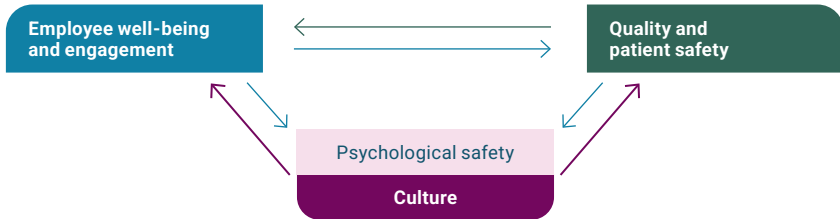


Leadership and culture – the foundation for good care. Quick overview



1 Culture for psychological safety, openness and learning

Culture influences employee health, well-being and engagement on the one hand, and quality and patient safety on the other. A crucial element is psychological safety.



Barriers: Infallibility / Hierarchy / Individual focus / Incivility

There are many factors that can undermine psychological safety

- expectations of infallibility
- hierarchy, which makes it difficult to challenge authority figures
- focus on the individual versus system factors when things go wrong
- incivility

Psychological safety is the perception that you can speak up – raise concerns, offer suggestions, report adverse events, show vulnerability, admit mistakes – without being met with silence, embarrassment, or other negative reactions.

How to develop culture?

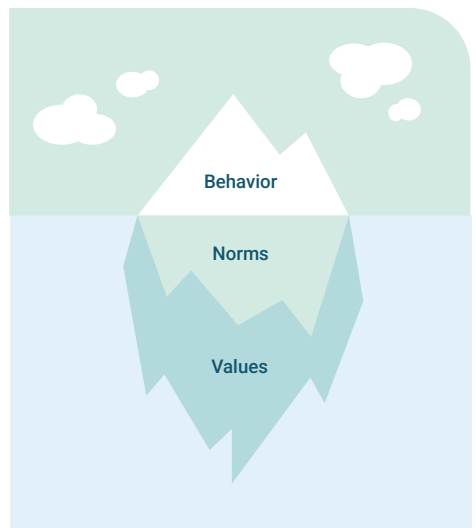
Direct ways of working with culture include discussing

- what are examples of **behaviors** that hinder or promote a healthy environment?
- which **norms** should characterize our interaction and communication?
- how can we make the organization's **values** more concrete and meaningful for us?

In addition, development takes

- good task organization and clarification of roles
- positive utilization of diversity within the team
- arenas for reflection and experiential learning

Culture development requires sustained attention over time. Make it part of your systematic HSE (Health, Safety, and Environment) work.



Cultural leadership

To create an open and learning culture, and a solid foundation for psychological safety, it is important to

- clearly invite people to offer input
- respond to input with a positive attitude
- reiterate how important it is to speak up if anyone notices any cause for concern
- take a clear stance against harassment and other unacceptable behaviors
- address and follow up individual employees who display inappropriate or unprofessional behavior
- implement measures that ensure a strong reporting culture and proper follow-up of adverse events and other deviations
- create safe arenas for reflection and learning
- involve employees in the review of adverse events, and provide feedback regarding which measures have been implemented

Leaders are role models and set the standard. Culture is also shaped through

- what leaders pay attention to and spend time on
- what and who is recognized and rewarded
- which qualities are emphasized, and who is selected for recruitment and promotions
- how crises are handled

Schein, 2010

- share your own misjudgments and experiences with adverse events
- emphasize the importance of taking responsibility for what happens after an adverse event, regardless of who is responsible for what happened
- demonstrate that everyone is a valuable member of the team
- work systematically on improving the work environment and culture

2 Compassionate leadership

Compassionate leadership can be divided into four core elements (*Compassionate Leadership*, West 2021):

1. Attending	2. Understanding	3. Empathizing	4. Helping
to be attentive to the individuals involved and the challenges they are facing	to explore and try to understand the situation from their perspective	to share in others' feelings and take their concerns seriously	to take wise and thoughtful action to support others

Health care staff must be sure "they will be treated fairly and compassionately ... if things go wrong or they speak up to stop problems occurring".

NHS Patient Safety Strategy 2019

"You don't have to be the boss to be a leader. The leader's job is to create and nurture the culture we all need to do our best work. So anytime you play a role in doing that, you are exercising leadership."

Edmondson, 2018



Scan the QR-code to find supporting materials in English for our Guide to caring for patients, users, family and employees in connection with adverse events.