

# Psychological Safety Frameworks for ND Conversations

## TL;DR · QUICK SUMMARY

- Psychological safety isn't a vague feeling — it's built through specific, repeatable practices.
- This guide gives you a simple framework for creating the conditions where people feel safe enough to disclose, ask for help, or raise concerns.

## A Note Before You Read On

This resource offers general guidance and reflects common experience, not professional, legal, medical or financial advice. It is not a substitute for employment law, HR policy, occupational health guidance, or individual professional assessment. Every person's experience of neurodivergence is different, so please adapt anything here to your own situation. The Uniquely Wired Network does not accept liability for decisions, actions or outcomes arising from the use of this material. If you need advice specific to your circumstances, please consult a qualified professional (e.g. HR, legal, medical, or financial advisor).

## Why This Matters

Psychological safety is the difference between someone raising an issue early and someone hiding it until it becomes a crisis.

It isn't built by one good conversation — it's built by a consistent pattern over time.

Teams with low psychological safety lose good people quietly, often without ever knowing why.

## What This Might Look Like

- A team member who waits until burnout to mention they've been struggling for months.
- Someone who only discloses after they've already decided to leave.

- A team where people openly discuss working styles without discomfort.
- A manager who responds calmly and consistently, every time, regardless of what's disclosed.

## What You Can Do

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### 1. Use a simple three-part framework: Predictable, Private, Proportionate.

- Predictable — respond calmly and consistently every time, so people know what to expect.
- Private — default to confidentiality unless explicitly told otherwise.
- Proportionate — match your response to what's actually being asked, without over- or under-reacting.

### 2. Normalise the topic before you need it.

- Mention working-style differences and adjustments as a normal part of team conversation, not a rare event.
- Share (with permission) examples of adjustments that helped, so people see it modelled.

### 3. Watch for safety being tested in small ways first.

- People often float a small disclosure to see how you respond before sharing more.
- How you handle the small version directly affects whether you hear the bigger picture.

## Helpful Phrases You Can Borrow

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### Setting expectations proactively with a team:

"If there's ever something that would help you work better — a different format, more processing time, anything — just tell me. That's a normal conversation here, not a big deal."

### Responding consistently to a first, smaller disclosure:

“Thanks for telling me. That’s useful to know — is there anything you’d like me to do differently?”

## Quick Tips

- Predictable, private, proportionate — a simple test for any response.
- Safety is built over many small moments, not one big gesture.
- People often test the waters with a small disclosure first.
- Normalise the topic before someone needs to raise it urgently.
- Consistency matters more than eloquence.
- Low safety often shows up as silence, not complaints — don’t mistake quiet for fine.

## Want to Know More?

- See our companion guide: “Confidentiality & Trust” for the practical mechanics of keeping information safe.
- See “Business Case & Psychological Safety” for the wider organisational context.
- See “Inclusive Meeting Practices” for building safety into everyday team rhythms..

### Before You Go

You can’t force someone to feel safe — but you can consistently behave in ways that make safety possible.

Small, repeated actions build more trust than any single well-crafted conversation.