

Safer Workplaces for Women of Colour

AND

Psychological Safety at Work: An Intersectional Lens

SUMMARY REPORT



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Acknowledgements

This report acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Australia and pays respect to Elders, both past and present. We recognise their continual connection to land, waters, and community, and acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded: this land always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.

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We would also like to thank the students of Melbourne University who worked on the project's research report, the VPS employees who participated in focus groups and listening sessions throughout the various stages of the project, and our participants involved in the piloting of the Psychological Safety program.

Acknowledgement of Funding

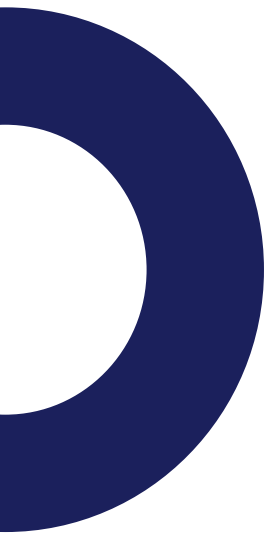
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Executive Summary



In 2020, CPSU received funding from WorkSafe Victoria to develop a project that aimed to address racism and discrimination experienced by Women of Colour in the workplace. The project was developed in response to engagement and initial research with CPSU members in the Victorian Public Service (VPS) who reported experiencing various forms of racism and discrimination at work. Furthermore, many instances went unreported due to structural and systemic barriers in the VPS to reporting or 'calling out' negative experiences in the workplace.

National and international research shows that women in the workplace are often exposed to misogynistic bullying and harassment, while minority groups may similarly experience bullying and harassment in the form of racism and discrimination^{1 2}. Falling at the intersection of both gender and ethnicity, Women of Colour as a minority group are particularly vulnerable³. The intersection of gender and race has a compounding effect and Women of Colour consequently face bullying and harassment to a degree greater than that experienced by other groups⁴.



To better understand experiences of racism and discrimination and the barriers to reporting in the VPS, CPSU and MindTribes developed the Safer Workplaces for Women of Colour research project. The project aimed to explore these issues and develop strategies and recommendations to improve psychological safety in the workplace. While an initial focus was on responding to the issues raised by Women of Colour, research and stakeholder consultation conducted throughout the project found that significant barriers to reporting are experienced by employees across a range of intersections including gender, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, and disability. For this reason, the project team broadened the approach to address psychological safety from a fully intersectional perspective.

Following the completion of the research report, CPSU and MindTribes developed Psychological Safety at Work: An Intersectional Lens. This learning program is the first in Victoria that focuses on responding to issues impacting the psychological safety of minority groups in the workplace. The program takes a prevention and early response approach and is targeted towards Human Resources (HR) professionals and people managers, who are often the first point of contact for employees experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, harm in the workplace.

This report captures the journey and learnings derived from the Safer Workplaces for Women of Colour project, through to the development of the Psychological Safety at Work: An Intersectional Lens program and its successful pilot and evaluation in the VPS.

Glossary of terms

For this report, we have adopted the following definitions:

Cultural safety is a concept that originated in the field of healthcare but has since been applied to other settings such as education, social services, and workplaces. It refers to an environment in which individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds feel respected, valued, and understood. A culturally safe environment recognises and respects the cultural diversity of all individuals, and actively works to address the power imbalances that can exist between different cultural groups ⁵.

Discrimination occurs when a person, or a group of people, are treated less favourably than another because of their background or certain personal characteristics ⁶.

Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation ⁷.

People of Colour is a term based on individual self-identification and typically refers to people who do not self-identify as 'white'. It is used fundamentally to unite people who may experience multiple layers of marginalisation and inequality based on race and ethnicity.

Psychological safety is the shared belief among team members that they can express their ideas, opinions, and concerns without fear of negative consequences such as ridicule, rejection, or retaliation. Psychological safety is essential for effective communication, innovation, and collaboration within teams and organisations, and it is often considered a critical component of a healthy workplace culture. When people feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to be open and honest, share ideas freely, and work collaboratively towards common goals ⁸.

Psychosocial hazards are factors in the design or management of work that increase the risk of work-related stress and can lead to psychological or physical harm. Examples of psychosocial hazards might include poor supervisor support or high job demands ⁹.

Racism is any prejudice, discrimination, or hatred directed at a party because of their colour, ethnicity, or national origin that prevents the party from enjoying dignity and equality because of their race. Racism can manifest in many forms. While overt racism is explicit and intentional, covert racism is subtle and disguised beneath any visible or tangible event ¹⁰.

Woman of Colour is a term based on individual self-identification and typically refers to women who do not self-identify as 'white'. It is used fundamentally to unite women who may experience multiple layers of marginalisation and inequality based on race, ethnicity and gender.

Workplace bullying refers to "repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed at an employee, or group of employees, that creates a risk to health and safety" ¹¹.

Introduction

In 2019, CPSU engaged with members of the VPS Women of Colour Network in response to a range of issues impacting upon psychological safety in the workplace. These issues included instances of racism, discrimination, bullying and harassment, difficulty accessing promotional opportunities and low representation in decision-making and leadership roles. Furthermore, CPSU learned that the likelihood of Women of Colour reporting negative incidents to their line manager, or a Human Resources representative, was low, and hindered by fear of repercussions and poor trust in the organisation’s reporting processes.

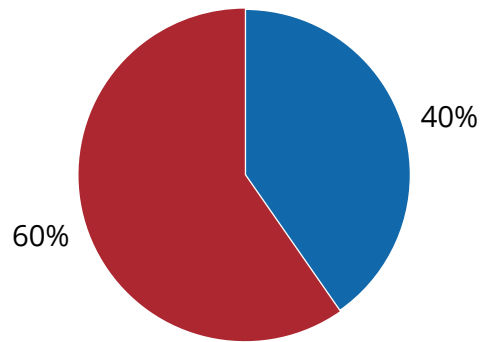
CPSU membership survey

Research indicates that Women of Colour are often a gender and racial minority in the workplace and are particularly vulnerable to experiences of racism, discrimination and harassment³⁴. To better understand the nature and breadth of these experiences across the VPS, CPSU conducted a survey of its membership and found that rates of racism and discrimination were significant across multiple workplaces¹². 32% of respondents had personally experienced workplace racism and 58% had personally experienced bullying or harassment. However, of those who indicated they had experienced workplace racism, 60% chose not to report the incidents. Of those who had experienced bullying and harassment, 32% did not report.



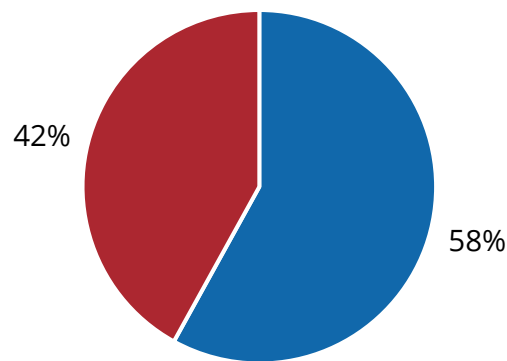
Did you report your experience of racism to your manager/organisation?

■ Yes ■ No



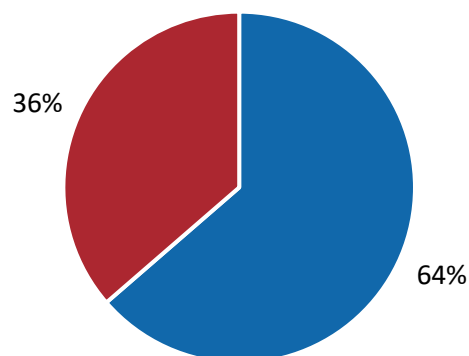
Have you personally experienced bullying/harassment in your workplace?

■ Yes ■ No



Did you report your experience of bullying/harassment to your manager/organisation?

■ Yes ■ No

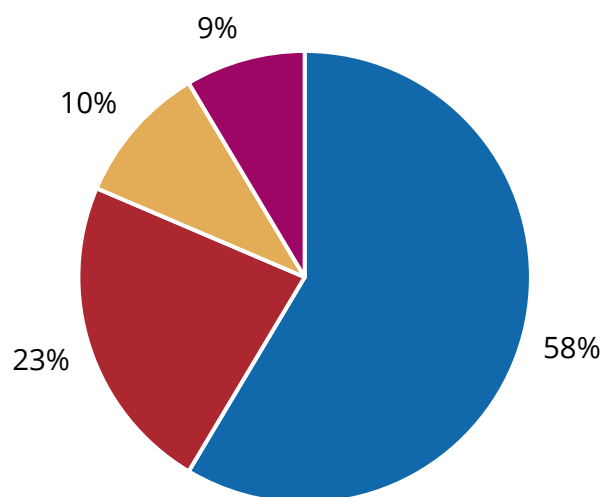


In addition to the statistical evidence, survey respondents also provided numerous anecdotal examples of employers failing to provide psychologically safe workplaces. Further evidence indicated that whilst respondents were aware of experiencing racism, the types of racism, unless obvious and overt, were difficult to prove. Respondents noted that structural racism and unconscious bias were common in their workplaces; however, there was a low level of knowledge on the part of employers to recognise and respond to incidents appropriately.

The survey also revealed more about the internal and external barriers to reporting instances of racism and discrimination. Rationale for not reporting included fears about confidentiality and repercussions to careers, and low levels of trust in organisational complaints processes. Anecdotal evidence suggested that some who did report a negative experience to their line manager or to HR were dissatisfied with the outcome, while others initially reported, but decided not to proceed with a formal complaint due to the onerous nature of organisational process.

What were your reasons for not reporting your experience of bullying/harassment?

- I resolved the issue informally without reporting
- I didn't trust my manager/organisation to investigate and respond impartially
- I was concerned about confidentiality
- I was concerned that it would affect my employment or promotion
- I didn't think it would change my situation



Development of Safer Workplaces for Women of Colour project

To provide further opportunity to investigate the survey findings from an industrial relations and occupational health and safety (OHS) perspective, CPSU held an inaugural Women of Colour conference in October 2019. In partnership with WorkSafe Victoria, Maurice Blackburn and the Australian Multicultural Foundation, the conference brought together 130 Women of Colour from across the VPS to share their experiences in a series of workshops and discussions.

Following the conference, the Safer Workplaces for Women of Colour project was conceptualised. Its aim was to develop a better understanding of intersectional experiences and to develop a prevention and early response approach to addressing racism and discrimination as a workplace occupational health and safety issue. The project featured two key stages:

1. The development of a comprehensive research report including a literature review, a mixed methods study into the experiences of Women of Colour in the VPS, examples of national and international best practice in prevention and response, and a list of recommendations to address racism and discrimination in the workplace.
2. A suite of evidence-based tools and resources to build individual and organisational capability in preventing and responding to racism and discrimination.

The research phase was scoped to explore issues primarily from the perspective of Women of Colour, however, it was intended that the project's desired outcomes would also benefit employees from a range of diverse backgrounds through its focus on intersectionality. The resources developed for the project would focus on the responsibility of employers to provide safer workplaces, and aim to improve their skills, knowledge and capability to respond to reports of racism and discrimination appropriately.

Following a competitive tender process, CPSU selected MindTribes as its research partner for the project. MindTribes' expertise in driving organisational change through diversity and inclusion measures, along with previous collaboration with the VPS Women of Colour Network and other public sector clients, provided it with a solid understanding of the project objectives and the context in which CPSU operates. Furthermore, MindTribes' lived experience as People of Colour, with expertise in organisational psychology and cross-cultural engagement, indicated that stakeholder consultation would be sensitively managed and informed by best practice.

Research Report

Conducted during 2020-21 by MindTribes, with support from the University of Melbourne ¹³, the project's research component focused on answering the following questions:

- What are the impacts of, and the various ways in which, racism and discrimination manifest in the workplace?
- What are the linkages between racism and discrimination and bullying in the workplace?
- What barriers discourage Women of Colour from reporting incidents to employers?
- What strategies can Women of Colour adopt in safely raising issues of workplace racism and discrimination to employers?
- How can employers effectively prevent and respond to workplace racism and discrimination in a meaningful and timely manner?

The research took an intersectional approach to identifying and understanding experiences of racism, discrimination, bullying and harassment, and sexual harassment. It was conducted as a mixed methods study focusing on VPS employees who identified as Women of Colour and employees from other diverse backgrounds, HR professionals, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) professionals and senior leaders.



The research activities were comprised of the following:

1

A literature review to consider national and international best practice and frameworks to understand what has been successfully implemented in workplaces, what has failed, and the reasons behind failure and success.

2

Qualitative data from five focus groups conducted with VPS employees - three with participants who identified as Women of Colour and from multiple diverse backgrounds, and two focus groups with managers and senior leaders in the VPS. The focus groups encouraged participants to share and discuss their personal views and experiences around racism and discrimination in their workplace.

The themes of the first three focus groups focused on identifying barriers to reporting incidents of racism and discrimination, how to create a more effective reporting process which would improve employee confidence in reporting, and the effectiveness of punishment versus reward policies as a deterrent to racism and discrimination.

Two additional focus groups were conducted with participants of diverse backgrounds to:

- Explore the likelihood of adopting proposed external approaches and internal mechanisms (to manage and reduce discrimination and racism in the workplace).
- Understand the practical barriers to implementing the recommendations in the workplace.

3

Quantitative data from a survey to validate and support key findings from the focus groups. The survey was intended to determine participants' level of comfort for different anti-racism and discrimination initiatives.

The objectives were:

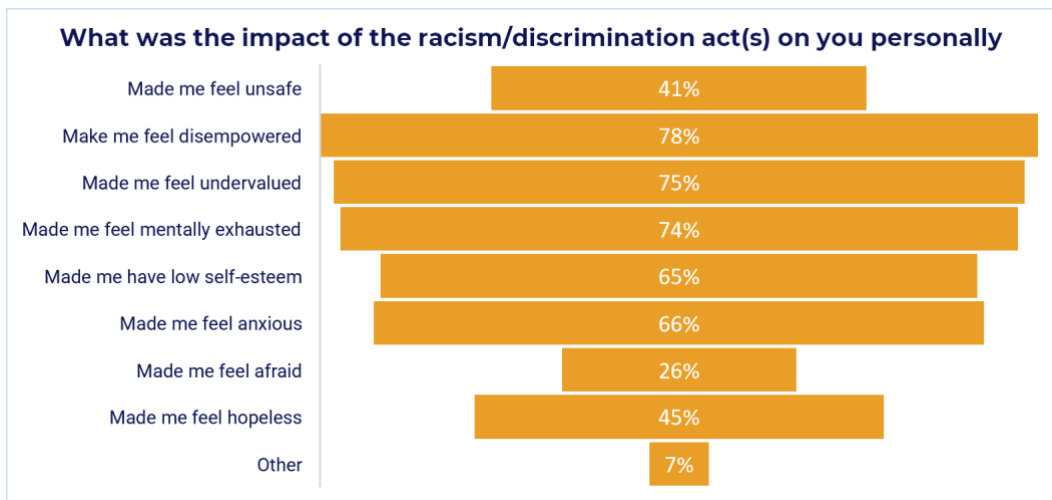
- To explore how racism and discrimination occurs
- To obtain participants perspectives on the impact of racism and discrimination
- To understand the potential barriers that prevent individuals from reporting incidents
- To examine what an 'appropriate strategy' looks like

While the research did not explicitly address racism or discrimination experienced by any racial/ethnic group, it is important to acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience racism, race-related bullying and discrimination at a rate of up to four times more than other women¹⁴. This was supported by examples of lived experience shared during the focus groups by people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Research findings

Research has shown that over time, racism and discrimination can affect an individual's physical and mental health¹⁵. Chronic stress and low self-esteem are commonly experienced by victims of workplace discrimination in addition to anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, generalised strain, psychosomatic symptoms, and burnout¹⁶. These effects lead to job dissatisfaction and decreased performance which, in turn, deteriorate overall organisational function¹⁷.

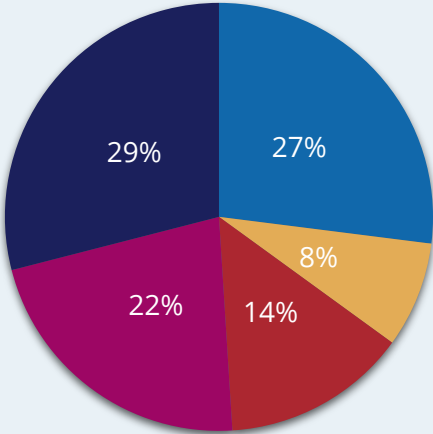
The project's research findings provided further evidence of the impacts of experiencing racism and discrimination on an employee's psychological and physical safety, workplace relationships, job motivation and career prospects.



What is the impact of systemic racism on your...

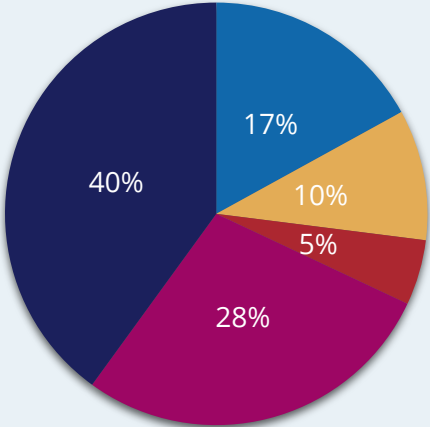
Psychological Safety

Very None Low Moderate High



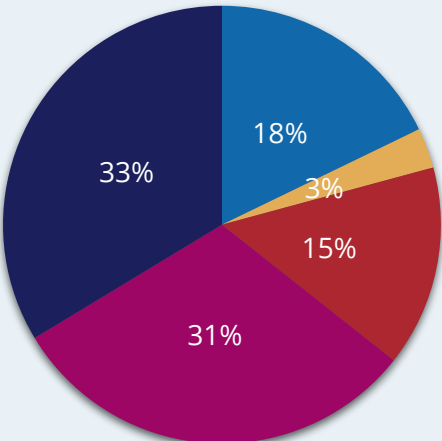
Physical Safety

Very None Low Moderate High



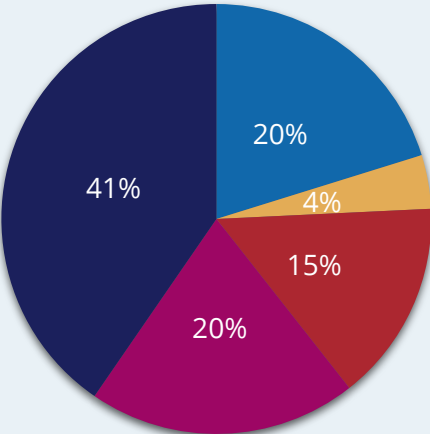
Workplace Relationships

Very None Low Moderate High



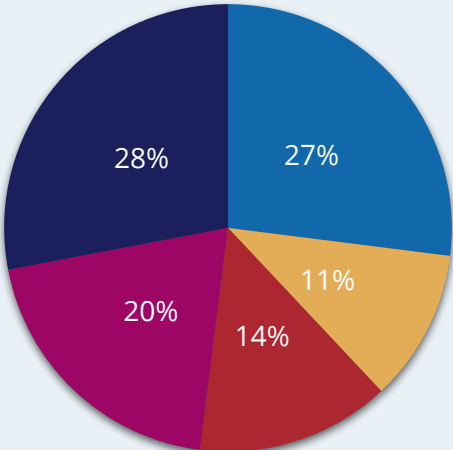
Job Motivation

Very None Low Moderate High



Career Prospects

Very None Low Moderate High



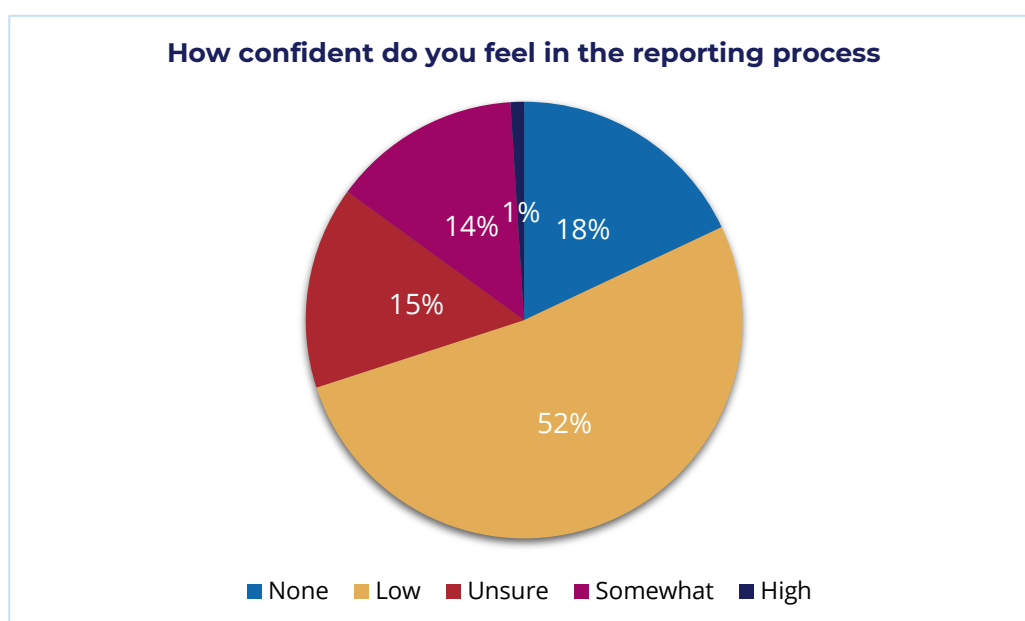
Reporting workplace incidents

While diversity initiatives, legislation and anti-discrimination policies are key to making structural changes within organisations and changing organisational culture, poor incident handling and the failure to provide a psychologically safe work environment are common barriers to reporting¹⁸. Ensuring that systems are universally trusted and understood is critical for employees to engage with the reporting process either as witnesses or targets. Beliefs that reporting will not be taken seriously, or that reporting will be met with negative consequences (hostility, shame, or being seen as a troublemaker) lead to the perception of a lack of safety associated with reporting processes¹⁸.

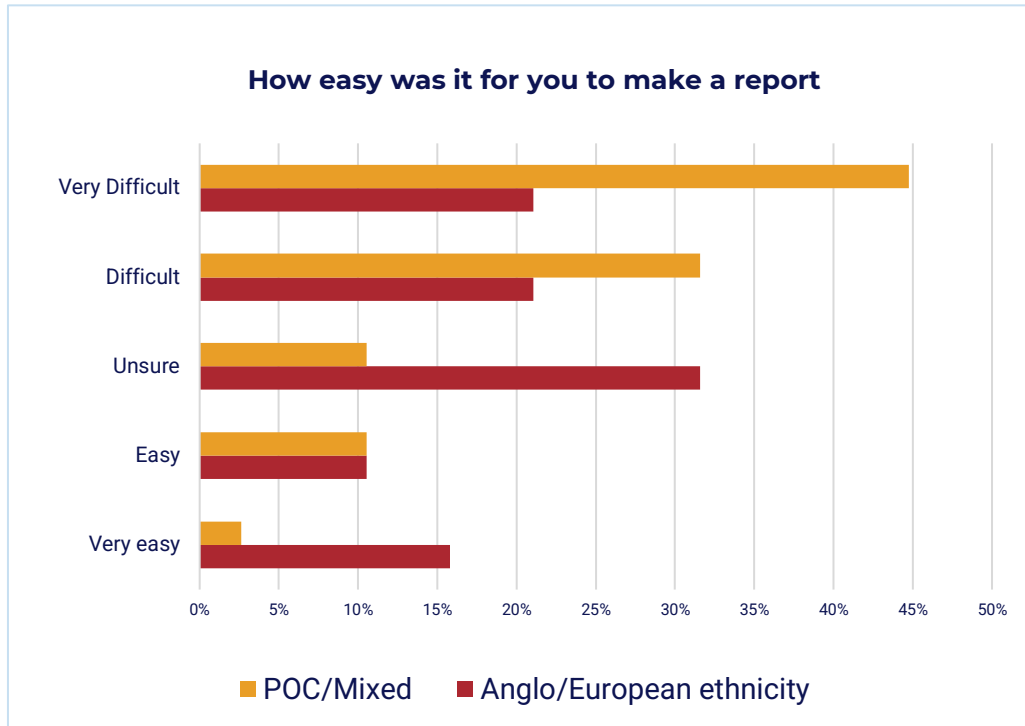
In addition, a perceived lack of action and acknowledgement of incidents creates distrust in the organisation's ability to create meaningful change. More specifically, Women of Colour may not trust those they report to, who are often in more senior positions, responsible for workplace safety, and potentially more likely to be favoured and/or protected by the organisation, given their senior ranking.

In line with the body of research on barriers to reporting, the project's research showed that 76% of Women of Colour and 42% of Anglo & European women found reporting harassment and bullying in the workplace very difficult to report. 65% of all participants did not trust that the system would manage the complaint to a satisfactory conclusion and 64% felt that they would be ignored or dismissed when they raised the issue with their line manager or with HR.

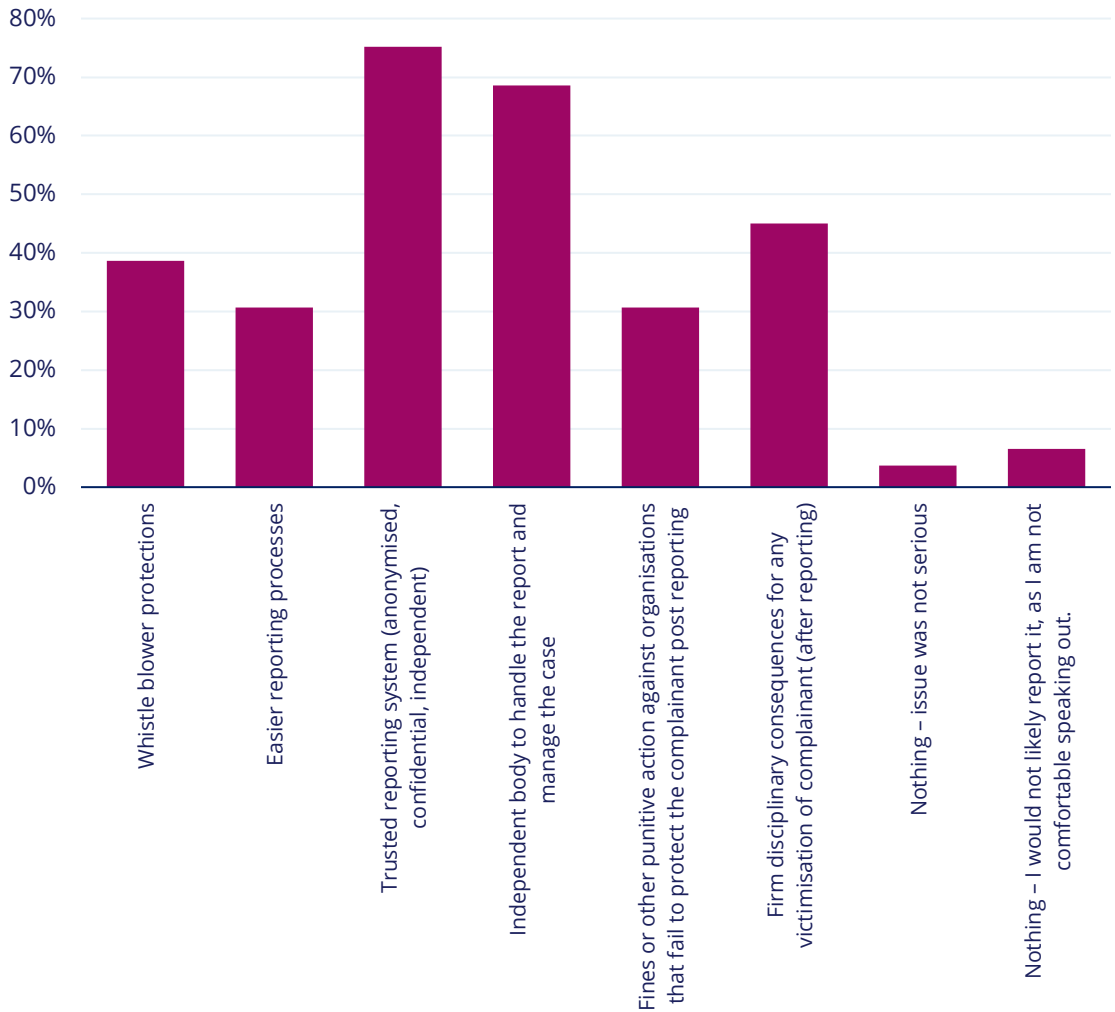
These statistics also corroborated CPSU survey findings that showed of the 32% who had experienced racism or discrimination and the 60% who chose not to report it, 29% did not report due to a lack of trust in their employer's impartiality and 22% feared reporting would have a negative consequence on their career¹².



The accessibility of reporting systems was also a deterrent for the project's research participants¹³. Evidence indicated a belief that VPS complaints systems were difficult to access and navigate, while some participants expressed concern that there was no anonymous reporting mechanism available to them. Others provided anecdotal evidence of HR representatives 'warning' them that their organisation's process was long and difficult, with potential negative outcomes for the complainant¹³.



What would have made you more confident in reporting it



Research Report Recommendations

Comprehensively tackling systemic issues of racism and discrimination in the workplace requires a cultural shift, whilst also imposing external compliance controls to ensure that organisations are held accountable for positive change. The research report's overarching recommendation was for organisations to build an enabling framework to prevent and respond to incidents of racism and discrimination internally¹³. The framework should include:

- **Voice** (e.g., confidential and anonymous reporting, improved accessibility and transparency of complaints systems)
- **Education, Awareness and Coaching** (including training for leadership and employees)
- **Tracking metrics** (improving diversity in leadership positions, independent monitoring of outcomes)
- **Clear governance** (policies, programs, and targets)

Three external interventions were also recommended to encourage organisations to adopt the framework:

1. **Hazard reduction** via compliance with OHS regulations under the remit of WorkSafe Victoria
2. **Regulation** supported by a public entity to guide and enforce compliance
3. **An incentivised approach** – highlighting 'best in class' organisations



A Hazard Reduction Approach would provide WorkSafe with the power to apply punitive penalties from an OHS context.

An Incentive Approach would establish the case for change and set the appropriate goals, provide education and support and assist organisations to develop plans to prevent and respond to racism and discrimination.

A Regulation Approach would provide the most comprehensive, sustainable approach to reducing systemic barriers for Women of Colour and establishing long term organisational cultural change.

An organisation's appetite for change, and their capability to implement it, should be evaluated prior to adopting each intervention (separately or concurrently). Whilst any single approach regarding external intervention would have a positive outcome, using all three approaches either in parallel, or in a phased rollout, would achieve a comprehensive response that would go further to eliminating racism and discrimination.

Feedback from the focus group with managers and senior leaders indicated a preference for an incentive-based approach that featured a staged implementation to be phased in over several years, considering an organisation's maturity, capacity and capability to achieve outcomes.

Organisations committed to taking care of their people focus on:



Following the completion of the research report, CPSU participated in a series of discussions with the Victorian Government and VPS departments and agencies about the research findings. The report's findings were also presented at the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) annual conference in 2021.

Psychological Safety at Work: An Intersectional Lens

Program Development

While the project's initial focus was to address issues raised by Women of Colour, the inclusion of Peer Support Network members in focus groups indicated that barriers to reporting are broadly experienced by VPS employees across a range of intersections including gender, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, and disability. For this reason, the project team acknowledged that strategies informed by the research needed to be broadened to address psychological safety from a fully intersectional perspective.

Following the completion of the research report and discussions with WorkSafe Victoria, the decision was made to align the next stage of the project with the research recommendations on Education, Awareness and Coaching. This would build upon the research evidence and focus group feedback to work on changing the experience an employee has when reporting and navigating organisational complaints processes.

Research tells us that the response from a person in positional power directly impacts the psychological and cultural safety of a person who has experienced negative behaviours at work ¹⁹. During consultations with Women of Colour and employees from other diverse backgrounds, MindTribes were provided with numerous examples of complaints that were handled poorly and had a further negative impact on the person experiencing harm. Through various qualitative interviews, research participants shared that they often first approached a HR professional to seek counsel prior to reporting but were met with 'process guidance' on how to complete forms to make a formal complaint. They reported feeling isolated and experiencing little to no duty of care from HR, besides a referral of self-help - i.e. advice to contact their organisation's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) ¹³.

In most organisations, HR professionals have the sphere of influence to improve organisational governance and operations to create a safer experience for those experiencing harm in the workplace. Based on this understanding, CPSU and MindTribes decided to develop a learning program to build the capability of HR professionals and managers. The program would aim to encourage participants to audit and assess their organisational environments and to influence and advocate for psychological safety.



Program Design


Following consultation and further refining of key content, MindTribes designed a six-session learning program – Psychological Safety at Work: An Intersectional Lens. The program represents the first time that learning on psychological safety has included real life examples and lived experiences of employees from diverse backgrounds in Victoria, making it the first fully intersectional learning program of its kind.

The objectives of the program are:

1. To develop a human-centric approach that places the cultural and psychological safety of a person experiencing harm in the workplace at the centre of an organisation's response.
2. To build the capability and knowledge of people responding to workplace incidents and issues where psychological safety is at risk.
3. To build a consistent approach to managing, assessing and controlling risks to psychological health and safety at work.
4. To build capability and provide opportunity for individual and organisational assessment to identify where further knowledge and skills are necessary.
5. To create learning organisations through the promotion of data collection, policy and process reviews, learning from and sharing best practice examples, and through giving participants the skills and confidence to advocate for reform in their organisations.
6. To encourage all employees to speak up/report negative behaviours. learning.

The program is comprised of six facilitated sessions supported by a Community of Practice to facilitate peer to peer learning outside sessions. Participants are asked to commit to act, which means applying their learning to real world situations outside the course and then sharing insights from their work with the group to support everyone's learning.

The program's six sessions are broken down into capability assessment, response, continuous assessment and proactive prevention topics. These allow participants to evaluate structures and systems that govern psychological safety and consider what can change, or should change to proactively prevent harm, and to deal with an immediate duty of care to restore and rebuild psychological safety.



Sessions & Community of Practice

The curriculum is a **program** in a 'Hub' environment, [a group of 10-12 participants] who together form a **Community of Practice**.

1

2

The **ideal participant** is either an HR leader or a line manager. Members meet virtually and have a project coordinator to organise the group and access facilitator support in between sessions. The six dates are set once the group is formed.

The style of learning is facilitation and coaching of core content by an external lead and learning is further supported by **peer-to-peer learning** [each member contributing to each other's growing knowledge and capability].

3

4

The group members should belong to different organisations, or different areas of an organisation, if possible to enrich the group dynamics and provide opportunity to learn from different 'case studies in action'.

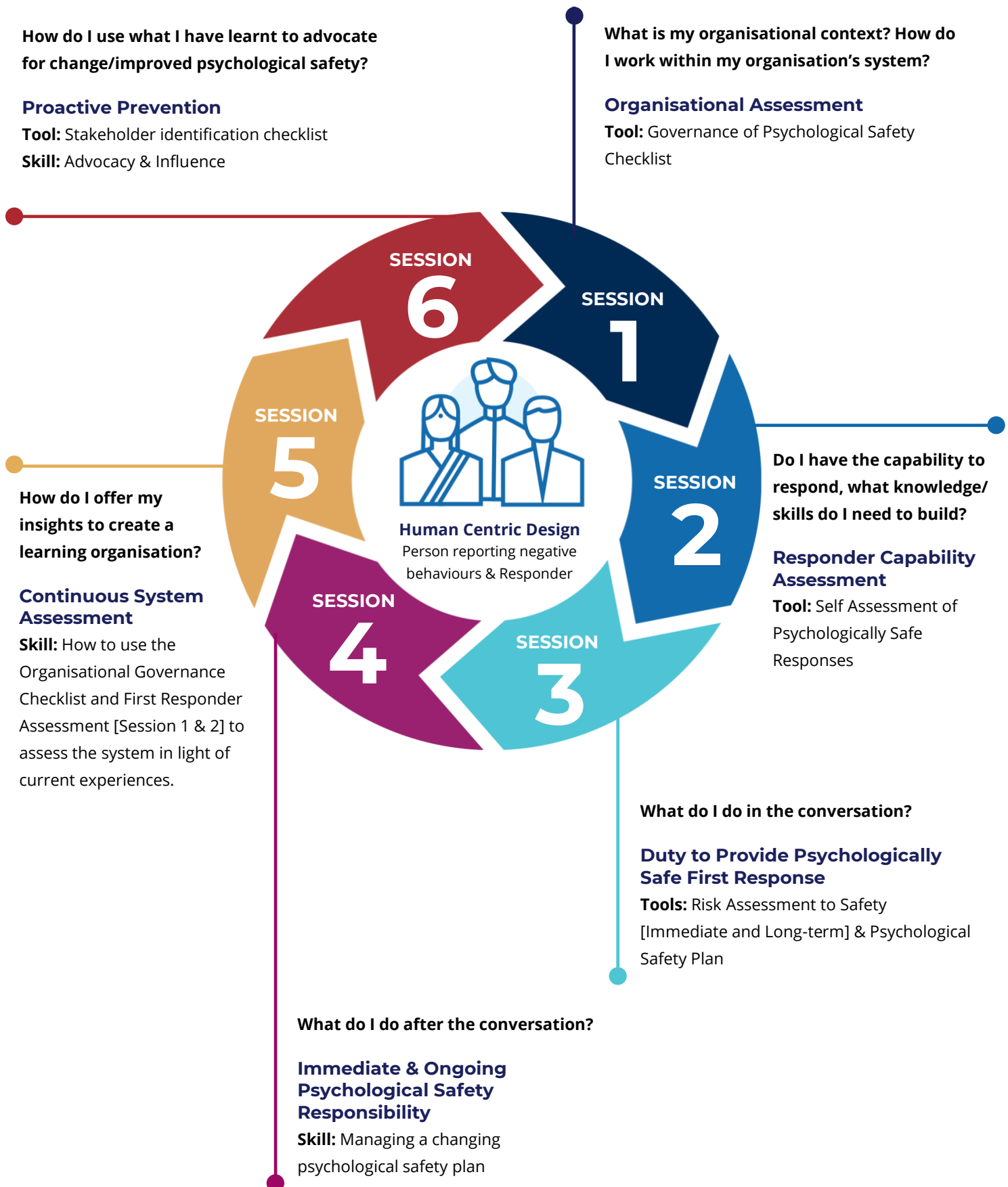
All participants must have the **overall aim** of improving psychological and cultural safety in their organisations.

5

6

In between sessions, participants **must commit to act**, which means they must apply learning from the session in a **real world** context, bringing back insight from the application to the group and facilitator, for further coaching and support.

Curriculum Outline



SESSION 1

Session 1 helps participants gain an understanding of their organisational context and the environment in which they are working. Using an organisational assessment tool, participants assess the organisational levers that govern psychological safety.

SESSION 2

Session 2 enables participants to measure their individual learning needs and identify what skills or knowledge they need to respond to an individual in a way that protects or restores psychological safety. This session involves producing a development plan for participants that focuses on capability-building and skills acquisition.

SESSION 3

Session 3 teaches participants how to have a conversation about psychological safety with a person experiencing harm, how to assess risk, and how to set up ongoing safety checks until issue resolution.

SESSION 4

Session 4 focuses on immediate and ongoing psychological safety responsibilities, which involves carrying out a risk assessment and codesigning a psychological safety plan with the person experiencing harm.

SESSION 5

Session 5 focuses on ensuring that learning is used to improve systems and governance; in turn, improving the way in which psychological safety is managed.

SESSION 6

Session 6 focuses on proactive prevention and how participants can use skills and knowledge gained from the program to advocate and influence.



Participant learning is supported by a suite of assessment tools and resources to measure individual and organisational capability and to identify gaps where further capability is required. These are mapped across sessions, as shown in the table below.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND RESOURCES	
SESSIONS	TOOL/RESOURCE
Session 1: Organisational Assessment	Session 1: Governance of Psychological Safety Checklist – Organisational Assessment and Governance of Psychological Safety Checklist – Actions to Address
Session 2: Responder Capability Assessment	Session 2: First Responder Capability Assessment
Session 3: Duty to Provide Psychologically Safe First Responses	Session 3: Psychosocial Safety Risk Assessment
Session 4: Immediate and Ongoing Psychological Safety Responsibility	Session 4: Psychological Safety Plan
Session 5: Continuous System Assessment	Refer to Session 1: Governance of Psychological Safety Checklist – Organisational Assessment and Governance of Psychological Safety Checklist – Actions to Address
Session 6: Proactive Prevention through Advocacy	Session 6: Stakeholder Identification Checklist



In addition to the assessment tools, the program also features 18 intersectional case studies, derived and de-identified from MindTribes' consultations conducted across the VPS. These real examples of lived experience encourage a move from a process-centred approach to a human-centred approach and provide a range of scenarios across issues such as racism, bullying, sexual harassment, and various forms of discrimination. Participants discuss and apply learning to the case studies throughout the program. The case studies can also aid in discussion in participants' workplaces when seeking to advocate or influence change.

Example Case Study: Racism – Racial Stereotyping

Amanda is an associate lecturer in Strategy and Transformation and a senior public servant and has been in Indigenous-facing roles for most of her career. She is part of the Stolen Generation and was in the first cohort of Indigenous students to attend Victorian public school. She is in her first Director role that is non-Indigenous facing, and she is looking forward to it.

While Amanda is warmly welcomed into her new team, the fact that she is a First Nations woman, and the first to take on the Strategy Director role, is over-emphasised. After a few weeks in her new role, Amanda feels isolated. She is often excluded from meeting invitations and less formal gatherings of the senior leadership team.

Amanda's voice is welcome on First Nations matters and on the development of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). She is also consulted on developing a more meaningful Acknowledgement to Country, asked to recommend First Nations cultural competence training, and to contribute to the organisation's NAIDOC plans. However, on other matters she is on the periphery, often talked over, or her contribution and the issues she raises dismissed quickly. Amanda is also provided with a more junior Anglo person to 'help' her write her papers for the leadership meeting; this person is often invited to the senior leadership informal and formal meetings without Amanda.

Amanda decides to speak up. In the next senior leadership meeting, she tells her colleagues about her experience and states that she is being over-valued for her First Nations status, but not recognised for her knowledge and experience in Strategy and Transformation. The room is quiet. Amanda's manager acknowledges that Amanda is upset and calls the meeting to a halt. He meets with Amanda immediately after the meeting and advises that she has handled the issue inappropriately. He advises that there is a certain level of professionalism that she needs to maintain.

Amanda is devastated that her manager does not address her colleagues' mistreatment of her. When she asks him for an explanation, he advises that the matter is one of perception and that onboarding mistakes occurred that she 'needn't get heated over'. Amanda tells him that this is passive aggressive bullying and racism. He says that she is welcome to raise it with HR and see what they say, but he is doubtful that this will 'stick' as racism.

Implementation

Recruitment for the pilot of Psychological Safety at Work: An Intersectional Lens was targeted towards HR professionals and DEI practitioners across VPS departments and agencies. A total of 17 participants were recruited from the Department of Health (DH), Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Victoria Police, Department of Government Services (DGS), Department of Premier & Cabinet (DPC), and the Victorian Equal Opportunities & Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC).

The pilot program commenced in April and was completed in August. Sessions were held online for two hours, in three-week intervals, and were facilitated by Div Pillay of MindTribes.

A typical session entailed the following:

30 mins: Facilitated group peer discussion (Community of Practice)

- Review of last week's topic
- Learning from pre-work assessment. Exchange of learning between participants.

30 mins: New content delivered

- Best practice tools, thinking, frameworks, models
- Learning through intersectional case studies

30 mins: Facilitated peer discussion in break-out sessions

- Application of new content to an intersectional case study
- Assessment of participants' context/organisation to the case study

30 mins: Commitment to Act

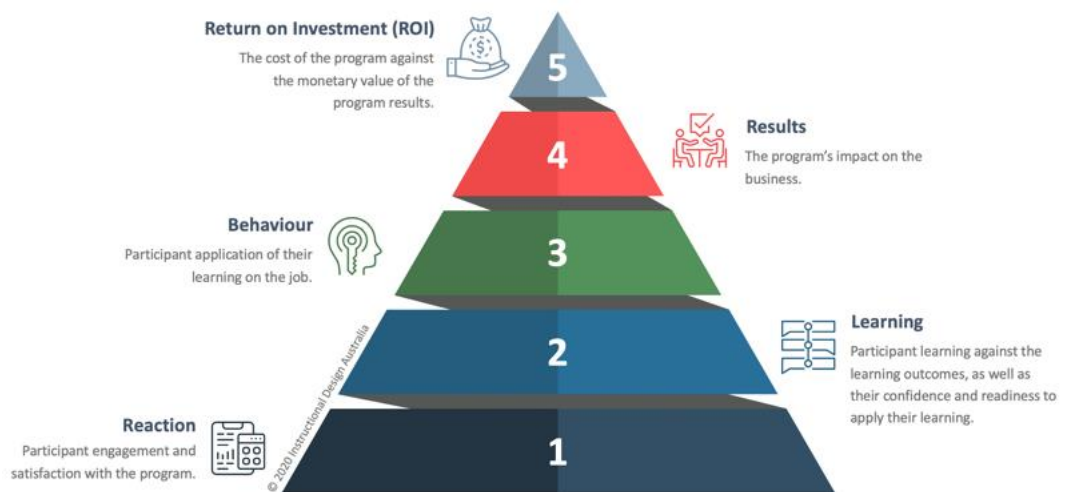
- Supported decision-making of next steps to be taken by each participant
- Close of session and links to the next session (explanation of pre-work)



Evaluation

Psychological Safety at Work: An Intersectional Lens is inherently underpinned by an audit and assessment approach so that each participant is constantly evaluating system, structural and humanistic variables that lead to improving psychological safety at work. This approach was developed during the program design phase, using the Kirkpatrick Model, as a framework for evaluation and design.

Levels of evaluation



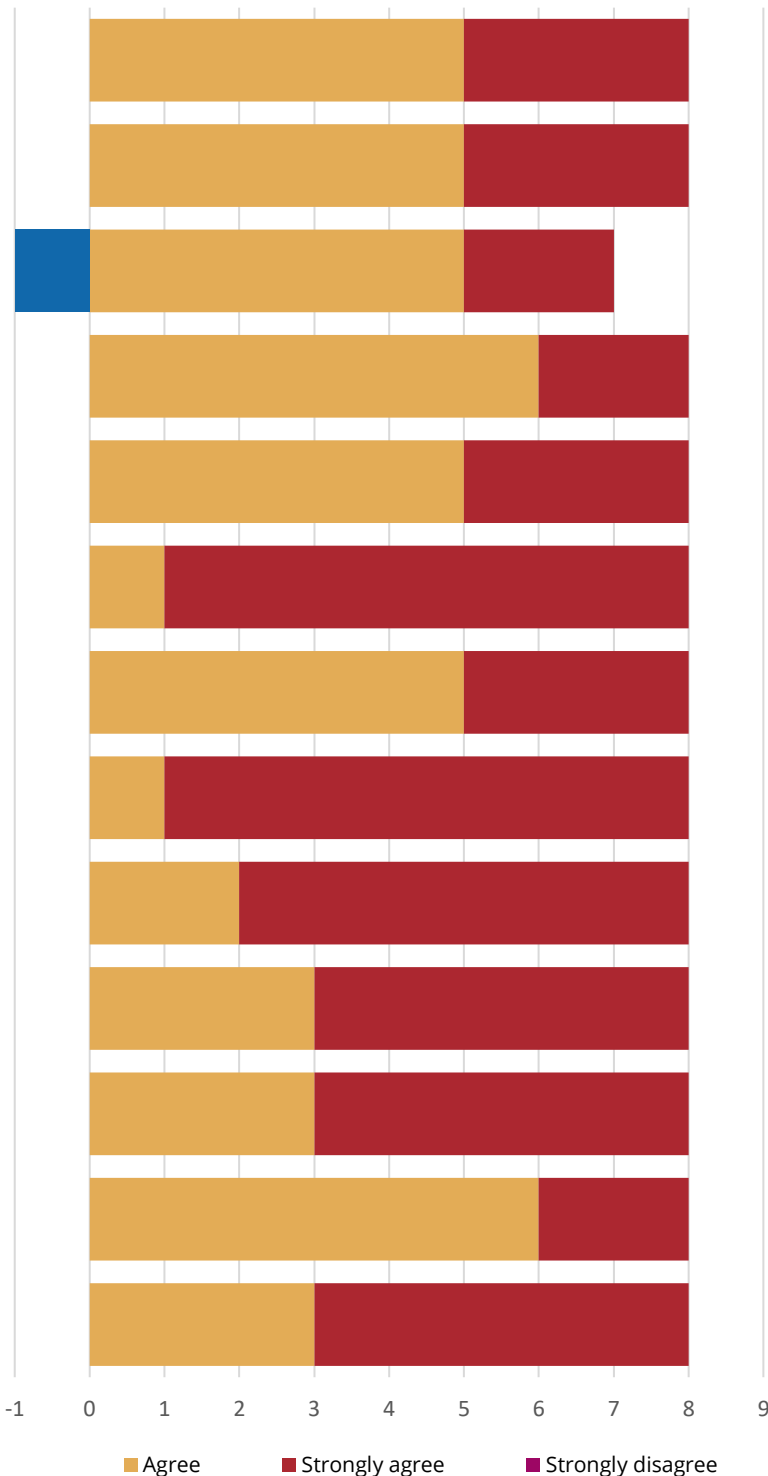
Adapted from "Evaluating Training Programs" by D. Kirkpatrick, 1994, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.^[1] & "The Value of Learning: How Organisations Capture Value and ROI" by P. Phillips & J. Phillips, 2007, Pfeiffer.

In addition to the quantitative and qualitative post-program evaluations, there are 22 built-in learning self-evaluations [Kirkpatrick 2-4] during sessions, with Level 1 catered for in the overall design of a Community of Practice (every session starts and ends with 30 minutes of connection, clarity and engagement).

SESSION	EVALUATION OF LEARNING BY DESIGN DURING THE SESSION
Session 1: Organisational assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human Centric Assessment of Organisational Governance of Psychological Assessment [Case Study 1] using 5 Inclusion Metrics [level 2] 2. Application of learning via case studies 2 & 3 [level 3]
Session 2: Individual capability assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Accountability check of commitments to act from session 1 [level 4] 4. Application of learning: Inclusion Metrics to case study 4 [level 3] 5. Application of individual capability assessment to case study 4 [level 3] 6. Assessment of immediate and ongoing psychological safety needs within case study 4. [level 2] 7. Consolidation assessment: application of content to case studies 5 & 6 [level 3]
Session 3: Duty of care first responses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Accountability check of commitments to action from session 2 [level 4] 9. Application of lived experience listening techniques to case study 7 [level 3] 10. Application of inclusion metrics to case study 7 [level 3] 11. Application of psychosocial risk assessment to case study 8 [level 3] 12. Application of co-design of psychological safety plan to case study 9 [level 2]
Session 4: Psychological safety management plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Accountability check of commitments to action from session 3 [level 4] 14. Assessment of data storage and management of early indicator data – application to case study 10 [level 2] [level 3] 15. Assessment of voice data integration [level 2] 16. Re-assessment of risk and indirect risk to others [level 2]
Session 5: Continuous system assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Accountability check of commitments to act from session 4 [level 4] 18. Assessment of system gaps for psychological safety using case studies 1-15 in aggregate. [level 2] [level 3] 19. Critical Assessment of systems to collect voice data continuously [level 2]
Session 6: Proactive prevention through advocacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Accountability check of commitments to act from session 5 [level 4] 21. Assessment of stakeholder strength in context of case studies 16-18. [level 2] [level 3] 22. Assessment of individual capability to influence key stakeholders [level 2]

Participant Feedback

Participant feedback was collected via an anonymous online survey and qualitative interviews with participants. The online survey measured participant experience and learning by presenting a list of statements about the pilot program, to which participants had options to strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. These statements sought to measure how well the program had met its objectives in building individual and organisational capability, which aspects or parts of the program were most useful to participants, and if participants felt that the pilot had potential for adaptability and tailoring for different audiences.



This iteration of the program was aimed at HR and OHS professionals. To what extent do you agree that it could be tailored effectively towards line managers.

This iteration of the program was aimed at HR and OHS professionals. To what extent do you agree that it could be tailored effectively towards senior leadership.

The model of peer-to-peer learning in a community of practice encourages shared learning across departments.

The stakeholder assessment tool helps to identify potential allies and supports to improve psychological safety

The organisational system assessment tool evaluates the whole organisation, not simply reporting and complaints-handling processes.

The program's intersectional case studies help me to better understand the risks to psychological safety and the barriers to reporting experienced by minorities in the workplace.

The program provides tools and resources that can be utilised after the program's completion

The approach is person-centric, humanistic, and intersectional

The program aims to increase my personal capability, knowledge and skills

The program encourages continuous assessment of psychological safety from an organisational and individual perspective

The program is focused on prevention and early intervention to minimise the risk of harm occurring

The program is grounded in practical, operational experiences

The program aligns with the principles of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Victorian Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004

Similarly, positive feedback about the program was received during qualitative interviews with participants. Comments included:


“ I really liked all the topics and I think it's a nice journey. The organisational assessment and the psych management planning is so important.

“ The program provided a good opportunity to hear about and share different perspectives and approaches based on specialist areas and the case studies were diverse enough to generate good conversations.

“ There are some great templates. There's lots of stuff that can be used and tailored to whatever organisation our HR colleagues work in.

“ I really loved the case studies. I thought they were very useful. The conversation we had in the breakout rooms would be really, really positive.





“ I think that one of the highlights around the course was those case studies... Some of them challenged me as a manager at times, because I think sometimes having to weigh up the business needs and the individual needs can be difficult, and I thought that there were some really good illustrations of that.

“ I found the case studies really useful, particularly because they were real examples that brought to life some of the issues that we're trying to manage and deal with.

In summary, both qualitative and quantitative feedback shows that the pilot program was well received. Participants also offered several useful suggestions for improvement which will be tabled for consideration should funding be available to revise and rollout the program to a broader audience.



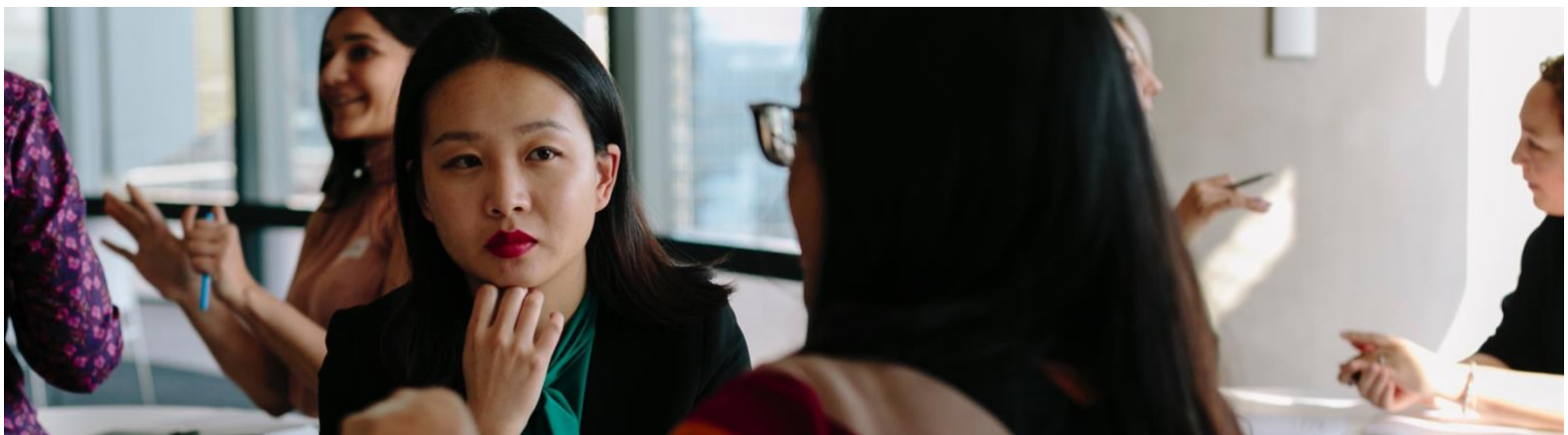
Conclusion

As a union, CPSU is committed to improving the experiences of its members and working to make workplaces safe, equal and fair. Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act), employers must provide and maintain a working environment for their employees, including contractors, that is safe and without risks to health, so far as reasonably practicable ²¹. In Section 5 of the OHS Act, health is defined as including psychological health ²¹.

The Victorian Government is currently considering options for the development of the Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Psychological Health) Regulations to strengthen the OHS framework and recognise the harm that psychosocial hazards at work present to health, safety and wellbeing. The proposed regulations aim to promote the importance of psychological health and safety in the working environment ²¹.

Psychological Safety at Work: An Intersectional Lens can help employers take a proactive approach to reducing psychosocial hazards in the workplace, improve reporting experiences for employees who speak up, and develop workplaces that are psychologically and culturally safe for Victoria's diverse workforce. The program can be tailored to align with different job roles and functions and scaled for impact to broader audiences. It can also be delivered face-to-face or online, with modular adaptations available to focus on specific content areas.

The work presented in this report represents three years of research and stakeholder consultation, directly shaped and informed by people from diverse and marginalised groups experiencing harm in the workplace. CPSU and MindTribes remain committed to further expanding this work based on the principle that employees from all intersectional backgrounds deserve psychologically safe workplaces.



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