

# Fostering Psychological Safety in our Workforce

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# Experts in Pediatric Care

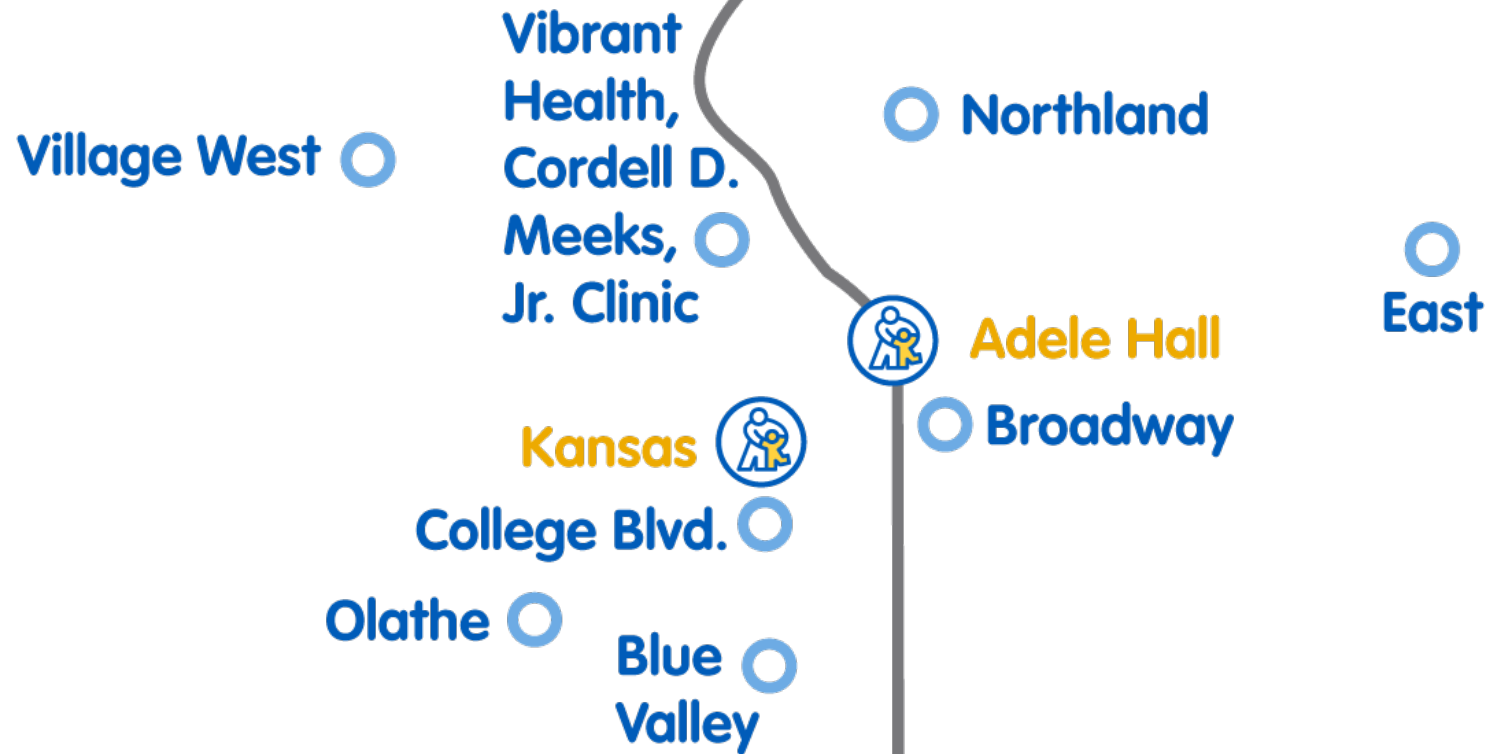
- Non-profit
- Independent children's hospital
- Founded in 1897
- 8,400+ employees
- 780+ faculty members
- 3,000+ nurses
- 1,000+ allied health professionals
- More than 1,100 volunteers

# The Region's Pediatric Health System of Choice

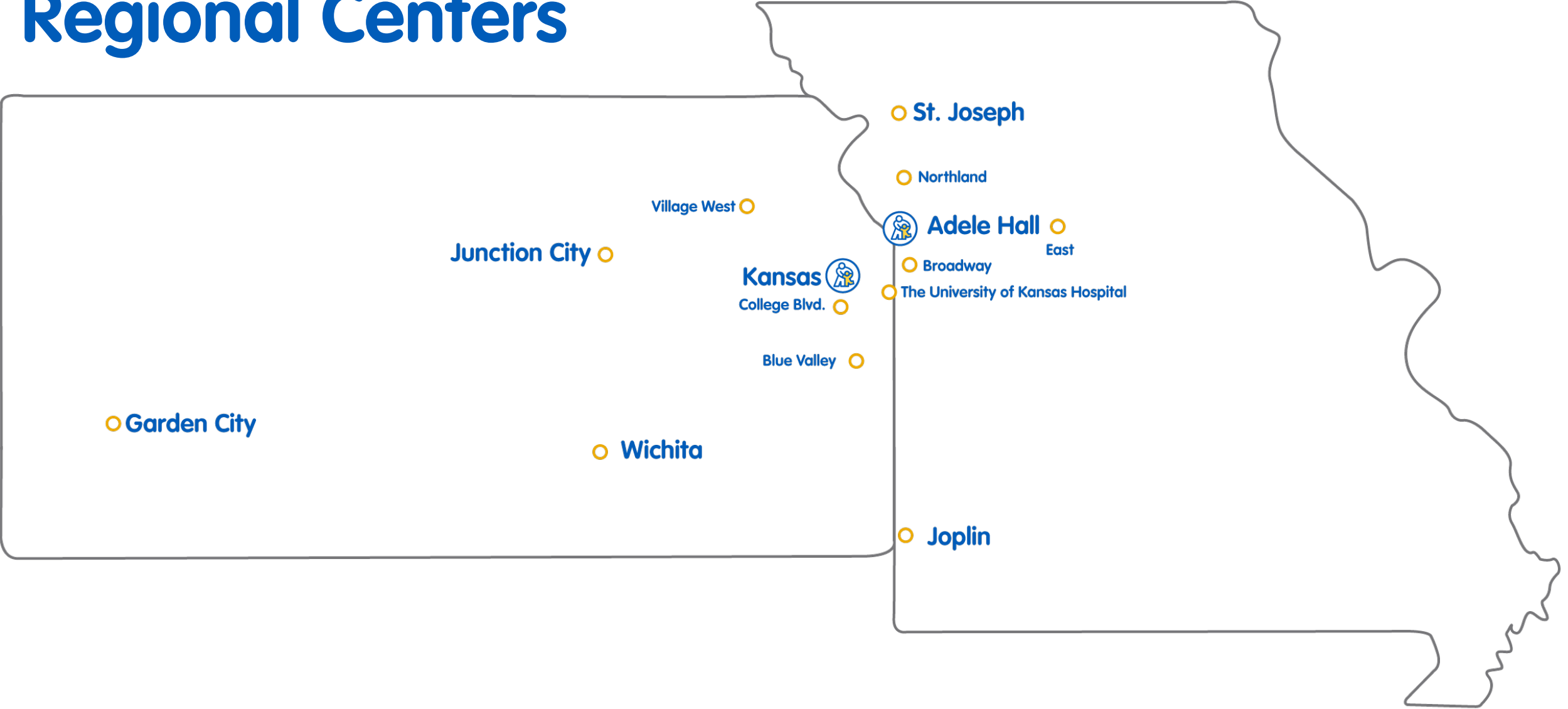
- 390 beds
- 352,809 outpatient visits
- 131,754 ER/UC visits
- 12,543 admissions
- 19,210 surgeries
- 4,619 transports



# Kansas City Locations



# Regional Centers





# Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to identify the key elements of psychological safety.
- Participants will be able to describe how psychological safety impacts patient care, inclusion, and innovation.
- Participants will be able to identify strategies that can increase psychological safety within teams.

# What is Psychological Safety?

# Psychological Safety

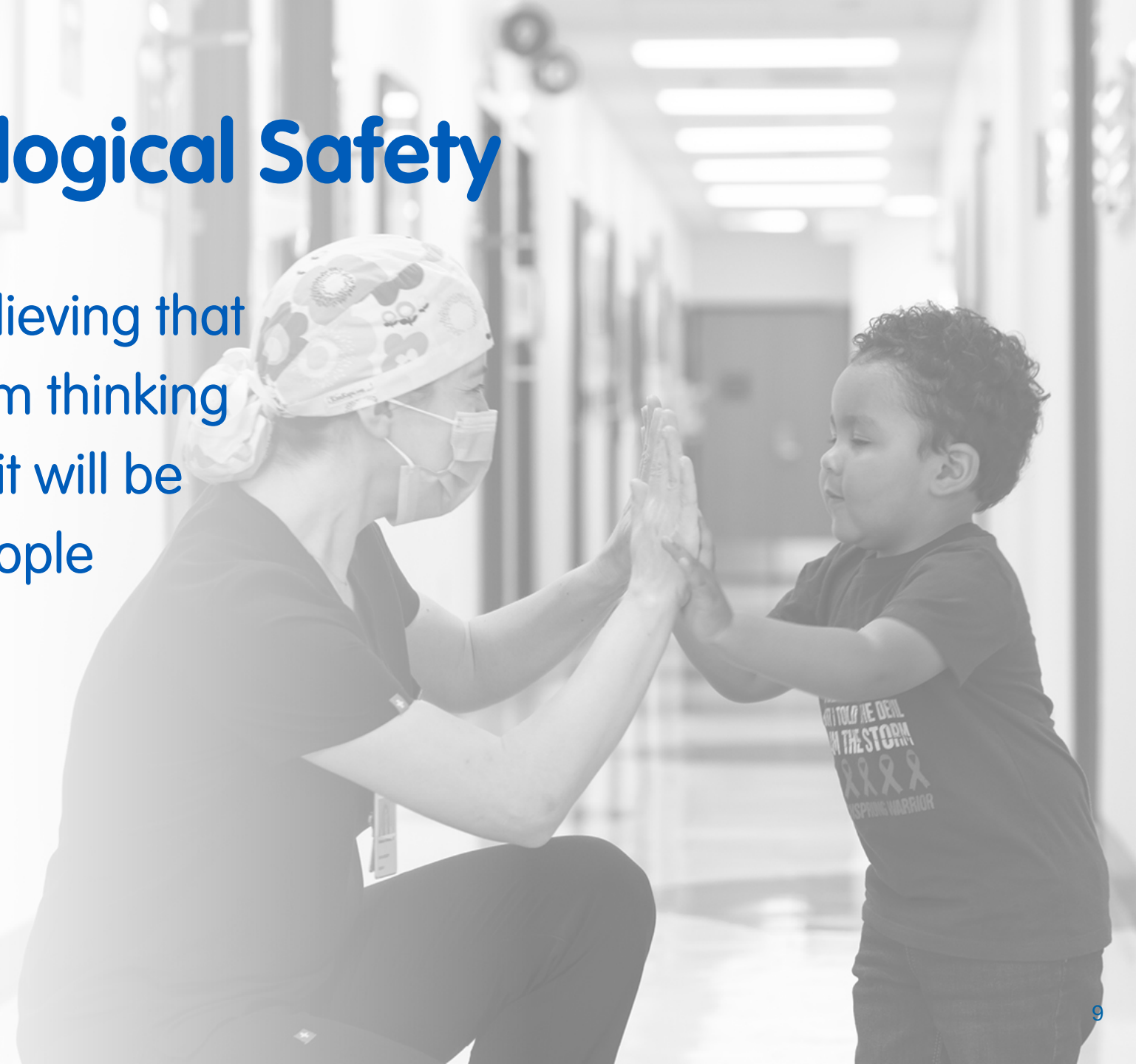
- The term psychological safety was first coined in the 1960s by organizational psychologists Edgar Shein and Warren Bennis.
- Shein and Bennis studied organizational, interpersonal risk-taking and how it relates to change in the workplace.
- The next step in this work was taken by Dr. Amy Edmundson in the 1990s, who began researching medication errors in hospital systems. Her research concluded that people must feel comfortable speaking up to prevent errors.
- The work has continued on....Dr. Timothy Clark, Shane Snow, and others.



# Defining Psychological Safety

“Psychological safety is believing that not only can I say what I am thinking or worried about, but that it will be **VALUED** – that it’s what people **WANT** me to do.”

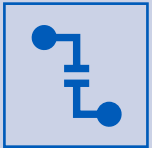
Amy Edmundson



# Psychological Safety is...



“A shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.” – Amy Edmondson, PhD



“An environment of rewarded vulnerability.” – Dr. Timothy Clark



The degree to which team members feel safe speaking up, asking for help, trying new things, and learning from mistakes.

# Psychological Safety as a Continuum



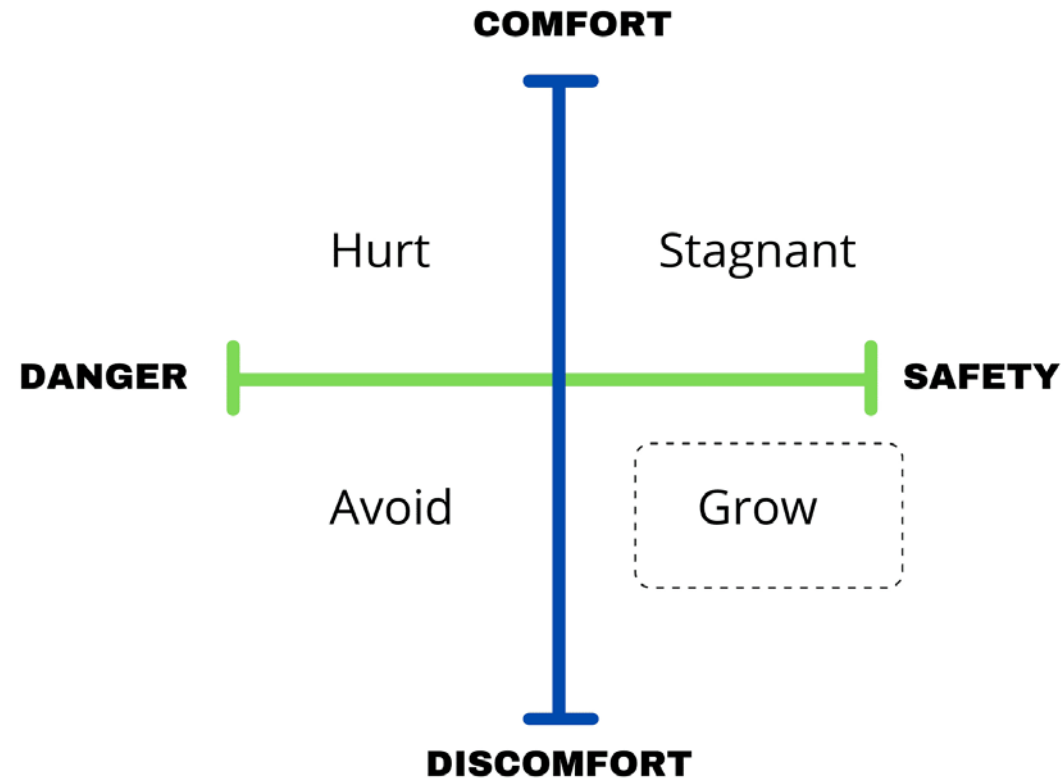
# The Myths of Psychological Safety

1. It's not holding people accountable.
2. It's avoiding conflict.
3. It's being nice.

# Safety Does Not = Comfort

- In a recent article by Shane Snow, he commented that the “idea of making a team environment completely comfortable was at odds with growth and human problem solving.”
- There must be a balance of healthy conflict and diversity of thought.

# Discomfort + Safety = Growth and Progress





# Psychological Safety in Teams

# Which Team Has More Psychological Safety?

## Team A

- Everyone is tenured, skilled, successful
- Meetings are efficient
- Team members follow the agenda and wait until a topic arises in which they are experts and then they speak at length
- Facilitator keeps everyone on track and reminds the group of the agenda when side comments are made
- No idle chit chat or long debates

## Team B

- Varying roles, experience and skill levels
- Meetings are fluid
- While there is an agenda, the team ebbs and flows out of discussions with people interjecting their thoughts, which sometimes leads to getting off track from the agenda
- At the end of the scheduled time, team members often stay behind to connect and talk further

# Reflection Moment

How would you describe your team meetings?

When was the last time someone spoke up and voiced a concern in front of the team? What was the response?

Are there people in your team who are actively seeking the ideas and perspectives of other team members? How does it feel when you are asked for your perspective?

# Psychological Safety in Healthcare



# The Impacts in Healthcare

- Psychological safety has a deep connection to patient outcomes.
- Healthcare environments have high levels of **interdependency** and **uncertainty**.
- Patient Safety and Achieving Zero Harm requires a culture of safety that includes a high level of psychological safety.



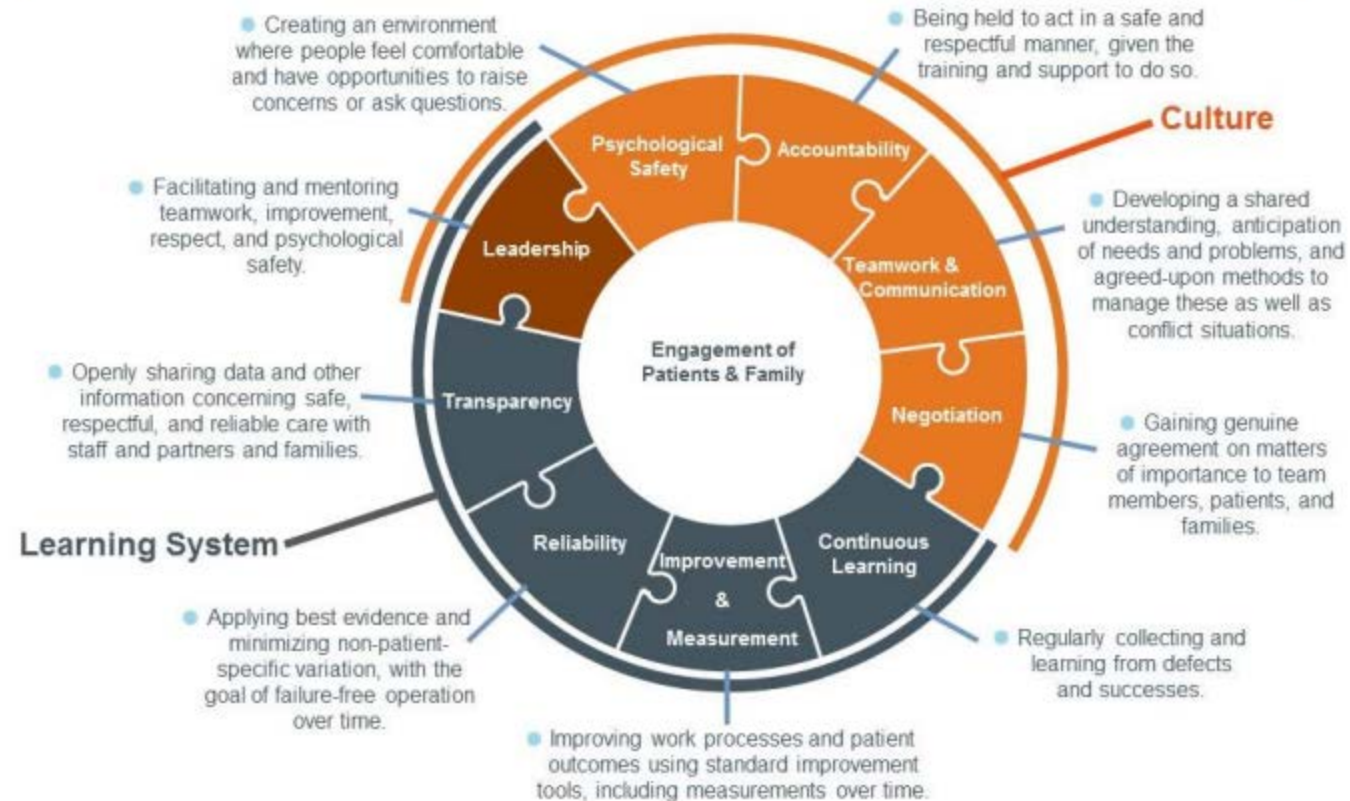
# Health Care Outcomes

- Research has shown a direct correlation between levels of psychological safety and reporting of errors, as well as whether or not hospital staff adhere to infection prevention practices such as hand hygiene and line care.
- Studies show 1 in 4 employees stated they would not speak up about things that may negatively affect patient care.
- 4 in 10 employees verbalized feeling afraid to ask questions.
- Over 50% of employees said they will not question the decisions of those with more authority.



# Institute for Healthcare Improvement: *A Framework for Safe, Reliable, and Effective Care*

**Figure 2. Framework for Safe, Reliable, and Effective Care — with Descriptive Detail for the Components**



# Why is Psychological Safety Important in Healthcare?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LF1253YhEc8&t=191s>

# Reflection Moment

Have you had a time when you felt like you should speak up and didn't? What prevented you from speaking up?

Are there groups/teams in which you feel less comfortable speaking up than others? What are the differences in those groups?

As a leader, how would you guide an employee through a situation in which he/she does not feel comfortable speaking up?

# Psychological Safety and Inclusion



# The Impact on Inclusion

- Inclusion includes:
  - Connection, acceptance, and belonging, which are basic human needs.
  - “The need to be accepted precedes the need to be heard.” – Dr. Timothy Clark
- Inclusion (and psychological safety) requires intentional effort and practice, especially among diverse teams.
- There are many benefits to diverse teams, and when you are on a diverse team you must pursue inclusion to work together effectively.
- It is the responsibility of every member of the team and the leader to be inclusive.



# The Impact on Inclusion

**"Diverse opinions cannot be heard if they are not expressed, and this is where psychological safety comes in."**

**-Amy Edmondson**



# Psychological Safety and Innovation

# The Impact on Innovation

- Open and Honest Expression of Thoughts and Ideas Leads to
  - Creativity
  - Learning
  - Innovation



# The Impact on Innovation

“Removing the fear of speaking up allows people to suggest novel ideas and possibilities that are integral to developing innovative products and services.”

-Amy Edmondson

# My Story

# Three Ways to Create Psychological Safety in Healthcare

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbLjdFqrUNs>

# Actionable Ways to Foster Psychological Safety

- Frame the Work
  - Adds meaning to the work we do
  - Reminds others that our work is full of uncertainty and demands interdependence on each other
- Model Fallibility
  - Admit you don't have all the answers you need input
  - "What am I missing?" "I need your help."
- Embrace Messengers
  - Make it a positive experience for people to speak up
  - "Thank you" for...speaking up, offering ideas



# Actionable Ways to Foster Psychological Safety

- Practice Curiosity
  - Ask for different perspectives and ideas
  - Show you are open and genuinely want to hear from others
- Treat Failure as a Learning Opportunity
  - Resist the urge to hide failures from others
  - Role model the sharing of failures, and what you learned from each failure

# Everyone Can Be a Leader for Psychological Safety

- Titles don't matter.
- The psychological safety of the team can be either negatively or positively impacted by just 1 person.
- Team norms are essential, as well as the expectation that team members hold each other accountable to the behaviors that foster psychological safety.

# Let's Practice

Admitting Mistakes

Speaking Up

Group Think

# The Journey Forward..

- Senior Leadership Commitment
- Department Leadership Engagement
- Leadership Training
- Staff Training
- Behavioral Action Plans
- Ongoing Discussion of Topics – Mixing them into the culture



# What Will You Do?

What is 1 behavioral change YOU can make to foster psychological safety within your teams?

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