities of employees and employer
  - Informal and formal complaint process
  - Investigation process
  - Statement about confidentiality

Recognize and address workplace inequities

Workplace inequity refers to the unfair and unequal treatment or experiences of employees based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, or other characteristics.[15] Unconscious bias, also known as implicit bias, refers to the attitudes, stereotypes, and perceptions that individuals hold about certain groups of people without conscious awareness.[16] Training can help you learn about unconscious bias and develop tools to create a more inclusive and safe work environment.

Supporting resources:
- The Centre for Race and Culture has a Microinequities Resource.
- The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research has developed an Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit to support employers in recognizing and addressing microinequities in the hiring and recruitment process.

"If we include this cross-cultural training of the onboarding process to understand different cultures, because we all from different, diverse point of views, diverse cultures, it's easier to navigate your employment, or for the employee or the employer to understand what is expected out of you."

– **Food and Beverage Leader**

* **Here are some promising practices:**
  - Attend training to help you recognize and address inequities and bias in the workplace. Consider making this mandatory for leaders.
  - External biases from customers can impact employee well-being. Support employees experiencing microinequities and biases from customers by providing opportunities to debrief and brainstorm strategies to navigate these situations.
  - Pair all employees with peers who can offer guidance and support. Encourage regular check-ins with one another.
  - Review recruitment strategies to ensure that all stages of recruitment, including the job description, selection of candidates, and interview, are equitable. See a linked example on the left.

To create strong business practices, you can:

Implement new conflict resolution strategies and practices

Conflict will arise in every team. Conflict resolution strategies can be used to address and resolve disputes fairly and effectively.

Supporting resource: The Mental Health Commission of Canada has a Manager's Toolkit to Resolving Conflict to support conflict resolution.

✽ **Here are some promising practices:**
- Attend training on inclusive, psychologically safe conflict resolution practices, and embed these strategies in workplace policies.
- Practice sharing your own cultural norms and communication preferences with staff. For example, whether you are more direct or less direct with how you communicate.
- During check-ins or team meetings, communicate your previous strategies for addressing conflict. Invite employees to share their experiences.

Provide consistent recognition and appreciation of employees

Recognizing the role that employees play in workplace culture and a successful business is important for sustaining a psychologically safe workplace. Appreciation supports employee well-being and retention.[17]

Supporting resource: Culture AMP provides a blog post with 20 Employee Recognition Ideas.

✽ **Here are some promising practices:**
- Hold an 'Inclusive Employee of the Month' recognition award.
- Host a celebratory lunch or food-based gathering for all employees.

To create strong business practices, you can:

Promote and role model positive work-life balance

All employees have competing priorities in their lives, including commitments to themselves, their families, and their communities. Being mindful of work-life balance can promote employee well-being and improve retention.

Supporting resource: The Canadian Mental Health Association has a [Work Life Balance Brochure](#).

✳ **Here are some promising practices:**
- Lead by example by setting boundaries with work hours.
- Offer flexible scheduling options where possible. We have developed a toolkit on [Flexible Shift Scheduling](#).
- Provide resources for stress management and mental health support.
- Provide time off for mental health and well-being.

Celebrate diversity by recognizing cultural holidays and other events within the workplace

All employees have unique cultural backgrounds. Building safety around inclusion means employees feel respected and that they belong. Celebrating diversity by recognizing cultural holidays within the workplace helps foster psychological safety.

"What's your habits? Like, what are you doing at home? What are you eating? What [are] you doing for different types of holidays? That I would say, would help me just communicate."
– Food and Beverage Leader

✳ **Here are some promising practices:**
- Check in with employees about important cultural holidays or events.
- Offer employees substitution days off in exchange for recognized holidays.
- Learn a few words in the languages spoken by employees.
- Host an employee potluck where everyone can share foods that are important to them.

Supporting resource: Together Platform offers [13 Actionable Ways](#) to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the workplace.

To create strong business practices, you can:

Implement a peer-buddy program to support new employee orientation

A peer-buddy program allows new employees to connect with more experienced staff who can provide informal support, guidance, and training. These programs can improve training processes, help reduce feelings of isolation, and give a sense of community within the workplace.

Supporting resource: The Project Management Institute has a paper on the Peer Buddy System.

✳ **Here are some promising practices:**
- Implement a peer-buddy program where new employees can connect with more experienced staff.
- Schedule job shadowing opportunities during training for new employees to learn how others approach tasks similar to those they are responsible for.

Case scenario reflection: Advocate for strong business practices

As described at the beginning of this section, the business that Dalia works for has built strong practices over time, including an organized training structure and a peer-buddy system. Now, envision the future of your own business. In the next five years, how can your business practices evolve to offer similar support for your staff? What are the first small steps you can take?

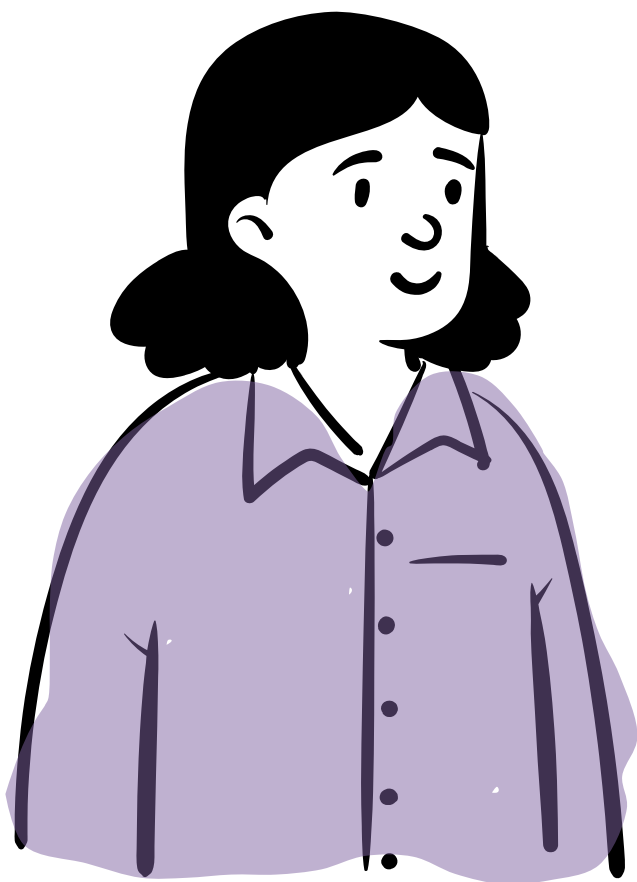Take three minutes to write about your vision. The goal is to write non-stop with no editing or judging.

Area of Action 2

Build your leadership skills

"Including and leading by example are my two biggest things in my kitchen, and I will do anything and I try and help."
– Food and Beverage Leader

Strengthening leadership skills can play a fundamental role in building and sustaining a psychologically safe work environment. There is a connection between leadership, psychological safety, and proactive learning behaviours among employees.[12] Understanding factors that build leadership skills is crucial for shaping workplace culture.

Leaders have a role in:

- Developing employee potential and supporting their active engagement in the business.[18]
- Cultivating a workplace culture that prioritizes equity, diversity, and inclusion.[19]
- Balancing workplace safety while encouraging innovation, creativity, and employee growth.[19]
- Monitoring and assessing the levels of psychological safety at work.[19]

"I would say in [fast food chain], that I like this job because when I started, they're all treating me like I have friends from multiple countries, from multiple nations in different cultures. And I think I'm pretty good with them. And also, they're treating me with respect, equality..."
– Newcomer Young Adult

To build leadership skills in fostering psychological safety, you can:

Communicate explicitly that psychological safety is a workplace priority

Talking about what psychological safety is, why it's important, and what specific values align with the work culture can emphasize and normalize the behaviours you want to see.[19]

Supporting resource: The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has a downloadable Healthy Minds at Work Poster that can raise awareness of the importance of psychological safety at work.

✳ **Here are some promising practices:**
- Discuss psychological safety with other leaders and employees. For example, brainstorm promising practices to integrate into the workplace.
- Share information about workplace psychological safety in common areas, such as an infographic on the bulletin board.

Use failure and other learning experiences to embrace a solutions-oriented approach

Mistakes happen in every workplace and are completely normal. A psychologically safe work environment means taking the opportunity to learn from mistakes.[20] A solutions-oriented approach in leadership focuses on finding solutions instead of blame and punishment.[21]

✳ **Here are some promising practices:**
- Ask "how can we fix this?" instead of "who did this?" [20]
- Share a failure you've experienced. Normalize discussing what went wrong and what you learned.

Supporting resource: The Centre for Creative Leadership provides an article on Encouraging Innovation which can support innovation in your workplace.

To build leadership skills in fostering psychological safety, you can:

Listen actively to engage with employees

Ensuring everyone can share their thoughts, opinions, and ideas is key to psychological safety. It is important that all employees have the opportunity to contribute.

Supporting resources:
- The Centre for Creative Leadership has a resource on [Active Listening](#) to help build and practice these skills.
- Race Forward has a [Racial Equity Impact Assessment Toolkit](#) to assess the impact that business decisions may have on employees.

✳ Here are some promising practices:
- Listen actively by giving full attention to those who are speaking.[20, 21]
- Ask follow-up questions of employees who are sharing their thoughts and opinions.[21]
- Acknowledge and show appreciation for candor and honesty, even if it is difficult to hear.[20]
- Consider the impact of certain decisions on all employees. Some decisions made may have a different impact on certain groups.

Build trust through vulnerability

Being vulnerable can build trust and show newcomer young adults that leaders make mistakes too. Modelling vulnerability can help employees to be vulnerable and learn from their mistakes.[20]

✳ Here are some promising practices:
- Share mistakes that you have made and how you have learned from them.[21]
- Ask for help when you need it.[20]

Supporting resource: Ronnie Kinsey's [Tips on Psychological Safety](#) provide tips for leaders to create psychological safety.

To build leadership skills in fostering psychological safety, you can:

Build inclusive language

Building inclusive language means creating a communication style in the workplace where all individuals feel valued, respected, and included. It also involves considering and encouraging diverse perspectives.

Supporting resource: McLean and Company offer a free downloadable Inclusive Language Infographic that can be shared in common areas.

✳ Here are some promising practices:

- Be mindful of the unique experiences of newcomer young adults. Seek their input, especially among those who are less vocal.
- Make a conscious effort to promote inclusivity through discussions. This might include acknowledging and celebrating cultural, religious, and personal milestones of employees.
- Intentionally use words and phrases that are inclusive, avoid stereotypes, and are non-discriminatory. For example, ask people's pronouns and how to pronounce their names.
- Ensure workplace communications avoid jargon and that all employees understand the topics being discussed.
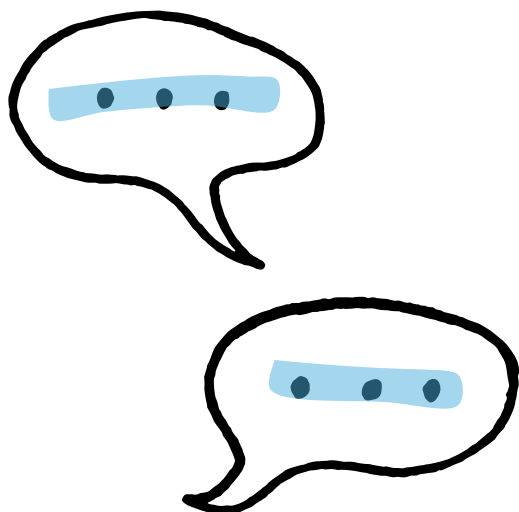
To build leadership skills in fostering psychological safety, you can:

Build a management culture of approachability

Newcomer young adults join the workforce with varying experiences and ideas about leadership. Getting to know your employees and their needs will build a culture of approachability.

"...be the manager who goes by example, yeah, like, you can be like, do this and this and this. This needs to be done today. But also you need to have and go, like, I'm gonna vacuum today for you. It's fine. You are going, you're on a split you have rough night, last night at work, go home and rest."
– Food and Beverage Leader

* **Here are some promising practices:**
- Have an open-door policy.
- Get to know employees by asking them questions about how they can best be supported.
- Be explicit that employees can approach you with ideas or sensitive issues.[21]
- Check in on employees' well-being.[20]

Supporting resource: Harvard Business Publishing provides a Building Trust Article that includes strategies to build trust.

Address issues that arise

Ignoring issues or concerns is a key threat to psychological safety.[21] It is important to have strategies for tackling issues promptly.

Supporting resource: Harvard Business School Online outlines why Problem Solving Skills are Essential for Leaders.

* **Here are some promising practices:**
- Acknowledge when there is an issue.
- Gather information to understand the issue.
- Brainstorm possible solutions to address the issue.
- Act in a way that follows the employee handbook and human resource policies.

To build leadership skills in fostering psychological safety, you can:

Acknowledge efforts, innovation, and successes

A key leadership skill is to celebrate and acknowledge the efforts, innovations, and achievements of employees. Employees benefit from knowing when they are doing a good job, and recognition helps build psychological safety. You can foster trust, respect, and excitement by noticing and acknowledging achievements within your team.

Supporting resource: Canada Life provides a Team Building Activity - Recognizing Strengths.

✱ **Here are some promising practices:**
- Share stories of team innovation or successes during team meetings and check-ins.
- Provide timely and specific feedback about what employees are doing well and their strengths.
- Encourage brainstorming and innovative thinking among team members.

Case scenario reflection: Build your leadership skills

Alma is a newcomer from the Philippines who arrived in Canada 2 years ago. Recently, a busy restaurant hired Alma as a cook. Two other cooks she works with speak French as their first language, but Alma does not. During a busy lunch shift, the two other cooks start speaking a mix of English and French. Alma tries her best to understand the orders. Inevitably, Alma misunderstands and prepares multiple dishes incorrectly. This error leads to tension in the kitchen and several unhappy customers.

Take ten minutes to reflect on what values are important as a leader to help address this scenario. During your next team meeting, take five minutes to share this scenario with your team and discuss what can be learned from this situation.

Provide your team with access to well-being supports

Even within businesses that practice and achieve the four stages of psychological safety, some employees will benefit from external support for their mental health and well-being. Factors such as personal life stressors, unexpected life events, and mental health conditions are inevitable and often require specialized support beyond the scope of what an employer can provide. External resources, including professional counselling, mental health services, and wellness programs, offer critical supplementary support that employees can learn about or access through their workplaces.

For newcomer young adults, in particular, the workplace is where they learn about external resources and community supports. These services can help employees manage stress, build resilience, and maintain a healthier work-life balance. Recognizing the necessity of these external supports and their relationship to the workplace is crucial for fostering employee well-being, psychological safety, and improved retention rates.

Being aware of and providing access to external resources can support a psychologically safe and inclusive F&B workplace.

To provide your team with access to well-being supports, you can:

Implement an employee assistance program

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a workplace benefit program designed to help employees deal with personal and professional challenges that may affect their work. It is a confidential, short-term counselling service made available to employees.[21] EAPs typically provide a range of accessible services, including support with personal difficulties and mental health, job stress, relationship difficulties, elder care, child care, parenting difficulties, harassment, substance use, separation and loss, work-life balance, financial or legal support, and family violence.

✱ **Here are some promising practices:**
- Implement an EAP that offers confidential counseling services, including access to mental health professionals. It is important to ensure that employees are aware of the EAP and how to access its services.
- To explore EAP options, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety recommends you contact: www.ceapaonline.ca

Supporting resource: Go to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety's EAP Information webpage to learn about EAPs and how to find a good option.
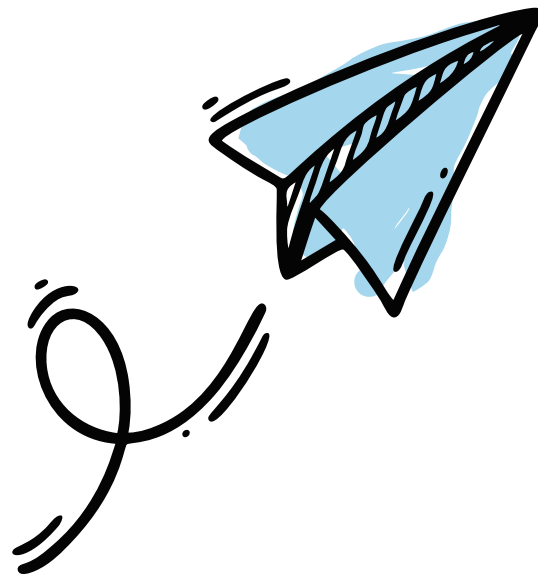
To provide your team with access to well-being supports, you can:

Share mental health resources

Having a list of mental health resources available in the workplace can encourage employees to access needed resources and supports.
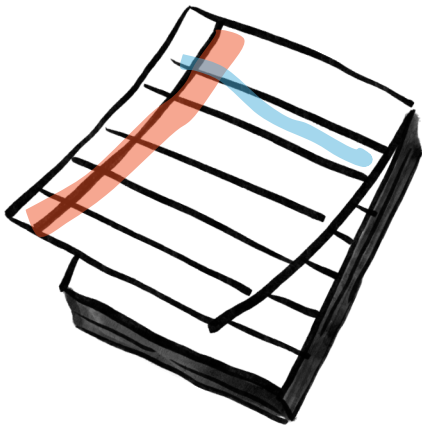
* **Here are some promising practices:**
  - Provide general information about local mental health resources such as support groups, hotlines, and community organizations. This information can be posted on online workplace platforms, printed and displayed in common gathering areas, or provided to employees upon request. Some information and resources can be found using the links below.

Supporting resources:
  - 211 Alberta's website allows you to search for services by location and topic.
  - The Canadian Mental Health Association provides a Looking for help? web page that can be printed and displayed in employee common areas.

To provide your team with access to well-being supports, you can:

Take mental health support training

Leaders in the F&B sector will likely need to navigate staff mental health challenges at some point. While you are not expected to deliver mental health services, you can learn how to work with and support mental health challenges. Management training can assist with building interpersonal skills, understanding how job stressors affect mental health, and knowing how to recognize and respond to employees experiencing emotional distress.[22]

✱ **Here are some promising practices:**
  - Attend training on workplace accommodations, return to work programs, supportive employment initiatives, and how to support staff health and well-being.
  - Adjust workload and responsibilities for staff experiencing mental health or other personal challenges.

"Definitely every manager should do mental [health] first aid, because I've done it a couple years ago. I keep doing these courses past two and a half years, and I can definitely tell they helped me a lot… You don't need to, you don't need to help them by you[rself] physically, right? But you need to know how to. 'Here's the help.' Yeah, and follow up on that… couple days after. 'Hey, did you call the number that I gave you?'"
– Food and Beverage Leader

Supporting resources:
  - The Canadian Mental Health Association – Alberta Division provides helpful information when Helping Others and has a Mental Health First Aid Course.
  - The Government of Canada provides Information on Mental Health Supports for Managers to support you and your employees.
  - Canada Life provides Accommodation Strategies to support employees.
  - The Mental Health Commission of Canada provides a Mental Health First Aid Guide for Managers to support colleagues or employees in crisis.

To provide your team with access to well-being supports, you can:

Connect employees to social, recreational, and community supports

Social, recreational, and community supports are important for addressing the pressures of balancing personal, family, and community responsibilities among newcomer young adults. You can assist by connecting newcomer young adults to supports.

* Here are some promising practices:
- Explore local partnerships to gain access to social, recreational, and community supports.
- Recommend specific organizational supports for newcomer young adults.
- Connect newcomer young adults to peer employees who can help them access supports.

Supporting resources:
- The Bow Valley Immigration Partnership is a regional community partnership. You can become a member or access information and resources on their website. They also provide a Newcomer Guide.
- The Edmonton Regional Immigrant Employment Council provides information on Edmonton Settlement Services.
- The Town of Banff provides information about Community Connections in the Bow Valley as well as Settlement Services in the Bow Valley.

Case scenario reflection: Provide your team with access to well-being supports

Alex is a dedicated employee who has worked as a host in a restaurant for one year. Over the past few months, their performance while seating guests has declined, and they seem increasingly disengaged throughout their shift. Alex's colleagues have noticed that they often look exhausted and are becoming more withdrawn, avoiding social interactions during breaks. Recently, Alex has started missing shifts, which is unusual for them.

Take five to ten minutes to consider Alex's situation and reflect on three actions you could take to support them.
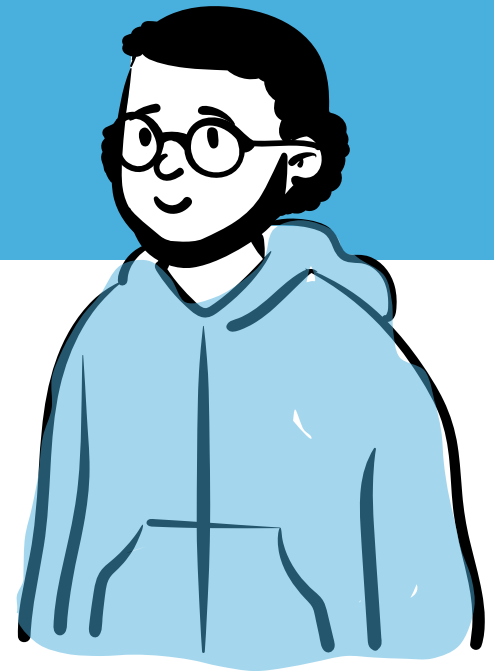
Area of Action 4

Evaluate your progress

Once you have adapted your business processes to improve psychological safety, you can assess your progress.

Psychological safety can be assessed using various methods, many of which are free and accessible online. This process can help you understand your employees' sense of inclusion and areas for improvement.

Multiple assessments can be done over time or at regular intervals to know if change is happening within the team.[24] Consider whether assessments should be done for the whole business or just specific teams.

Assessing the level of psychological safety may show results that are difficult to hear, such as learning that employees don't feel safe or included.[24] If you plan to assess psychological safety in your workplace, it is important that you are willing to review and understand the results, and make needed changes.

To evaluate your progress, you can:

Administer anonymous surveys

A short survey can help assess psychological safety. Making the survey anonymous may give you more honest answers. Consider administering the survey before and after actions are taken.

Supporting resources:
- Psychological Safety by Iterum provides a Survey Design Template that can be modified for your use.
- Psychologically Safe Team provides a Free Psychological Safety Assessment & Report. You can create a free account, gain access to assessment tools, and receive a free report to assess the level of psychological safety in your workplace.
- Psychological Safety provides information on Measuring Psychological Safety.

Hold check-ins and other opportunities to gather feedback from employees

One-on-one check-ins, team meetings, and conversations with employees are ways to assess psychological safety. Ask employees how they are feeling about the workplace's overall psychological safety and how they feel about the actions taken.

Supporting resource: Canada Life provides a Psychological Safety Discussion Guide with example questions to guide discussions.

To evaluate your progress, you can:

Observe and reflect

While less effective, you could observe behaviour and practices. Observations can be helpful because workplace culture will be reflected in the behaviours you see among and between employees.

Observing includes intentionally paying attention to how employees show up to work and how they work together. This may include watching for:
- Relationships between employees.
- Adaptability during work tasks, including whether employees adapt to change or struggle.
- The types of challenges that come up and how the team addresses them.
- Team dynamics.
- Employee well-being when arriving or leaving work.
- Whether employees speak up in team meetings, share their opinions, and challenge the status quo.

It's important to use what you learn from the observations to reflect and consider next steps. These next steps may include further assessment through surveys or discussions, or direct actions found in this toolkit.

Supporting resource: Psychological Safety by Iterum recognizes that observations can be challenging. They offer an article of Things You Might Hear to assess how psychologically safe your team feels.
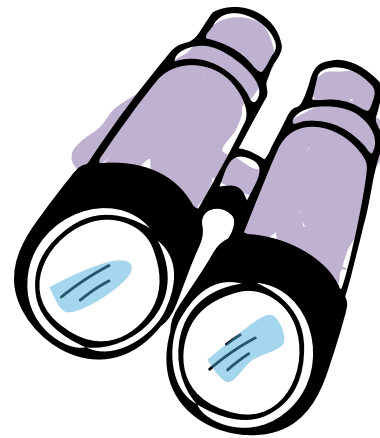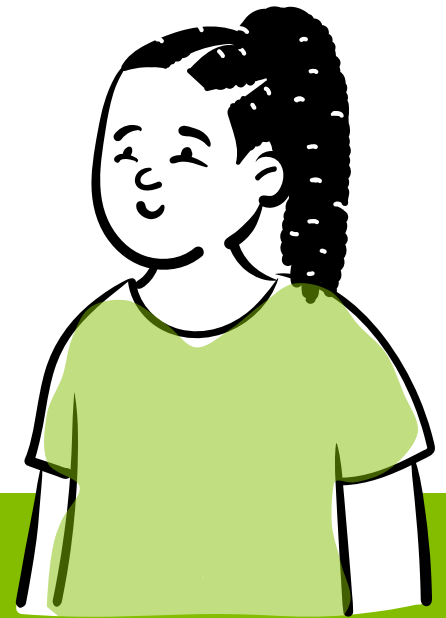
Case scenario reflection: Evaluate your progress

Dalisay is a floor supervisor at a restaurant in Banff, Alberta. She anticipates that the next few weeks will be slower during the transition from the summer to the winter tourism season. This provides Dalisay with an opportunity to spend a little bit of extra time with her employees one-on-one.

Take a few minutes to write down a few questions Dalisay could ask her employees about the level of psychological safety in the restaurant.

Next time you hold one-on-one check-ins, test out a few of the questions.

Concluding notes

This toolkit is intended to provide an overview of psychological safety, why it is important, and specific and concrete actions that you can take to create a more psychologically safe workplace for newcomer young adults, as well as other employees.

While building psychological safety may seem daunting at first, remember that meaningful change is a gradual process. This toolkit provides you with practical resources and promising practices to help implement and increase psychological safety over time. By using these tools consistently, patiently, and when there is capacity, F&B leaders can experience improved employee well-being and increased retention.

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