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Psychological Safety and Mental Health: What Happens When Healthcare Workers Don't Feel Safe to Speak?

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In healthcare, silence is not neutral, it can be dangerous. Nurses may carry emotional fatigue in silence. Junior doctors may hesitate to raise concerns or admit uncertainty. This silence is not about personality. It reflects how psychologically safe people feel and how leadership responds.

This talk explores psychological safety as the silent engine behind resilience, trust, and team performance. Defined by Professor Amy Edmondson, psychological safety means people feel they can speak up, ask for help, and learn from mistakes without fear. In hospitals and clinics, this enables early error reporting, open communication, reduced burnout, and safer care.

But psychological safety is not about avoiding discomfort. It's about creating space to grow through discomfort with support. Leaders play a central role. They are the thermostat of team culture. When leaders model vulnerability, invite feedback, and respond non-defensively, they signal safety. In Malaysian hospitals, teams using reflective rounds, anonymous wellness checks, and inclusive huddles are not seeing more errors, they're seeing more transparency and earlier interventions.

Toxic leadership, on the other hand, creates silent teams. And silence in high-stakes settings like healthcare can cost lives. This talk shares real stories, research, and practice insights to show how psychological safety turns policy into practice, and innovation into connection.

Aligned with the MindMatters2025 theme of bridging neuroscience, technology, and compassion, this session frames psychological safety as an essential catalyst for human-centered care. Because before we can transform mental health systems, we must first build teams where people feel safe to speak, and safe to care.