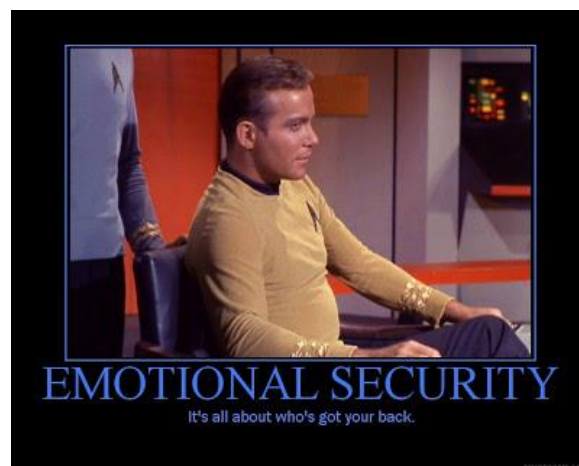


## SAFETY

### A view from my toy cupboard.



Like ET being shielding in the COVID crisis it is like being an alien in an alien land. Nothing feels safe only the feeling of being anxious for my safety is familiar. Like ET when there is a threat I hide with what will not give me away, where what I am and how I feel is an approximation to "normal". Its scary out there; give me what I know. I am not sure who or what is friendly, who or what I can trust and where I am going to be safe either physically or emotionally. Who has got my back?



I have no Spock, I have an oncologist and a team of Enabling Environment colleagues and of course my family, who as much as I love can be irritating at times. These are the people who provide me with safety, that ability to express how I am and to have strange and fantastical ideas without feeling judged, spurned or thought to be losing my marbles. I am not made to feel that what I feel and think is bizarre or the signs of slipping into some kind of "Shielding madness". Even when I make a mistake, either something dumbly physical or inadvertently attitudinally insensitive it is these people that hear me and will be willing to explore what "this is all about", rather than condemn or dismiss me out of hand.



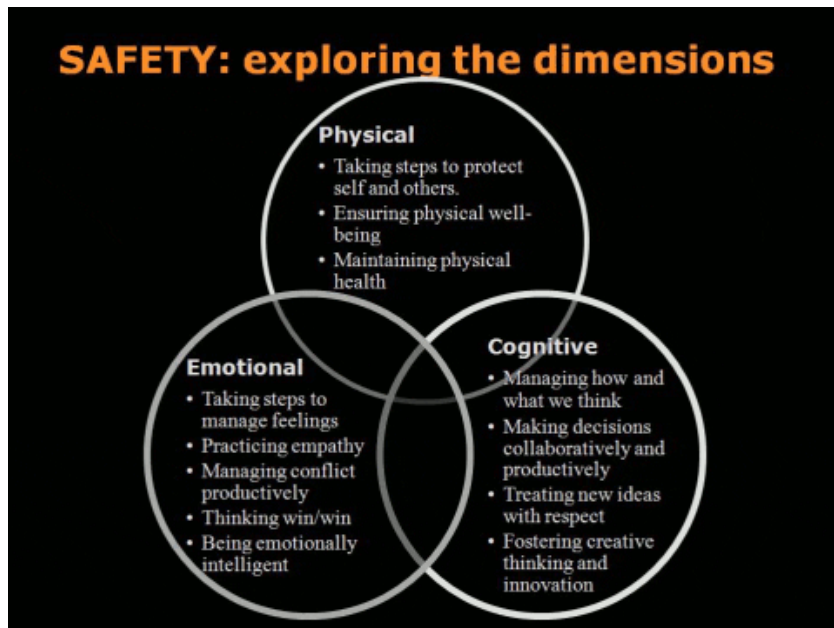
Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes.

These are the people that provide me with an emotional safety net, so that when I get tired and outraged of, and at, having cancer, or the frustrations of not going beyond the confines of my home since March, or ... the list goes on... and on. They are my safety net.



All of this is detached from the real world of managing services with high risk residents and staff that are taking risks with their own physical safety and their emotional safety. The feelings of anxiety and anticipated guilt if they take COVID back into their families are now all part of the working environment so a sense of emotional security is an absolute priority at the moment. This is a time when everyone is talking the "new normal", which means change and we all know that change is a challenge that brings its own package of emotions, mostly anxiety driven. More now than ever people need to be able to express how they are feeling, what their ideas of the "new normal " will look like and how they feel about all of this. More now than ever we all need to be able to listen to each other without judgement or preconceived ideas of what the world and other people will be like in the future.

I think that right now is the time to ask once again "what makes me and others safe?" What goes into making things safe in terms of models, organisations and how that is applied to our new and coming world of work and COVID tinged futures. One model suggests that there are three domains that contribute to safety, the physical, emotional and cognitive elements and each has its own components, as shown in the picture below:



It seems to me that this makes quite a good checklist of things to pay attention to when thinking about safety on an organisational level. This is perhaps a handy addition to the management tool box or for use as personal reflection. Maybe even a guide for a focused supervision session or staff group? Of all the elements the one that I focus on in my isolated state is emotional intelligence, I find it challenges me to keep the layers of the world in proportion and to think from the personal to the wider world. I came across a table of questions that uses the different levels to set out the challenges of being emotionally intelligent, there are some tricky ones in there for me and I guess they maybe for others.

Four Areas Of Emotional Intelligence			
Self Awareness	Self Management	Social Awareness	Relationship Management
*Know your story & how it affects you	*Learn skills for breathing & relaxation	*Understand nonverbal social signals	*Develop skills for reflective listening & empathy
*Make peace with your past	*Complete your basic emotional healing work	*Develop a positive view of others	*Learn skills for healthy assertiveness
*Know your beliefs, your emotions & your behavior patterns	*Learn skills for soothing & motivating yourself	*Understand basic human emotional needs	*Learn conflict resolution skills
*Know your relationship patterns	*Maintain healthy eating & exercise	*Understand "games" & personal integrity	*Develop skills for support & affirmation of others

This is all very fine and dandy but at times I just hide in the fluffy toy cupboard alongside ET and hope the danger will just go away without me being found. I dream for something simple, quiet and nonverbal, something that just is...



**Stay safe, stay aware and be kind to yourself.**

**Roland Woodward**

**Enabling Environment Lead.**