Leadership Style and Psychological Safety at Work: A Qualitative Exploration of Leadership Practices, Voice, and Workplace Dilemmas

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***Abstract*—Psychological safety concerns whether people believe they can take interpersonal risks at work such as asking for help, raising concerns, admitting mistakes, or disagreeing without fear of humiliation or punishment. This qualitative project explores how leaders describe practices they believe support open communication and how they navigate tensions involving employee well-being, accountability, organisational policy, transparency, and performance. Three semi-structured interviews were examined: a senior corporate leader with military experience, a leader of a small fully remote learning-and-development consultancy, and a senior/lead professional in a large semiconductor organisation. An exploratory thematic analysis organised recurring patterns while preserving differences between cases. The material highlights practices such as inviting disagreement before decisions, explaining the purpose behind change, listening to parties in conflict, gathering feedback, providing autonomy and flexibility, and maintaining clear expectations. At the same time, openness does not remove the need for accountability, confidentiality, deadlines, and consistent policies. The analysis is limited because the sample includes only three leaders and does not directly establish how their employees experience psychological safety. The report therefore interprets the interviews as leaders' accounts of their own practices and beliefs, not as proof of employee perceptions or causal effects. Practical recommendations focus on leader response behaviours, transparent decision processes, safe feedback routes, workload review, and fair policy discretion.**

***Index Terms*—employee voice, leadership, leadership dilemmas, organisational change, psychological safety, qualitative research, workplace communication**

I. INTRODUCTION

Workplaces depend on people communicating information that is incomplete, uncomfortable, or inconvenient. Employees may notice a process error, disagree with a plan, need support, or see that a deadline is unrealistic. Whether they say so depends not only on technical knowledge but on the interpersonal consequences they expect. Where disagreement is read as disloyalty, people stay silent; where questions are treated as useful contributions, concerns surface before problems become serious.

Psychological safety is a useful lens for this interpersonal dimension. Edmondson [1] defined team psychological safety as a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. It is not constant comfort, absence of standards, or freedom from accountability; it concerns whether people can ask questions, admit errors, request help, and challenge assumptions without being needlessly embarrassed or punished. The American Psychological Association (APA) [2] describes psychologically safe workplaces as those where people can express opinions, discuss mistakes, address difficult issues, seek help and feedback, trust colleagues, and feel valued, and distinguishes the construct from a psychologically healthy workplace more broadly.

Leadership matters because leaders shape how interpersonal risk is interpreted. A manager's response to a mistake, a dissenting view, or a request for clarification signals what participation is welcome. Yet leaders also work within deadlines, client requirements, confidentiality, staffing limits, and policy. Psychological safety is therefore a practical leadership challenge, not simply an attitude.

The literature supports this framing. A field study of 51 teams linked team psychological safety to learning behaviour [1]; a meta-analysis of 136 independent samples treated the construct as organisationally consequential [3]; and a recent review connects it to learning, performance, and leadership in complex, interdependent work [4]. Complementary frameworks add attention to autonomy, competence, and relatedness [5] and to the balance of job demands and resources [6]. Leadership-style labels such as transformational, transactional, or situational describe emphasis rather than predict safety, and leaders often combine them; this study therefore examines specific behaviours rather than assigning fixed styles.

Leadership can shape psychological safety through routine interpersonal signals. A leader who asks for input, listens without immediate retaliation, acknowledges uncertainty, and responds constructively to bad news may signal that speaking up is legitimate, whereas one who reacts defensively or treats dissent as disobedience may signal that silence is safer. These are plausible mechanisms, not proof. Openness is demonstrated in what happens after an employee uses an open door: whether the concern is considered on its merits, whether retaliation follows, and whether the final decision is explained even when a suggestion is not adopted. Leader humility also matters, since acknowledging an error lowers the social cost of admitting that something went wrong without implying indecision. People judge not only a decision but the process behind it, so listening to both sides, using facts, and applying similar criteria can reduce perceptions of arbitrary treatment.

Voice is not simply the number of times someone speaks. A person may contribute often on routine matters while avoiding high-risk concerns, and a suggestion channel may be distrusted if employees believe criticism will be traced to them or ignored. Anonymous forms, one-to-one conversations, group discussions, and regular meetings create different opportunities and risks, and their actual accessibility and perceived safety can only be explored with employees. Psychological safety is also no guarantee that every idea will be accepted or that expectations are optional: a team can hold high standards and still discuss errors honestly, and the distinction is between challenging a person's dignity and scrutinising work, decisions, or evidence [1], [2].

Self-determination theory proposes that autonomy, competence, and relatedness underpin high-quality motivation [5], which helps interpret accounts of flexibility, feedback, recognition, and team relationships. The Job Demands–Resources model distinguishes demands such as workload and time pressure from resources such as autonomy, feedback, social support, and adequate staffing [6]; a short burst of extra effort differs from a chronic pattern that relies on people repeatedly compensating for flawed processes. Psychological safety does not require the absence of performance management: a healthy process makes it safe to report obstacles while maintaining clear expectations.

Change creates uncertainty because employees may not know how new priorities will affect role, workload, status, or future, and explain purpose and expect effects may reduce avoidable uncertainty. Transparency does not mean every detail can be shared, since legal obligations, personal information, and client confidentiality limit disclosure. A transparent process can say what is known, what remains undecided, why information cannot yet be shared, and when another update is expected, and should clarify whether input is consultative or decision-making authority is shared. Asking for feedback and then ignoring it without explanation can undermine trust.

The key evidence gap is that most accounts of leader practice come from leaders themselves. Their descriptions show what leaders say they do and value, not whether employees experience those practices as safe or fair. This study explores leaders' own descriptions of dilemmas and routines, guided by five questions: (1) how leaders describe practices that encourage open communication and voice; (2) how they respond to disagreement, conflict, and uncomfortable information; (3) how they navigate tensions among well-being, flexibility, accountability, and rules; (4) how they communicate change and maintain trust when some information is confidential; and (5) what practical implications follow and what remains unverified without employee interviews.

To organise the inquiry, a sensitising framework was used (Table I). It is not a tested causal model: leadership behaviours may shape the cues employees use to judge interpersonal risk, those judgements may influence whether employees speak up, ask for help,

or share errors, and workload, hierarchy, remote working, and policy condition the process.

Table I Proposed sensitising framework

Element	Examples	Caution
Leadership behaviours	Invite dissent, explain intent, listen to both sides, set standards	Stated in interviews; enactment not verified
Interpersonal-risk interpretation	Whether questions, dissent, or requests seem acceptable or dangerous	Employees' interpretations not collected
Voice and learning	Raise concerns, ask for help, discuss mistakes, contribute to change	No systematic observation of employee behaviour
Context	Deadlines, remote work, hierarchy, confidentiality, staffing, policy	Examples cannot estimate prevalence
Possible outcomes	Trust, coordination, learning, commitment, sustainable delivery	Not measured in this project

II. METHOD

A. Design and Orientation: The study used an exploratory qualitative design based on semi-structured interviews, with an interpretive orientation: responses were treated as situated accounts shaped by participants' roles and understandings, not as complete representations of organisational reality. Because the work is exploratory, no statistical hypothesis was tested and no variables were manipulated or measured; the research questions guided the inquiry. Inferential statistics would not be appropriate for three interviews.

B. Key Concepts: Table II gives the working meanings used in the analysis. A leader account is treated as a participant's description of practice or belief, not as independent evidence of how employees experience it.

Table II Key concepts and their working meanings

Concept	Working meaning
Psychological safety	Belief that interpersonal risks such as asking, admitting, disagreeing, or seeking help can be taken without undue fear of humiliation or punishment
Employee voice	Communication of suggestions, concerns, questions, or dissent relevant to work and decisions
Leadership practice	A described behaviour or routine, such as explaining a decision, inviting dissent, or reviewing a conflict
Accountability	Clear expectations and responsibility for commitments, quality, deadlines, and outcomes
Leadership dilemma	A situation in which legitimate priorities conflict, such as flexibility versus consistency
Leader account	A participant's description of practice or view; not independent evidence of employee experience
Policy discretion	The process by which a leader considers whether a rule can be adapted or an exception authorised

C. Participants: Three individuals with leadership responsibility took part. P1 is a senior corporate leader with a military background and 19 years' experience in an organisation of 10,000 employees. P2 leads a small, fully remote learning-and-development consultancy (up to 19 people) and has four years' experience. P3 is a senior/lead professional in a large semiconductor organisation with 13 years' experience. Descriptions are deliberately broad to reduce identification risk. The sample appears to be small and purposive or convenience-based; recruitment was not fully documented, and representativeness is not claimed. Employees without leadership responsibility were not interviewed.

D. Instrument: An interview guide opened with a consent-oriented introduction (anonymity, no right or wrong answers, freedom to skip questions or stop,

permission to take notes) and recorded context details such as experience, role level, organisation size, sector, and operating model. Eleven questions covered motivation and engagement, recognition, communication, speaking openly, disagreement, organisational change, competing priorities, transparency versus confidentiality, a specific dilemma, and commitment. Questions on speaking openly, disagreement, feedback, and change bear most directly on psychological safety; motivation and retention were included only where they illuminated the central focus.

E. Analysis: Analysis followed exploratory thematic analysis informed by Braun and Clarke [7], and is not presented as grounded theory. Each transcript was read as a separate case before comparison. Segments were coded (for example, invites dissent, explains intent, feedback before change, fact-based conflict resolution, flexibility with accountability, sustainable workload); codes were compared across cases to develop and review themes, with tensions such as openness alongside execution expectations retained rather than resolved. No software-assisted audit is claimed.

F. Trustworthiness and Ethics: Trustworthiness rests on transparent analysis, a cross-case matrix, quotations checked against the transcripts, and a consistent distinction between leader accounts, interpretation, and unmeasured outcomes. Because psychological safety was the central lens, there was a risk of reading every instance of communication or flexibility as evidence of safety; broader material such as praise and pay was therefore not treated as an indicator unless linked to voice, fairness, or feeling valued. Participation was voluntary with verbal consent, participants are referred to by codes, and identifying organisational details and sensitive client or employee information were excluded.

III. FINDINGS

The themes below are analytic patterns in the supplied accounts, not measured properties of the organisations. Across cases, leaders described communication as more than transmitting information: explaining purpose, inviting opinions, hearing both sides, giving feedback, and clarifying expectations. All three also acknowledged constraints: decisions must be made, deadlines matter, some information is confidential, and policy limits flexibility. The overall pattern is not "open leadership is good," but that leaders try to create room for discussion while retaining responsibility for decisions and outcomes. Table III summarises the cross-case pattern.

Table III Cross-case overview of themes by participant

Theme	P1	P2	P3
Voice	Challenge before decision; facts over hierarchy	Team involvement; group discussion	Open opinions; technical verification or escalation
Change	Mission intent and context	Anonymous feedback; group discussion	Gradual rollout; explains benefits
People and performance	Exceptional effort versus overwork	Flexibility versus deadlines	Policy exceptions with human resources (HR)
Recognition	Specific; credit to those who did the work	Autonomy; humane treatment	Feedback builds confidence; pay lasts longer

A. Voice Is Invited Before a Decision, but Decisions Need Closure: P1 gave the clearest account of explicit dissent: team members should feel able to say "I don't agree" or warn that a plan may fail, but refusing to execute after a decision is different. P1 summarised this as "Disagree professionally, decide, and then execute." P2 described team members as partners involved in decisions and preferred group discussion to top-down mandates. P3 encouraged opinions and used discussion or escalation. The mechanisms differ and are not interchangeable: group discussion may feel less personal but can expose a dissenting employee to peers, while one-to-one conversation protects privacy but reduces shared learning. The interviews do not reveal which format employees prefer.

B. Explaining Purpose Reduces Avoidable Uncertainty: P1 argued that people need the objective behind an instruction, and described explaining what a

decision means for the team, involving implementers, and identifying risks. P2 communicated through functional branch leads, reserved organisation-wide announcements for major policy changes, and gathered anonymous and group feedback before changes. P3 introduced change gradually and explained benefits. These practices may complement each other: explanation clarifies the objective, input reveals operational consequences, and gradual rollout allows adaptation. Communication becomes one-way, however, if feedback is collected without showing how it was used.

C. Conflict Is Managed Through Listening, Evidence, and Proportionate Escalation: P1 resolved conflict through discussion and facts rather than hierarchy, deciding after hearing those closest to the problem. P2 used broader group discussion to dilute individual pressure and avoid perceived favouritism. P3 heard both teammates individually, used verification for technical disputes, and otherwise sought common ground or consulted higher management. The shared thread is procedural fairness: listen, understand the nature of the dispute, consider facts, and escalate where necessary.

D. Flexibility and Well-Being Must Coexist with Accountability: Flexibility was not presented as an unlimited good. P2 valued empathy and flexibility in a remote setting but reported that weak follow-up or reduced punctuality harmed productivity and client satisfaction. P3 described exploring policy limits with HR when a request such as extended work-from-home conflicted with rules, and a retention case in which pay or benefit changes required senior approval. P1 warned that repeatedly asking the same people to stay late or take extra shifts may signal a flawed staffing model, process, or prioritisation, and distinguished a temporary crisis from an unsustainable operating model.

E. Transparency Has Boundaries, but Silence Needs Explanation: P1 held that employees do not need every detail but need enough context to understand direction. P2 protected confidential information through non-disclosure agreements while keeping daily processes open. Even where details cannot be shared, leaders may state the type of constraint, the decision stage, and when an update is likely.

F. Recognition and Humane Treatment Signal Value: P1 stressed specific recognition and giving credit to those who did the work, warning against confusing team achievement with personal achievement. P2 expressed appreciation through trust, autonomy, flexibility, inclusive language ("team member" rather than "employee"), and treating people as humans with worries and challenges. P3 distinguished verbal or email praise, which builds confidence temporarily, from monetary benefits, which motivate for longer. These are individual accounts, not universal rules, and their link to psychological safety is indirect.

G. Communication Routines Help Coordination but Do Not Prove Safety: P2's branch-lead structure and P3's daily stand-ups support coordination. A stand-up may be a space to ask for help or a public performance in which delays are hidden; an anonymous form may or may not be trusted. The quality of the leader's response is more informative than the channel itself.

IV. DISCUSSION

The accounts align conceptually with literature on interpersonal risk, learning behaviour, and leadership [1], [4], but as points of alignment rather than independent confirmation of employee experience.

A. Voice and Veto

P1's position illustrates a distinction between voice and veto. Psychological safety does not require leaders to accept every proposal; it concerns whether people can offer information and challenge assumptions without undue penalty. A leader can listen, weigh evidence, explain the final decision, and still expect coordinated implementation. Closure should not, however, suppress legitimate new information: a decision may be final operationally yet remain open to review if conditions change or a serious risk emerges. A psychologically safe approach therefore needs decision clarity and a route for raising new evidence.

B. Safety Is a Shared Perception, not a Leadership Intention

Leaders can articulate practices they believe are supportive but cannot establish how employees interpret them. A leader may believe group discussion reduces pressure while an employee experiences public disagreement as risky; an anonymous channel

may exist without being trusted; an exception may seem fair to a leader and like favouritism to colleagues. Comparing intended practices with employees' accounts of specific episodes is the necessary next step.

C. The People–Performance Tension

The interviews complicate the assumption that well-being and performance are opposing goals. Sustainable leadership involves diagnosis: is a problem due to a missed commitment, unrealistic workload, a process bottleneck, unclear ownership, or a policy that does not fit a legitimate situation? The Job Demands–Resources model offers a useful lens, since rising demands without matching resources increase strain, while autonomy, support, and feedback help employees cope [6]. P1's focus on the operating model shifts attention from individual endurance to organisational design. The present data, however, do not measure demands or strain.

D. Flexibility, Fairness, and Motivation

Discretionary exceptions raise fairness questions. P3's HR consultation illustrates a process-oriented response, and identical treatment is not always equitable treatment. Accounts of autonomy, learning, and team connection can be interpreted through self-determination theory [5], though such links are interpretive, not diagnostic. All three leaders also treated change communication as a process of listening and adaptation; leaders should distinguish information, consultation, and shared decision-making, and be honest when a decision is fixed.

E. Implications for Theory

The findings support psychological safety as an interpretive concept while retaining attention to context, and suggest behaviour-level analysis is more useful than fixed style labels: the same leader may be participative in diagnosis, directive in a crisis, and flexible with an individual request. The findings do not justify a new theory or a claim that one style is superior.

F. Practical Implications

- Invite concerns before decisions are final and make clear how and when a decision will be made.
- Respond to mistakes and bad news with questions that establish facts and identify learning, while maintaining appropriate accountability.
- Explain the rationale, constraints, and expected effects of change; distinguish what is decided from what remains open.
- Use conflict-resolution processes matched to the issue, with privacy safeguards for sensitive matters.
- Review recurring overtime, backlog, or missed deadlines for process and workload causes before assuming the problem is only individual effort.
- Create multiple feedback routes and communicate how input influenced decisions.
- Use transparent criteria for policy exceptions while protecting personal and confidential information.

V. LIMITATIONS

The sample is three leaders from distinct settings, which is useful for exploration but prevents reliable comparison by sector or organisation size and supports no claims about leaders generally. Employees' own accounts were not collected, so whether the described practices are experienced as safe is unknown. Self-reports may be affected by recall, self-presentation, and social desirability. No validated psychological safety scale, direct observation, or causal analysis was used, so the study cannot show that any practice increased safety, retention, or performance. Recruitment was not fully documented, and transcript formats and levels of detail differed (some responses were summarised and lightly edited), limiting the depth of cross-case comparison.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are practical proposals derived from the themes and literature. They are not interventions tested by this project, and suggested indicators are for local evaluation rather than universal success thresholds. Organisations should adapt them to size, legal obligations, industry, and employee needs.

A. Establish a Voice-and-Response Routine

Leaders should create a predictable routine for raising concerns and make response expectations explicit. This can include a standing question in team meetings ("What risk or assumption should we revisit?") and private routes for sensitive matters. Leaders should thank the person for raising the issue, clarify facts, explain next steps, and return to the concern even

when immediate action is not possible. The routine should avoid turning every meeting into a public disclosure exercise: employees should be able to speak privately, through a confidential channel, or in a group when the issue benefits from shared discussion. Table IV outlines the actions and possible indicators.

Table IV. Voice-and-response routine: actions, implementation, and indicators

Action	Implementation detail	Possible indicator
Invite dissent	Ask for risks, alternative views, and assumptions before important decisions	Employees can give examples of being invited to raise concerns
Respond constructively	Acknowledge the concern, ask clarifying questions, avoid ridicule or retaliation	Feedback on whether concerns are handled respectfully
Close the loop	Tell the person what was decided and why, within confidentiality limits	Share of raised issues receiving a response
Protect privacy	Offer a private channel for sensitive interpersonal or personal matters	Employee awareness and trust in reporting routes

B. Use a Change-Communication Template

Change communications should answer five questions: what is changing, why, what is known and not yet known, which aspects employees can influence, and when the next update will come. This operationalises P1's emphasis on mission intent, P2's use of feedback, and P3's preference for explaining benefits and allowing adaptation.

1. State the objective and the problem the change is intended to address.
2. Identify what is decided, what remains open, and what constraints apply.
3. Invite input from the people who will implement the change.
4. Explain how feedback will be considered and who will make the final decision.
5. Provide a follow-up summary showing what changed, what did not, and why.

C. Create a Fair Policy-Exception Process

Where roles or policies allow discretion, organisations should define a consistent process rather than rely on informal personal favour. The process can identify the request, relevant operational requirements, the employee's stated constraints, alternatives, equity implications, approval authority, and review date. Personal information should be limited to what is necessary; where an exception is not possible, leaders should explain the reason and consider other forms of support. Table V lists decision questions that can structure the process.

Table V. Decision questions for a fair policy-exception process

Decision question	Purpose
What is the operational requirement?	Clarifies what the policy is intended to protect
What is the employee's request and stated constraint?	Ensures the decision responds to the actual issue rather than assumptions
What alternatives are feasible?	Avoids an all-or-nothing decision when another arrangement may work
How will similar cases be treated?	Supports consistency and reduces perceptions of favouritism
Who has authority to approve?	Prevents unclear promises and inappropriate disclosure
When will the arrangement be reviewed?	Allows temporary solutions to be reassessed

D. Review Workload and Process Before Asking for More Effort

P1's account warns against using repeated overtime or additional shifts as the default response to recurring problems. Organisations should conduct a brief after-action review when the same team repeatedly experiences late work, backlogs, or emergency effort, asking whether workload, staffing, task prioritisation, role clarity, tools, or dependencies create a recurring bottleneck.

- Track repeated overtime and emergency coverage as possible signals of a system problem, not only evidence of commitment.

- Ask employees closest to the process where delays or rework originate.
- Separate temporary surges from persistent capacity gaps.
- Make trade-offs explicit when priorities cannot all be met.
- Ensure people can report overload before it becomes a crisis.

E. Make Accountability Explicit and Two-Way

Accountability works best when commitments are clear and obstacles can be discussed early. In remote settings, flexibility should be paired with clarity about deliverables, response times, handovers, and how to flag a delay. Leaders should ask whether the agreed deadline is realistic and what support is needed, while employees remain responsible for communicating risks and following through. A two-way accountability conversation should identify the expected outcome, deadline and quality standard, the employee's understanding, known dependencies, a check-in point, and the process for raising a risk. If a commitment is missed, the first conversation should establish what happened before deciding whether the issue reflects capability, resources, unclear instructions, or avoidable non-compliance.

F. Match Conflict-Resolution Method to the Problem

The interviews illustrate individual listening, group discussion, fact-checking, and escalation. Leaders should select a method based on the nature and sensitivity of the issue: technical disagreements may benefit from shared evidence or testing, interpersonal conflict may require private conversations and clear behavioural expectations, and allegations of misconduct or safety concerns may require formal channels rather than informal group mediation. Table VI suggests a first response and a safeguard for each type of issue.

Table VI. Conflict-resolution methods matched to the type of issue

Issue	First response	Safeguard
Technical disagreement	Define the question, review evidence, test alternatives	Separate critique of an idea from criticism of a person
Task or coordination conflict	Clarify ownership, dependencies, timelines, handovers	Record agreed next steps
Interpersonal conflict	Hear each party separately where appropriate	Do not force disclosure in a group setting
Policy or ethics concern	Use a designated formal or confidential reporting route	Protect against retaliation and preserve confidentiality
Unresolved disagreement	Escalate with a concise summary of evidence and options	Explain the decision and review conditions

G. Recognise Contribution Specifically and Fairly

Recognition should identify the contribution, explain its impact, and give credit to the people responsible. Leaders should avoid treating generic praise as a substitute for meaningful feedback. Because preferences differ, organisations can combine timely verbal feedback, written acknowledgement, development opportunities, compensation, and public credit according to the situation and the employee.

H. Evaluate the Process Rather Than Assume Success

A programme to support psychological safety should be evaluated using employee perceptions, behavioural examples, and process indicators. The current project provides no baseline scores or validated measures, so it cannot specify a defensible numerical target. Organisations should establish a baseline, protect confidentiality, and set targets only after understanding the starting point. Table VII outlines possible measures and the caution attached to each.

Table VII. Areas, possible measures, and cautions for evaluating the process

Area	Possible measure	Caution
Perceived safety	Validated psychological safety scale or confidential pulse survey	Do not publish results that identify individuals in small teams
Voice behaviour	Examples of concerns raised, questions asked, and suggestions considered	More reports may reflect more trust or more problems
Response quality	Time to acknowledge concerns; share receiving follow-up	Fast closure is not enough if responses are dismissive

Workload sustainability	Overtime patterns, recurring backlog, unplanned work, recovery time	No single indicator substitutes for employee accounts
Fairness of exceptions	Review whether comparable cases follow documented criteria	Respect privacy; not all cases are identical
Change communication	Employee understanding of purpose, constraints, and input opportunities	Comprehension does not guarantee agreement

I. Suggested 90-Day Implementation Sequence

Table VIII sets out a proposed sequence and the review question for each period. It is a proposed practice plan, not a result of the present research. Organisations should avoid collecting sensitive feedback without a clear response plan: if leaders ask employees to disclose concerns, they should explain who will see the information, how it will be protected, and what action may follow.

Table VIII. Suggested 90-day implementation sequence

Period	Priority actions	Review question
Days 1–30: listen and map	Review feedback routes; ask which channels employees' trust; identify recurring workload and policy dilemmas	Where do people hesitate to speak, and why?
Days 31–60: pilot routines	Pilot voice-and-response routine; use change template; document exception criteria	Do employees understand how concerns and decisions are handled?
Days 61–90: review and adapt	Gather confidential feedback; review response quality and bottlenecks; adjust routines	What has become easier to raise, and what still feels risky?

VII. CONCLUSION

This study explored three leaders' accounts of communication, disagreement, change, and dilemmas through the lens of psychological safety. The accounts describe practices that may create opportunities for voice inviting dissent before decisions, explaining purpose, hearing different sides of a conflict, collecting feedback before change, and weighing individual needs against organisational constraints while insisting that openness coexist with accountability, confidentiality, client requirements, and fair policy. The strongest practical insight is that psychological safety is not created by a slogan or a single channel; it depends on what happens when someone raises a concern, asks for help, disagrees, or reports a mistake. A second is that well-being and performance are not a simple choice between kindness and standards: repeated emergency effort may signal a system problem, and flexibility without clear commitments may create coordination problems.

Because these are leader accounts from a small sample, the study cannot show that employees experience high psychological safety or that any practice produces outcomes. Future work should interview employees alongside leaders in the same organisations, elicit critical incidents of speaking up, use larger and more varied samples, and combine interviews with validated measures in a mixed-method design. A psychologically safer workplace is not one in which disagreement disappears, but one in which disagreement, uncertainty, and mistakes can be discussed with respect, evidence, and responsibility.

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