ONLINE MEETINGS

MEDICLINIC

NOT JUST A JOB • NOT JUST A JOB • NOT JUST A JOB

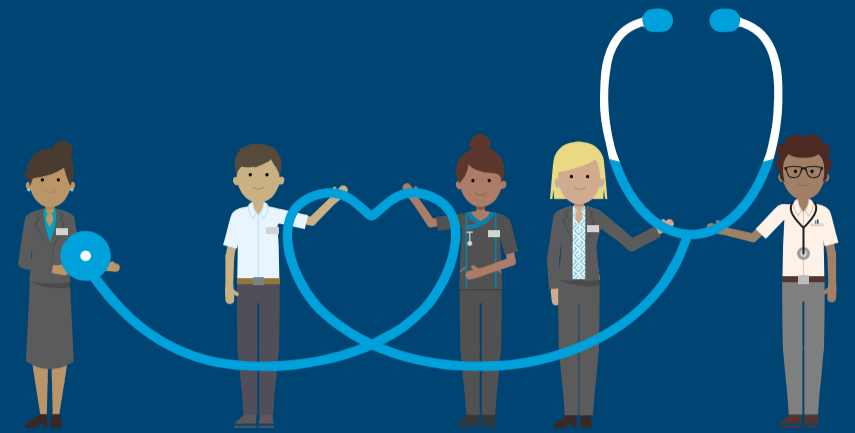### PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY TOOL FOR LINE MANAGERS

TOOL

IN THE TRANSITION TO ONLINE PLATFORMS, A DECREASE IN LEVELS OF TRUST CAN BE EXPECTED DUE TO PHYSICAL DISTANCE, LIMITED COMMUNICATION AND NEW MEETING FORMATS, AMONG OTHER ASPECTS. MANAGERS, THEREFORE, HAVE TO TAKE EXTRA CARE TO ENSURE THAT TEAM MEMBERS CONTINUE TO FEEL CONNECTED, ENGAGED AND PRODUCTIVE IN THE TEAM, DESPITE THEIR LOCATION.

Below are tips on useful behaviours which managers can adopt to increase psychological safety in the team, especially when conducting online meetings.

TIPS FOR CREATING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN ONLINE MEETINGS

- Invite people to participate and to speak up in meetings.
- Measure psychological safety. Ask the team members how safe they feel and what could enhance their feeling of safety.
- Avoid interrupting team members when they speak. Give them an opportunity to feel heard.
- Learn to hold the silence after you have asked if anyone has anything further to add. Create room for people to speak up.
- Do not end a meeting until everyone has spoken at least once. Incorporate introvert-friendly strategies, such as giving team members an opportunity to prepare for the meeting and think through the topics beforehand.

IDEA

VIRTUAL, BUT NOT DISTANT: CREATING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN ONLINE MEETINGS

- **Create opportunities** in meetings for individuals to authentically share challenges and concerns.
- **Respond productively to and accommodate team members' reactions,** even where these are unexpected or uncomfortable, for example, if a team member expresses discontent, double-check that you are not frowning or reacting in a way that might signal that it is not all right for them to continue speaking.
- **Address intergroup conflicts** through open discussions. Promote healthy debates and encourage team members to verbalise their views instead of acting out.
- **Demonstrate vulnerability.** Talk about your emotions. Encourage people to express their thoughts and emotions, for instance, anxiety, disappointment, concern and frustration, without being judged.
- **Ask questions.** Instead of assuming you know what your team thinks and needs, focus on what questions you can ask them to understand their mental and emotional space better.
- **Read facial expressions and body language,** while remaining aware of your own. For example, take note when a team member appears distracted, anxious or bored and raise the matter in a thoughtful and appropriate manner.
- **Admit what you do not know.** If possible, quickly garner the information you need while you are still online or straight after the meeting.
- **Express appreciation.** Thank team members for their contributions, especially when it is obvious that they are struggling to either articulate their thoughts or to share an unpopular opinion.
- **Destigmatise failure** by focusing on how mistakes can be resolved to build trust and avoid blaming.
- **Capture real-time feedback** from the team related to work projects or team dynamics, for instance, use a phone-based survey polling tool.
- **Provide space** for team members to catch up with non-work-related matters before or after meetings.
- **Your communication should not end when the meeting does.** Ensure that there is a communication platform where team members can reach each other in an effective and convenient way, should there be anything further they want to add regarding meeting points.
- **Increase the check-in frequency,** both one-on-one and with the team.
- **Get personal in a creative way.** Since we cannot see the pictures and mementos on each other's desks, try a 'family photo Friday', a virtual meeting where team members can share a picture of their pets or family.

Should you need any further guidance or support, contact your regional Organisational Effectiveness Specialist.

EXPERTISE YOU CAN TRUST.

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