

Supportive Colleague

how to be a
a guide for UWindsor

Fostering a Supportive Workplace

At the University of Windsor, we all share in fostering an environment that is supportive of mental health and psychological safety. Being a supportive colleague means ensuring that our words, actions, and behaviours make others feel respected, valued, welcomed, and a sense of belonging. This guide aims to help faculty and staff foster a supportive workplace environment in which everyone's psychological safety is prioritized.

We all can help create a supportive environment

Fostering a supportive workplace environment can be straightforward and impactful. These simple behaviours can help colleagues feel a sense of community and care at work:

- Greet, acknowledge, and check-in with colleagues while at the same time respecting personal boundaries and privacy.
- Recognize your biases. Understand when your lens and perspective may get in the way of respectful dialogue and collaborative problem-solving.
- Recognize the big and small accomplishments of your colleagues.
- Express appreciation to others.
- Ask before providing feedback, and if it is welcome, ensure feedback is honest, kind, and helpful.
- Practice active listening. Show genuine interest in the ideas, opinions, and concerns of others.
- Shift perspectives around making mistakes. Mistakes can be a source of learning and growth. Avoid blaming and instead emphasize problem-solving.
- Offer assistance when someone needs help and show support when they are having a challenging time.
- Show empathy and understanding toward colleagues. Consider the impact of your words and actions on others.
- Keep an open mind and genuinely consider different perspectives and ideas.

These simple strategies can help promote psychological safety at work, ensuring that everyone in your department feels heard, is comfortable bringing ideas forward, and knows that they are welcome and valued as a person.

For information on supporting a colleague who may be in distress or struggling with mental health, please refer to the "Supporting a Colleague in Distress" guide.