



**By The Office of Equal Opportunity, Kristal White**

Each month, the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) looks forward to providing content that celebrates the diversity across our state's workforce and embraces the differences that help make us better together. We believe diversity and inclusion are everyone's responsibility and we hope all state employees carry such responsibility with honor, courage, and passion. Check us out [here](#)

### **Defining Psychological Safety?**

**Psychological safety** at work is the shared belief that one can share their thoughts without fear of punishment or shame. A psychologically safe workplace should include feeling safe to be yourself. One should feel safe to bring their whole self to work. Team members should feel comfortable asking for help when they need it. They should feel safe to bring up difficult issues. And they should feel safe contributing and admitting mistakes. In a safe work environment, teammates value each other. They achieve this through mutual respect, trust, and by showing interest in others.

Psychological safety must be present, to achieve diversity and inclusion (D&I) in the workplace. Past experiences influence our willingness to trust others. This can affect how we contribute to a psychologically safe environment. It is not always easy to reflect on our own behavior, challenge our assumptions, or admit our faults. A psychologically safe environment can embrace mistakes as an opportunity for growth. Achieving and maintaining psychological safety takes consistent effort. Each of us can do our best to model psychological safety while encouraging others to join in our efforts.