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Subject: Agility - Respect for People: Psychologically Safe Leaders Anticipate Conflict
Date: Friday, August 27, 2021 4:28:00 PM
Attachments: [image003.jpg](#)

Related to the “Respect for People” side of Agility, check out this article about how psychological safe leaders should anticipate and prepare for conflict. Please pass this along to your leaders and teams to help them engage their employees in productive discussions. Talk about this within your teams and your leaders’ teams.

The entire article is here: <https://www.ohscanada.com/features/psychologically-safe-leaders-anticipate-conflict/>

An excerpt:

Anticipating conflict begins with a frame of reference for common sources such as:

- unsure about performance expectations
- unclear about role clarification
- trust issues around transparency of communications
- experiences that facilitate acts of incivility
- concerns around work demand
- work cutting into personal time
- feeling overwhelmed because of a lack of resources
- perceiving one is being unfairly judged.

A psychologically safe leader must be mindful that they have only one lens through which to see the world. They always need to understand their employees’ experiences and be willing to talk about their position on conflict.

Following are some actions a psychologically safe leader can take to help themselves and their employees prepare for conflict:

Set realistic expectations on workplace conflict: Unhealthy conflict can put employees at risk of mental or physical harm. Set the expectation that

conflict can be an opportunity for learning and discovering new and better ways to operate.

Be realistic and acknowledge that not all conflict is bad.

Discover the conflict landscape: Do not assume you are the keeper and knower of the employee experience. You may not know what employees are feeling.

Think about Dr. Seuss's engaging children's book *Green Eggs and Ham* that promotes the benefits of curiosity through open-ended questions. Avoid assuming or guessing what may be causing conflict.

Ask direct reports and peers: "What are the top three causes of conflict in this workplace? How do you find these situations are typically dealt with?"

Talk about conflict often: Engage direct reports in conversation about the types of conflict that can happen: unhealthy and healthy.

Unhealthy conflict is when conflict puts others at risk of mental or physical harm. Healthy conflict is a difference of opinion and preferences as to how things should be.

Talk about conflict with employees to anticipate that it will happen and not to avoid it.

Hope you have a great weekend!

Rainey

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