

Experiencing Psychological Safety

Adj.Professor Melissa Casey, 11 June 2020

Psychological Safety

Why is it important?



If we don't feel psychologically (internally) safe a lot of our work performance will be driven defending ourselves



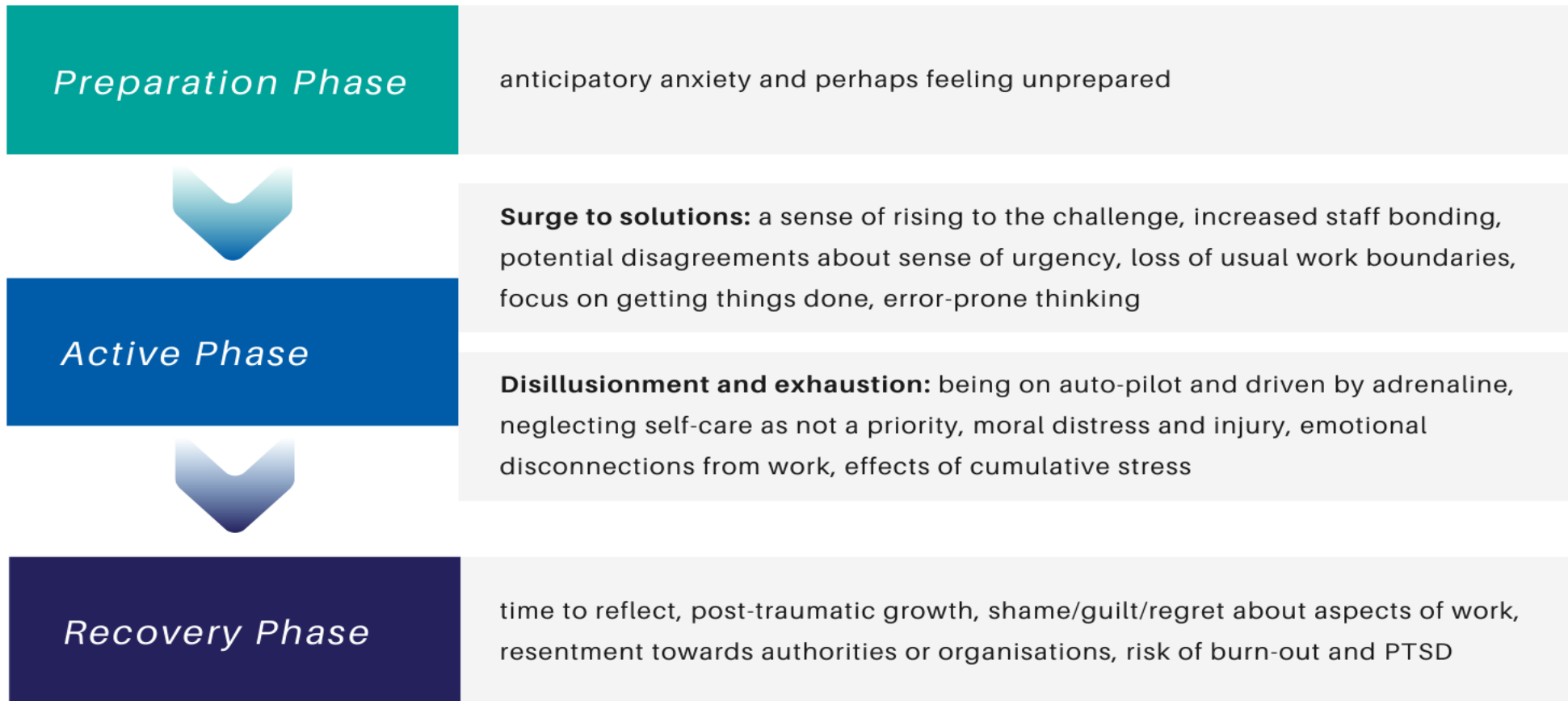
Paradox: Still could be performing well at work.... but without feeling psychologically safe

- Hard to adapt
- Hard to learn new things
- Chasing the next extraordinary achievement
- Never feel good enough

And why now?



Phases of The Outbreak: Psychological Health



Psychological Safety



Psychological safety refers to a climate in which people are comfortable *being* and expressing themselves²



- *Being – Internal life*
- *Expressing* thoughts and feelings?
- Reflect and connect

*This process is one of connecting with self and others and being **accepted** for who you are and what you are thinking and feeling promotes psychological safety*



Our
experience

Our mind

and

Feeling safe



Our internal life, that is, our mind,
determines the quality of our *being*....the
quality of our experience



Feelings of pain or pleasure or some quality in between are the bedrock of our minds –
we often fail to notice this because the mental images of objects and events that
surround use up so much of our overburdened attention¹



TIPS TO MANAGE MY PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE



Sleep Hygiene

- Go to bed & get up at the same time
- Quiet place to sleep
- Keep bedroom for sleep (and sex – where applicable)
- Keep bedroom dark and cool
- Turn off screens 30 mins before bed
- Limit daytime naps

Eating and drinking

- Keep hydrated
- Limit alcohol and caffeine
- Eat colourful fruits & vegetables, foods high in fibre (wholegrain cereals & bread, beans, chickpeas, lentils & nuts), fermented foods (unsweetened yogurt, olive oil, fish)



Exercise

30 mins a day - moderate to intensive exercise most days of week



**A final note on teleconferencing.
Limit it!**

Develop a self care box

We all need comfort in our lives at times.

A go-to self-care comfort box can help you when feeling low.

Successful self care strategies involve a sensory component - 7 senses: touch, taste, sight, hearing, smell, movement & comforting pressure

Some examples include: candles, soft blanket, music, scent or lavender oil, favourite book



Practice Breathing and Mindfulness

Everyone can benefit from guided relaxation exercises – there are many available on the internet. If you find one you like, practice it daily & the benefits of relaxation will increase with practice.

See meditations from Jon Kabat Zinn on YouTube



Practice Activity Planning

- Plan for the week ahead, scheduling health activities
- Plan new work activities to fill time voids
- Maximize activities that create a sense of mastery
- Utilize activities that involve joy at work
- Set up virtual social events with friends daily via FaceTime, Facebook Messenger, Zoom, etc
- Review the week/troubleshoot

Practice Radical Acceptance

- Radical acceptance is acknowledgment of facts of a situation & realistic limitations and is NOT approval, resignation, or passivity
- Usually involves sadness or grief e.g., loss of lifestyle pre COVID-19
- Similar to the sentiment in the Serenity prayer
Serenity to accept what I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, Wisdom to know the difference

Using ACCEPTS:

Activities - engage in any tolerable exercise

Contributing - give something to another

Comparisons - compare self to others same/less fortunate than you

Emotions - do things that stimulate different emotions,

Pushing away - leave the situation (mentally) for awhile

Thoughts - count, focus attention elsewhere

Sensations - hold ice, squeeze ball, etc.

Reach out for help - friends, colleagues or health professional depending on need. You are not alone.



What's Normal

- Fear, anxiety, shock, denial, disbelief, anger, irritability, guilt, shame, sadness and hopelessness
- Feeling disconnected and numb
- Difficulty concentrating
- Insomnia and recurrent dreams
- Being easily startled
- Aches, pains, muscle tension, agitation, general fatigue

What's Not

Signs that more help is needed

- Having difficulty functioning at home, unable to rest or take time out (not caused by work demands)
- Experiencing severe anxiety, fear, depression, excessive irritability and anger
- Unable to maintain their close family relationships, withdrawing and isolating yourself
- Feeling emotionally numb and distant, emotionally disconnected from work and colleagues
- Having persistent intrusive memories, consistently feeling overwhelmed and/or out of control
- Using alcohol or other drugs to manage their thoughts and feelings
- Avoidance “I’m fine, too busy, not available”
- Feelings of self-blame or guilt if you are unable to act or respond within your own moral code
- Pre-existing vulnerabilities which may be exacerbated by the intensity of the crisis
 - E.g., always had a tendency to worry but it didn’t impact functioning, but now it does



Health & Wellbeing Presentations

 Topic	 Description	 Presenter	 Date
<i>Sense of Safety (Physical and Psychological)</i>	With the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, we will have more contact with people at work and home. This session will have tips for adapting your daily routines - to keep you feeling safe.	Dr Melissa Casey Director of Psychology A Prof Rhonda Stuart Dept of Infectious Diseases	Thursday, 11th June
<i>Supporting children and adolescents during COVID-19</i>	Balancing work and parenting responsibilities; this session will cover some of the challenges and opportunities for young people at this time and some helpful strategies and supports for parents.	Dr David Moseley Dept of Psychology Discipline Senior (Early in Life Mental Health Service)	Thursday, 25th June
<i>Practical anxiety management</i>	Practical anxiety management skills: intro to breathing, relaxation and mindfulness exercises that can be easily fitted in to a workday.	Dr Sika Turner Dept of Psychology Discipline Senior Psychology (Adult Mental Health)	Thursday, 2nd July
<i>Getting a good night's sleep (Sleep Hygiene)</i>	It is essential that we have a variety of different practices and habits to obtain sleep for physical and mental health. This session will provide practical strategies to help you obtain a restful night's sleep.	Dr Natalie Grima Dept of Psychology Clinical Neuropsychologist, RACS subacute	Thursday, 9th July
<i>Self Care (Staying Emotionally Well)</i>	At times of stress, we tend to do less of what we need to do to keep healthy; the secondary effects of a busy worklife! This session will provide some tips as to looking after yourself in changing times	Dr Sika Turner Dept of Psychology Discipline Senior Psychology (Adult Mental Health)	Thursday, 23rd July



Health & Wellbeing Presentations

 Topic	 Description	 Presenter	 Date
<i>Approaching and supporting others including those in distress</i>	<p>During times of increased stress and distress in the workplace, we can be a great support to each other as colleagues – but how do we do it? Practical tips for reaching out and providing support.</p>	<p>Dr Sika Turner Dept of Psychology Discipline Senior Psychology (Adult Mental Health)</p>	<p>Thursday, 28th July</p>
<i>COVID and LGBTIQ+</i>	<p>Our workforce is large and encompasses a range of people and backgrounds. This session looks at some of the challenges people who identify as LGBTIQ+ have had to deal with through the COVID pandemic.</p>	<p>Dr Birgit Mumelter Dept of Psychology Discipline Senior Psychology Gender Clinic</p>	<p>Thursday, 6th August</p>
<i>Managing Emotional Fatigue (Compassion fatigue, burnout, vicarious trauma)</i>	<p>Caring for ourselves: How do we recognise the signs within ourselves that suggest we are fatigued or are burning out and then what can we do to overcome them.</p>	<p>Dr Lauren Stapleton Dept of Psychology Discipline Senior Psychology</p>	<p>Thursday, 13th August</p>
<i>Memory and stress</i>	<p>Stress is one of the most common causes of day-to-day memory lapse. This session will outline what constitutes “normal” memory failures in response to stress, and what we can do to safeguard ourselves from them.</p>	<p>Dr Brian Long Dept of Psychology Deputy Director and Clinical Neuropsychologist</p>	<p>Thursday, 27th August</p>
<i>The COVID Code: Unlock Your Inner Wellbeing and Resilience</i>	<p>Resilience embodies the capacity to adapt to change despite the risk of harm. But also knowing how we can organise our resources and tap into our traits and abilities to enhance our capacity for growth.</p>	<p>Dr Max Von Sabler Dept of Psychology</p>	<p>Thursday, 3rd September</p>



Call a psychologist

Contact our free and confidential service available for all employees provided by Monash Health psychologists. Employee Assistance program is also a free and confidential resource.



Call 0418 905 414

9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday

EAP 1300 687 327