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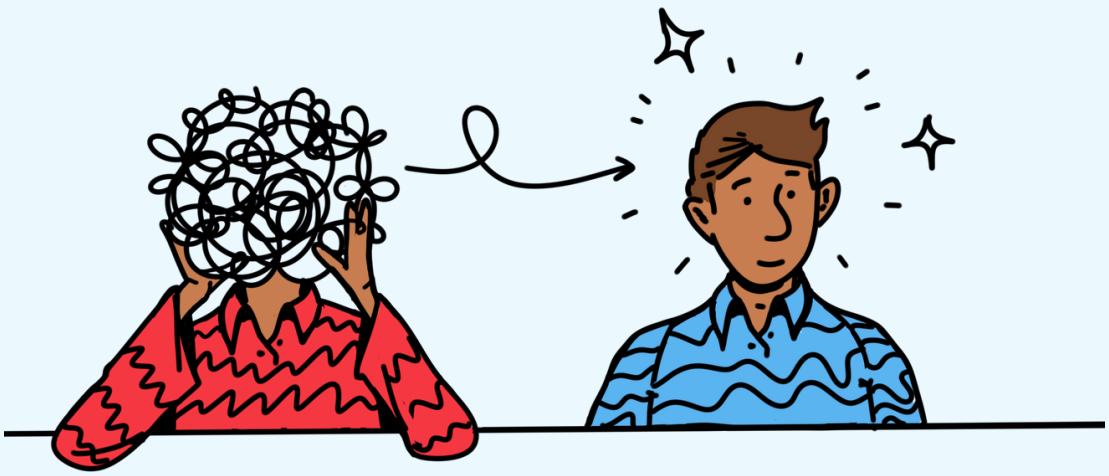
Individual safety guide: Strategies to support Psychological Safety in your school

Why individual safety matters

Individual safety refers to students feeling personally accepted, supported, and valued within the school environment. This type of safety is crucial for fostering a sense of belonging, which in turn enhances emotional wellbeing and academic success (Baker et al., 2018). When students perceive themselves as safe on an individual level, they are more likely to engage in learning, ask for help when needed, and form positive relationships with their peers and teachers (Hughes et al., 2020).

Research consistently shows that individual safety is a critical element for student resilience and mental health. Students who feel supported are more confident in expressing themselves, asking for help, and taking academic risks. On the other hand, those who do not feel valued are at higher risk of social withdrawal, academic disengagement, and mental health difficulties (Chester et al., 2020).

The strategies below aim to promote individual safety in schools, ensuring that students feel personally accepted and capable of engaging with their learning and social environments. This document is just a starting point, we encourage you to continue exploring approaches and ideas within your school community. Ongoing reflection, collaboration, and professional development are key to deepening understanding and embedding practices that foster individual psychological safety at every level.



Classroom strategies to promote individual safety

Foster positive teacher-student relationships

Why it helps:

Positive relationships between teachers and students provide a foundation for individual safety. When students feel that their teacher cares about them, they are more likely to engage in class, express themselves freely, and seek help when needed. Research highlights that positive teacher-student relationships enhance both student motivation and wellbeing (Baker et al., 2018). These relationships serve as protective factors, especially for students facing additional stressors outside of school.

What to try:

- Start lessons/school week with a personal check-in to gauge students' emotional states.
- Use individualised feedback to acknowledge each student's unique strengths and challenges (you can make use of Komodo student profiles for insights into this)
- Show that you value student input by integrating their ideas into class activities.

Create opportunities for peer support

Why it helps:

Peer support is essential for individual safety. Positive peer interactions help students develop a sense of belonging, linked to higher self-esteem and academic engagement (Hughes et al., 2020). Peer support reduces isolation, especially for students struggling with mental health challenges or social anxiety.

What to try:

- Establish peer mentoring programs for academic and emotional support.
- Organise small group activities that promote collaboration.
- Encourage students to share personal successes and challenges in a safe space.





Encourage emotional expression and reflection

Why it helps:

Safe spaces for emotional expression enhance self-awareness and emotional regulation. Studies show that processing emotions in a supportive environment reduces anxiety and fosters security (Chester et al., 2020). Emotional expression also promotes self-acceptance, which is crucial for personal growth.

What to try:

- Use emotion charts or feelings wheels to help younger students express their emotions.
- Set aside time for personal reflection, such as journaling or group discussions.
- Begin each day with a check-in question like "How are you feeling today?" to foster emotional awareness.

School-wide strategies to build learner safety

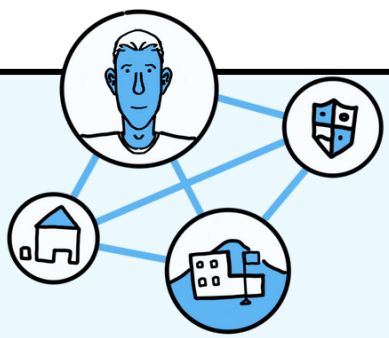
Implement anti-bullying programs and cultivate inclusivity

Why it helps:

A school-wide culture of inclusivity and respect is vital for promoting individual safety. Anti-bullying programs reduce bullying incidents and create an environment where students feel respected and valued. Research shows that effective anti-bullying programs lead to improved school climate and student wellbeing (Ttofi et al., 2018).

What to try:

- Promote anti-bullying initiatives like assemblies, workshops, and campaigns focusing on kindness and respect.
- Create clear anti-bullying policies and ensure staff and students understand how to report and address bullying.
- Implement restorative practices to resolve conflicts and rebuild relationships constructively.



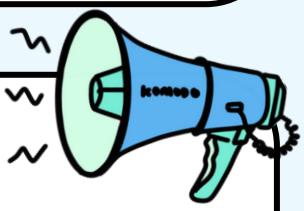


Ensure access to wellbeing, mental health and/or pastoral care resources

Why it helps:
A strong mental health and wellbeing framework is foundational to psychological safety in schools. When students know that support is available and accessible, they are more likely to seek help, feel less isolated, and develop healthy coping strategies. Providing clear access to counselling, pastoral care, or mental health services reduces stigma, promotes emotional wellbeing, and is associated with improved self-regulation, academic performance, and reduced levels of stress and anxiety (Gonzalez et al., 2019).

What to try:

- Communicate how students can access counselling or pastoral care. Consider posters, assemblies, or classroom check-ins.
- Integrate mental health education into the curriculum for students, with complementary training and resources for staff and families.
- Offer regular workshops on topics like emotional resilience, stress management, and positive coping strategies.



Promote student voice and leadership

Why it helps:
Giving students a voice and leadership opportunities helps them feel valued, which strengthens individual safety. When students feel their opinions matter, they are more likely to engage in learning and contribute to the school community. Empowering students in leadership roles improves self-esteem and sense of belonging (Kouzes & Posner, 2018).

What to try:

- Create student leadership roles such as class representatives, peer mentors, or school ambassadors.
- Organise student-led initiatives that involve decisions about school activities or policies.
- Encourage student participation in school decision-making, such as in councils or Komodo survey creation - some schools will get students to vote on one question of the survey.

Promoting individual safety in schools is foundational for creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. By focusing on positive teacher-student relationships, emotional expression, and peer support, schools can help students feel safe and valued. When students feel accepted and understood, they are better equipped to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.
Importantly, individual safety forms the base of a broader framework of psychological safety, which progresses through four interconnected levels: Inclusion Safety, Learner Safety, Contributor Safety, and Challenger Safety (for more information on the levels of psychological safety click here). Each level builds upon the last - students must first feel included before they can fully engage in learning, contribute ideas, and eventually feel confident enough to challenge the status quo. This layered approach reminds us that fostering safety is not a one-time task, but an ongoing process that requires intention and reflection.

We encourage schools to view this document as a starting point. Sustained change comes from ongoing professional development, regular team reflection, and an openness to feedback from both students and staff. Psychological safety evolves with the culture of a school; there will be challenges, setbacks, and shifts along the way—and that's okay. What matters is persistence and a shared commitment to creating environments where every student can thrive.

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