



EPISODE 007:

The Proven Tool to Humanize your Workplace with Greg Swaine

[00:00:00] **Greg:** There's no leader that wakes up saying that they just want the dollar and they don't care about their people. This tackles both ends of the spectrum for leaderships and for organizational leaders in the sense that they are becoming that employer of choice and their workers are thriving and it's under their care.

[00:00:17] And not only that. They're also reaping the benefits of that flourishing that their employees are feeling. I don't know if in someone's career there could be a better feeling than that organizational success and then success as a leader, as a human being.

[00:00:33] **Carolyn:** Greg Swain is one of the Canadian mental health association's most sought after advisors for psychological health and safety in the.

[00:00:43] He currently advises programming at the provincial and national level, and is also one of a few certified professional psychological health and safety program trainers. In 2018, Greg led a team that found themselves becoming Canada's first developmental services agency to launch mental health programming for their employees and to sign the declaration of commitment to psychological health and safety.

[00:01:10] Place. Greg's passion lies in supporting healthcare workers specifically to navigate their mental wellbeing, and he continues to do this as a trainer, traveling to hospitals and healthcare facilities across Ontario through C M H A. Ontario's your Health Space program.



[00:01:34] Greg is somebody that I. About four or five years ago, and although we worked in different sectors, it was clear that there was something connecting the two of us in terms of our story and really our purpose in our work. This podcast, you will hear that connection and it's through psychological health and safety.

[00:02:01] Greg has devoted himself to. This area of work and helping employers get clarity on what psychological health and safety means, and how to make it a practical tool and a relevant experience for leaders in their workplace. I'm really excited to bring this conversation to you because it's a show about resources.

[00:02:30] Resources that you as leaders can use. In any role that you might be. I hope you enjoy it.

[00:02:38] **Greg:** Welcome to

[00:02:39] **Intro:** Evolve a new era of leadership, a podcast for real leaders to join real conversations with business experts, practitioners thought leaders, and change makers who integrate head, heart, and body in all they do, who commit to compassion and curiosity, who commit to radical self-leadership in their quest to understand others better too.

[00:03:03] Because the only way to deliver real results is to understand what it takes to lead real human beings. This is a new era of

[00:03:12] **Greg:** leadership.

[00:03:18] **Carolyn:** I'm Carolyn Sora. And this is evolve a new era of leadership. Alright, well I am so excited to have Greg Swain with us today. And Greg, you are a repeat podcast guest for me and I'm so excited to have you on. Welcome, Greg.

[00:03:35] **Greg:** Thank you so much. I'm excited to be back. I was a huge fan of the P W E podcast and I'm really looking forward to evolve and hearing the episodes as they come out.



[00:03:45] And I saw that you have three out already, which is exciting. I'm a huge fan of your work, as you know, so it's a pleasure to be here.

[00:03:50] **Carolyn:** Well, I'm a huge fan of your work and I know since we last spoke, your work has evolved. I'm not even saying that word on purpose. . It's interesting, when we connected so many years ago, which was, I dunno, five, five years ago now, it

[00:04:02] **Greg:** was uh, 2000.

[00:04:04] Yeah.

[00:04:04] **Carolyn:** 2019, yeah, feels like 15 in some ways, but I know that we both seem to be. Interested in similar things, but it's amazing what's happened since 2019. And the one thing that I've seen you do remarkably well over the past five or so years is really help champion this notion of psychological health and safety.

[00:04:25] And so I was hoping today that we could dig into what that says. I mean, it's a mouthful. There's a lot of syllables in that psychological health and safety, and yet we know it is so important for our workplace.

[00:04:40] **Greg:** It absolutely is, and I agree it's a lot. Even the title itself is daunting when you look at the national standard of Canada for psychological health and safety in the workplace.

[00:04:50] I think for the purpose of the podcast moving forward, we'll just call it the standard, just to simplify that and make it as, yeah, easy to grasp as possible, but. The task in itself is daunting for a variety of reasons, and that's why I believe that people in positions similar to myself are important for the shift in the workplace to adopt psychological health and safety practices because there's people out there that have found a way to simplify how.

[00:05:18] Daunting, that task can seem by simply humanizing the process itself.



[00:05:23] **Carolyn:** Yeah. We're gonna back up a little bit here, I think, because let's talk about, first of all, what does this term even mean? And in my upcoming book, I talk about three elements that are really, really important for leaders if they wanna seem relevant and successful in today.

[00:05:40] Working environment, which is safety, consistency, and authenticity and safety. Sometimes we can think that, you know, physical safety is it, or like what does psych safety or psychological safety actually mean? And so. Ever since Covid, we know that safety physically and emotionally are two separate things, but could you just help, uh, the listeners, let's just get grounded on what do we mean when we say psychological safety?

[00:06:13] **Greg:** I think the easiest way to explain it without over complicating it is to define psychological health and safety as a construct that is made by a leadership team that specifically serves the needs of their organization and it aligns itself with their employees needs in order to create synergy in all facets of the organization.

[00:06:38] To move forward through innovation and morale and culture. When you define it as I know that guarding mines at work defines it as psychologically healthy and safe workplaces identified in the national standard as a workplace that promotes workers psychological wellbeing and actively works to prevent harm to workers, psychological health, including negligent, reckless and intentional ways.

[00:07:05] Hmm. And I find that when people read it like that, it can become terrifying in the sense that. You are worried that you are doing this as an organization yourself, whether it's intentional or unintentional, or there's negligence and there's something that's called professional embarrassment, and I think it's the number one cause of organizations not moving forward with psychological health and safety because they see something like this and they become very worried that they themselves have created this type of environment.

[00:07:37] We're unintentionally or intentionally neglecting our employees needs and. It's scary to think of it that way. Yeah. But when you simplify it as a way that you're just essentially creating synergy throughout an organization and



creating a culture that encourages innovation and belonging and humanizing the work experience, that seems a lot safer.

[00:07:59] And yeah, that's where I like to talk about psychological health and safety. Is in a way where it never looks like we're pointing fingers, but instead we're working together for a common cause.

[00:08:08] **Carolyn:** Yeah. I really like the way that, that you position that because as human beings, there are always gonna be dynamics that are changing, right?

[00:08:16] It's not like we're a bunch of robots that go in and the factors are the same that we have to work through every day. And I think with what we've experienced through so much in our world in the past few years, we can't separate. Ourselves at home from ourselves at work. And so you referred earlier when we started to something called a standard.

[00:08:36] Now I know you and I are familiar with that. You're obviously trained advisor in it, but the standard is a Canadian creation that I believe is the first of its kind in the world. It was, yeah. And so this was a series of recommendations or divided into like 13 factors, and here are the 13 factors that will help you create a psychologically.

[00:08:58] Safe workplace. Mm-hmm. . So let's just kind of go from there knowing that this standard has these 13 factors. How do you work with this and what do you do with this? And how can we use it to create these healthy

[00:09:15] **Greg:** cultures? So the best way to explain the best use of the national standard is when you think of psychological safety as an actual living organism, you can pick up the standard, which is a document, and there's even a copilot document.

[00:09:33] It's called Assembling the Pieces, and it essentially teaches you how to a. Build a framework and start establishing a psychologically healthy environment in your workplace. The problem with those two documents as they are right now, because I'll let everyone know that they're actually being



revamped currently, and there's gonna be some revisions that simplify the process and make it a little bit more clear.

[00:09:54] But these two documents, I believe are about 170 pages between the two of them, and that in itself is daunting and a lot of organizations don't know where to start. So when it comes to the standard, the easiest way to explain it is it's a way that you can keep a pulse on your organization, a adapt to the needs of your employees and your organization as a whole as they change.

[00:10:21] It's never gonna be an individual. Employee therapy tool. It's not designed to have leaders be the solution to their employee's problems. It's designed for leaders to keep a pulse on their organization and where the problem areas are. That's reducing things like productivity and morale, right, and feelings of safety.

[00:10:43] So feelings like your employees belong or they're able to use their voice and. It allows you to also not only recognize that, but adopt strategies to repair and to remedy those issues. But where you are today as an organization isn't necessarily gonna be where you are a year from now, and your needs are gonna change.

[00:11:07] So the idea of the standard being a one size fits all solution solver is a. Misconception. And essentially what we're looking at is a way that you can keep a pulse on your organization's needs, but you have to be fluid and adapt to the changes as they come. So it's an ongoing relationship and just like personal trauma or personal mental wellbeing, you're gonna need to adapt and change over time.

[00:11:32] And that's why I refer to it as a living organism. It's gonna change, its needs are gonna change and you're gonna need to feed the needs as they come. Right? So that's what the standard is. It's essentially a way that you can create an environment that supports innovation and supports synergy and feelings of belonging and safety in your

[00:11:51] **Carolyn:** workplace.



[00:11:52] Yeah, and there's so much research demonstrating that in order to get this innovation and creativity and to be able to really problem solve with effectiveness, we need to have these environments where people feel safe to speak up. and I feel like they belong. So, Greg, how do you use this standard and these 13 factors in what you do?

[00:12:17] **Greg:** So in what I do for work, essentially what I do is I go into organizations and I educate both frontline employees and their leadership teams as to what the psychological factors are. I define them and then I ask the employees to take notes. on the psychological factor that they feel resonates the most with them as an area where their organization could use some improvement.

[00:12:44] So, With that information, once I've defined the psychological factors, employees will tell me they'll vote usually in real time. Um, I use an application called mentee that allows employees to vote and see the statistics popping up on the screen as more and more people vote. And I'll take the top two problem areas in that organization and I will give them frontline level strategies where they can start making the changes that they wish to see inside their organization from their level.

[00:13:12] This could be individual based strategies and tools that allow them to better understand how they can prioritize their work and in doing so, solve workload issues in the workplace, which is one of the psychological

[00:13:22] **Carolyn:** factors. I was gonna say workload management, it's probably one of the top ones that Absolutely.

[00:13:25] You hear come back. Yeah,

[00:13:27] **Greg:** absolutely. That and clear leadership and understanding is another. and clear leadership and understanding isn't necessarily leadership styles. It's more how an employee understands what it is that they're supposed to be doing based on their job description and that they're informed of change in a timely manner.



[00:13:42] That's clear leadership and expectation. It's not, my manager does this and because I don't have clear leadership from him, it's my problem. It's, they don't understand what it is that they're supposed to be doing or what the capacity of their work is. That's another one that pops up. But essentially what we do is we give them tools and resources that allow them to start making the change.

[00:14:00] And better navigate those problem areas so they can actually reduce the likelihood of psychological harm in those factors from their level. And then what we do is in turn, we take that data, it's aggregate, so their confidentiality and anonymity remains intact, and we present it to the management team and we give them tools and strategies to start making more systemic level changes or organizational level changes, I should say, from their organization.

[00:14:25] And that can look like. Policy and procedure change, or it could look like ways that they can accommodate employees that might have specific needs. Hmm. Or it can look like potential trainings that we could suggest, or potential mental health programs or mental wellness programs that we could suggest that they can implement throughout their organization that work on things like, for example, if civility and respect is an issue, maybe the organization needs some crucial conversations training so they can have tact conversations even when emotions and stakes are high.

[00:14:53] and how you can move forward when you agree to disagree, but still find some ground to move forward with whatever percentage of an agreement you can come to. And that's just as important and relevant in a workplace as coming to a full agreement, is being able to just work with what you have and move forward with that and build that relationship.

[00:15:11] So that's essentially what I'll do is we find where organizations are at and we give them tools and strategies based on their needs. And allow them to start making those repairs. And we look for quick wins so they can get more buy-in from employees that might have a history of distrust or, uh, they might have a history of hurt in the organization or burnout or moral injury.



[00:15:32] And they just don't believe that these types of programs are gonna, there's gonna be longevity to it, which is a common issue with frontline employees. I mean, especially if they've been there for a long time.

[00:15:42] **Carolyn:** And you do your work specifically, just so our listeners know, in healthcare,

[00:15:46] **Greg:** correct? Right now.

[00:15:48] Right now, yes. Yeah. Right now I do, but I've worked in all industries across Canada. Right. But we see common trends in all industries, regardless of. What industry they serve. The trends are usually the same when it comes to employee buy-in or any kind of mental health programming, especially when it comes to frontline employees where mental health isn't commonly discussed or maybe it's, there's some stigma there and we try and help remedy those areas as well.

[00:16:14] **Carolyn:** So in your opinion, why is safety such an important part of leadership now than. And, and when I say now I'm, you know, I kind of use the timeline loosely, but why is this important now? Like if a leader out there is going, oh, I don't really need to worry about this. I just need to go get stuff done. Why do they need to have knowledge of the standard and knowledge of these 13 factors if they want to be effective?

[00:16:41] **Greg:** Well, there's a few reasons. One, Would be from a legal standpoint, that sounds scary in itself, which it is, but more often now, wrongful dismissal claims and employee complaints of dismissal or arbitration awards are being awarded more often to employees now than they have ever in the past. And larger compensation is being given out to employees when psychological safety is being ignored from a leadership perspective, secondary to that, it humanizes the work.

[00:17:12] so people have that sense of belonging that we as human beings need. It's ingrained in us. We need to feel like we're a part of something and that we're a part of something bigger than just ourselves. And that's what eliminates



that. What's the point? Or from an organizational standpoint, that's what helps remedy that I'm here for the paycheck and at the end of the day I go home.

[00:17:32] We want people to feel like they can be a part of organizations and their growth and that they can. Be a part of this team. And when you have that, that's where innovation happens. That's where organizational growth happens, and that's where the lifespan of organizations will actually improve. What that means for organizations is long-term relationships with your employees.

[00:17:56] So employee retention increases. You become a employer of choice if that's something that you're looking for. So that's important as well, because those organizations that are psychologically safe are the organizations where we're seeing key organizational growth contributions in the form of innovation.

[00:18:16] And people feeling safe enough to come up with ideas, without fear of being put down or belittled. And these ideas, Because the employees are the ones that are carrying out the work. If they can find innovative new ways to carry out their duties that simplify the process, and they feel safe enough to share that or safe enough to share their ideas, your organization is gonna perform better, right?

[00:18:43] You are going to seize what I call unnecessary loss, and we can touch on that later. But more importantly than anything is that's where you generate this reputation as employer of choice, and people start looking to work for you rather than you looking for employees. So it's almost

[00:18:59] **Carolyn:** like these standard, the 13 factors are a way to help us understand how to humanize the workplace and how to sync this productivity.

[00:19:13] Desire that we need to have, like we need to be accountable to our metrics and such, but how do we do that in a humanistic way instead of getting stuck in sort of these old robotic ways

[00:19:23] **Greg:** of doing it? Absolutely. I'm actually gonna do a throwback to our 2019 conversation. All right? We had a conversation about, there used to be a workplace Greg and an at-home Greg.



[00:19:35] Yes. And workplace. Greg brought his armor to. He had his defenses up. He was afraid to idea share, and he was guarded and unapproachable, and that was because I was shielding myself from the lack of safety that I felt in my workplace. I felt like my job was in jeopardy and I needed to do everything I could to not be the focus of attention and just to get through my days when I shed that.

[00:20:04] And I started to open up, and this only came from a leader, so a director in our organization literally asked me, how heavy is that armor? Wow. You could see it. It was completely life changing in the sense that he shared his mental health struggles. After knowing that I had my own through doctor's notes being submitted and through discussions with him and he shared his own story, This humanized him as a director, which made me feel safe enough to open up about some ideas and some feelings that I was having regarding our workplace, which until that moment, I kept close to the chest.

[00:20:47] Maybe it existed only in, I wish my workplace had this conversations with my closest peers in my family. Mm-hmm. But never in the workplace because, I believe the statistic is about 40% or 37% of employees aren't willing to discuss their mental health with their manager because it's too scary. You're afraid of feeling weak or you're feeling like you're gonna be ineligible for an advancement in the workplace because if you can't handle the workload at your position, how are you possibly gonna lead a team?

[00:21:16] Yep. So it humanized my experience in the workplace and what stemmed from that was. Within the span of, it was November in 2017 until May of 2018, so we're looking at six months max. We went from having no mental health programming at all in our organization to being Canada's first developmental services agency to implement a mental health program for its employees and assign the declaration of commitment to the national standard.

[00:21:45] Right? So when you have that feeling of psychological safety, That's where true innovation happens. Not just the idea of discussions about maybe changing the way that our annual Christmas party looks, but actual innovation. Yeah. Which changes industries. And that's what people are looking for, is that feeling of safety, that they need to have those ideas and share them.



[00:22:08] Yeah. And have them come to life.

[00:22:10] **Carolyn:** And I remember those days myself as well, you know, work Carolyn. I remember actually a senior leader telling a friend of mine that, Hey, I didn't realize Carolyn was so much fun. She should bring that person to work more often. Mm-hmm. . I was like, wow. I didn't even, I mean, I kind of realized that there were different pieces, but you know, again, I think the past few years have really shown us that.

[00:22:33] As much as we might have thought, we were two different entities, we're not right. Our brain doesn't know if we're at work or at home or wherever it is, and frankly, it's just a lot easier to show up in life the same way as opposed to at home or at work. This is why I think the standard is so helpful for leaders, and I'm really excited to hear that.

[00:22:54] It's progressing, it's evolving to just help leaders not be afraid of it, and to be able to use it to help them create these places that can create a sense of belonging as well. Mm-hmm. , Greg, I'm interested to know if there are any case studies or examples you could share with us that might help our listeners.

[00:23:14] Put this into context. I mean, I don't think we need to list all 13 factors per se, but I know there are usually a few factors that pop up to the top of the list most of the time. But yeah. Any examples or anecdotes that you could share with us that could help people really understand how this tool, this standard, is something that leaders.

[00:23:36] Really, really would do serve themselves well to get knowledgeable about.

[00:23:41] **Greg:** Yes, absolutely. So the Mental Health Commission of Canada submitted a case study, I'm specific to rolling out the national standard. Um, there was 40 organizations that were involved in the initial rollout, and you could find this case study online.

[00:23:54] It's been published and shared, and. They talk about the longevity of the program and where they saw organizations really thrive by creating so, uh,



psychologically safe environments. And these aren't small organizations. These are organizations like Alberta Health, hydro One Bell. And. Not only do they talk about the successes that they had from the employee level where things like productivity went up, absenteeism was decreased, long-term and short-term disabilities were decreased as well.

[00:24:27] The occurrences of long-term and short-term disabilities, but also things like infighting, so grievances, arbitration, you see a drop in that as well. They're all part of that report. But more importantly, from a business perspective, when it comes to bottom line, the return of investment for some of these organizations over timeframes went from within the first year to two years, being at around a 100% return investment when it came to every dollar that was invested.

[00:24:53] So you would get your dollar back plus another dollar. Mm-hmm. . But some organizations were seeing ROIs as much as \$5 or more for every dollar that was invested, and that data was further backed. By a study that Deloitte, uh, published in 2021. So this is taking Covid into consideration as well. And some organizations that have had long-standing relationships and active, again, living organism mental health programming, where they adapt to the changes as they come, are publishing that they're receiving \$5 and 16 to five \$65 per dollar invested.

[00:25:25] And. Not only are they humanizing their workplaces and their workers are flourishing rather than languishing, they're seeing a return on their investment that super exceeds anything that anybody was ever expecting, which in itself highlights every business case because essentially there's no leader that wakes up saying that they just want the dollar and they don't care about their people.

[00:25:54] This tackles both ends of the spectrum for leaderships and for organizational leaders in the sense that they are becoming that employer of choice and their workers are thriving and it's under their care. And not only that, they're also reaping the benefits of that flourishing that their employees are feeling, that feeling of safety and success that their employees are feeling, and I don't know.



[00:26:18] If in someone's career there could be a better feeling than that organizational success, and then success as a leader, as a human being. So

[00:26:28] **Carolyn:** yeah, I mean, the data is there. What drives leaders to seek out this standard in your experience?

[00:26:36] **Greg:** Initially it was the curiosity on what this new buzzword was. So let's go back to 2017 when I was first looking into psychological health and safety.

[00:26:45] That was the most common thing, was that people were hearing about psych health and safety and the national standard only came out in 2013. So at this point, about four years had passed and some of these organizations had been working with psychologically safe environments for about five years. Ok. So they were starting to publish that data and saying, Hey, look, like, I think at the time Bell was reporting r o i of a little over \$4 per dollar spent.

[00:27:10] So people were curious about that. Whereas fast forward to post Covid landing and I see in landing, because I don't necessarily think that we're post covid. Right. So when it comes to now, I think more organizations are seeing that it's not just this buzzword or this voluntary standard that it was being publicized about being, I think now it's becoming a necessity.

[00:27:35] Mm-hmm. and the leaders are not only feeling the stress themselves. Of being employees of their workplace, but they're feeling the stress that's coming from those in their charge. It's becoming more of a necessity now, and that's what people are looking for is how can I help? Because there is a percentage of organizations, I believe it's mid to high thirties, where they know what the standard is.

[00:28:03] But they don't know how to implement it. Right? And that's why they're starting to ask these questions now, and that's why podcasts like this are important because when you look at a document like the National Standard, it's a sizable document. It's filled with jargon that you might not necessarily be familiar with, and language that you might not necessarily be familiar with.



[00:28:25] Again, leading back to that professional embarrassment, sometimes we don't want to ask because we're in a position where we're supposed to be leaders. Am I supposed to know what this means? Right. And a lot of people don't. So if you're hearing this right now and this is landing with you, there are plenty of people out there that feel the same way.

[00:28:40] And I meet them every day as part of my job. And I think that now people are looking towards programs like your own, where we're evolving. Leadership and what does that look like and where does psychological safety land in the way that we evolve, the way that things look inside of our workplace, and how do we implement these programs?

[00:29:02] Yeah, like a psych health and safety program,

[00:29:05] **Carolyn:** and what would you say if somebody is interested, they're hearing this, I'm like, okay, I really wanna look into this more. Where do they start? What do they do?

[00:29:14] **Greg:** The best place to start, in my opinion, is that you can do a, it's called an internal. And it's offered by guarding mines at work.

[00:29:25] And essentially it's a checklist that you do like someone in human resources or you as the leader yourself can do this. It's a checklist on haves and have nots within your organization. When it comes to mental health, it goes beyond violence in the workplace response and things like that. It looks into things like whether or not you have a functional ability form for return to work or modified work duties.

[00:29:48] That includes things like mental. It includes mental health policies on return to work from a, a mental health leave. Like what does that look like for your employee as they're coming back and how do we tactfully bring them back into the workplace and navigate that process to policies and procedures around mental health and disclosure in the workplace and accommodation and what that looks like.



[00:30:09] So you can do one of those internal audits, and I think that that's a good way to get a baseline of where you're at and what you might need. and the type of help that you as an organization might require if you're unfamiliar with how to remedy those areas. Okay. You can put a name to. And then second to that, you're already at Guarding Mines.

[00:30:28] They have a employee engagement survey that lets you know as an organization where you're at in terms of those psychological factors that we've referred to. And it also gives you data that runs alongside 750 other organizations from across Canada that took the same survey. And it lets you know where you are at as an organization with your own employees, where you're at as an organization within similar industries across Canada.

[00:30:55] And it also gives you a reason to celebrate. It's not just gonna show you where your problems are, it's gonna show you where you're succeeding. And that's important too, is to don't look at it as a negative document. Yeah, that's.

[00:31:05] **Carolyn:** Celebrate this. That's a great point. As we were saying earlier, you know, this is a dynamic thing, so you're gonna be probably better in some factors than others, and there could be different influences to that in terms of understanding The third, so we've got this internal audit, they can do an employee engagement survey.

[00:31:23] What if I'm a leader and I'm listening to this and. I am in an organization perhaps that isn't as supportive or I just am gonna choose not to go to other support areas in the organization. What can I do with my team? Like, can I go to a website, learn the 13 factors, and try and create this environment on my team?

[00:31:47] **Greg:** Yes. And as a psychological health and safety advisor, one of my duties is to tell you when your organization just isn't ready to start implementing the national standard right now. Mm. And not aligning yourself with the national standard doesn't mean that you're not an organization that's ever gonna be able to establish psychologically healthy and safe environments.



[00:32:11] It just means that maybe right now, a systemic approach that's fairly rigid and it does have a lot of processes and a lot of wheels and gears that have to be in motion aren't appropriate for your organization right now. And an example of an organization where it wouldn't be appropriate is if you're going through.

[00:32:28] Organizational change, like if you're changing the way that your organization runs or like the physical location of it, if you're currently going through arbitration, particularly for something that has to do with somebody's mental health, if there's a lot of infighting, if there's a lot of issues with trust within the organization, the different facets, these are all reasons why maybe the national standard isn't what's right for you right now, but what is right for you right now?

[00:32:50] Giving your employees and yourself the opportunity to learn what psychological safety is and maybe start creating that interest in creating an environment like that. And you can do that through the Occupational Health and Safety Commission of Canada. They offer free trainings. That are purely introductory to psych health and safety.

[00:33:12] And essentially what it is, is there's an awareness course for employees, and there's a psych health and safety course specific to leadership and, uh, finding the program that works most appropriately for your organization. They're free, they take 20 minutes for the employee. And I think it's about half an hour is the the estimated time for the leadership one, and it gives you an idea of what psych health and safety can look like for your organization.

[00:33:38] It gives you an idea of ways that you can implement from a leadership side of things and what you need in terms of buy-in from your leadership team and from your employees in order for it to be successful. But it also gives your employees and yourself a reward by presenting you with a badge or a digital certificate that you can add to your cv.

[00:33:57] You can add to your ever-growing list of accomplishments, and it's a way that you folks can create synergy inside your organization where you're all kind of looking at this same thing and. You can figure out where your



champions are at different levels. You can find out where those frontline champions that did the training right away and they scored a hundred percent on the quiz at the end, and they're, they're asking questions about what this is and how they can help.

[00:34:23] Those are your people that are gonna be able to get that buy-in at the frontline level, and it allows you to identify them. So that's what you can. Yeah,

[00:34:31] **Carolyn:** we'll make sure that we get that link into the show notes now. We'll be proud Canadians for a moment and be proud of the fact that that is a Canadian offering for anybody who might be listening.

[00:34:42] That's not in Canada, are they? Is that still a good resource to go to?

[00:34:47] **Greg:** It is. I checked with them years ago. I had been invited to do a presentation for thought exchange and they had a lot of American clients, so I didn't want to be providing people from different parts of the world with wrong resources.

[00:35:00] So I checked in, and it doesn't matter with these folks at the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety, as well as, um, some other links that I can send you at the end of the show, Carolyn. But you can use these from anywhere in the world and it's. And it's still gonna be the same type of content and same type of ideas, and you don't need to be a Canadian to implement it.

[00:35:20] That's

[00:35:20] **Carolyn:** great. That's fantastic. Mm-hmm. . Now, there was one other thing that I know we had talked about touching on, which was inspiring leaders. So we've inspired leaders. Hopefully giving them some resources here. This show seems to be like chock full of resources. Where can I go? Where are some other, where's some information I can get my hands on?

[00:35:44] But you and I both know that leaders are, I mean, it's challenging at the best of times to be a leader. Mm-hmm. . And so what is it that you see



leaders do that help them stay healthy and help them? Energized enough that this psych health and safety stuff matters. What is critical for leaders to

[00:36:11] **Greg:** know. Okay.

[00:36:13] Um, I want everybody to take a second and hear me out cuz my answer I swear is self-care. Yeah. And all too often. When I say that, I'm usually met with eye rolls because we're too busy for self-care. That's the number one thing that I hear about, or self-care is selfish or they don't have time for it because they don't know what it is.

[00:36:36] In short, there are. Eight different dimensions of wellness that you can tap into. Self-care doesn't have to be one specific thing, and there's different ways that you can fill your cup. It doesn't have to be yoga. It doesn't have to be meditation. And if that's what you associate self-care with, that's not the case.

[00:36:55] But a leader cannot be at their best, and I know that we all hold ourselves to a certain standard when it comes to the type of work that we do. We want to go home at the end of the day feeling inspired and fulfilled by what we've done. And if you're not feeling that, or if you're feeling like you're languishing, chances are you're not showing up for your team in the way that you want to, and that's why you're feeling this way.

[00:37:19] So when it comes to self-care, the number one thing that I see, especially for leaders, is that they're not providing it to themselves, and there's ways that you can establish routines and self-care and find what works for you. And that's something that I could send you in the show notes as well, if that's something that's safe to say.

[00:37:35] Yeah. We'll

[00:37:35] **Carolyn:** come here. Well, you, you'd mentioned the eight dimensions of wellbeing. Can you just say quickly what they are?



[00:37:40] **Greg:** Sure. So the eight dimensions are, uh, off the top of my head, I'll try and name as many as I can, but there's intellectual, there's environmental, there's physical, there's spiritual, there's financial, there's occupational.

[00:37:53] And there is at least a couple other ones that I'm forgetting. Yeah. But these are some examples of different ways that you can tap into what it is that you need to fill your cup.

[00:38:02] **Carolyn:** I know in some of the work that I do, I talk about four dimensions of energy. Yes. Uh, physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

[00:38:09] And quite often, like many things, we can over rely on one and not pay attention to another one. And that just puts us out of balance. So, you know what we want all the leaders out there listening to know is, yes, you need to look yourself and. It will help you show up the way that you want to. And something that I talk about in my upcoming book, evolve is The Oxygen Mask.

[00:38:35] Mm-hmm. . Here's my take on the oxygen mask. I think it's a great metaphor, but I'll be honest, it annoys me whenever I hear people talk about it because mm-hmm. , for years I thought I had the oxygen mask on and I did. The problem was, is there was stale air going through it. There was no oxygen coming through.

[00:38:54] So I'm gonna say, put on your oxygen mask and make sure you've got a healthy dose of oxygen running through. And you know, we'll put those four elements or eight elements of wellbeing and, and that's frankly why I have all these different guests on the show is to help us all. Fine meaning in all of those elements of self-care, not just thinking it's yoga or mm-hmm.

[00:39:19] running or whatever. Insert hobby here type thing. Okay.

[00:39:23] **Greg:** I like that and I appreciate that fresh take because the oxygen mask is overused a hundred percent when it comes to why we need self-care and here's a fresh. There is, there was, I should say, an incredible woman by the name of Audrey Lord. Mm. And she identified herself as a queer black feminist.



[00:39:46] And in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, she was instrumental in dismantling the systems of white supremacy and institutionalized racism. And for. She said that she couldn't show up the way that she needed to for an entire nation and conquer what she did unless she was caring for herself and her own needs first.

[00:40:11] So a quote that she has is caring for myself is not self-indulgence. It is self-preservation. And that in itself is an act of political warfare. Mm. So the importance of caring for yourself. And then being able to do the massive things that you want to be able to do is paramount. You need to be able to be at your best to do your best, and if you are not, then chances are you're letting the people below you.

[00:40:47] Down. And you also want them to know that they need to take care of themselves too, because it's easy to talk the talk and not walk the walk. But the Oxford dictionary when it comes to self-care, defines self-care as the practice of activities that are necessary to sustain life health, and that are normally initiated by the individual themselves.

[00:41:08] So as a leader, just remember those two statements. Self-care is defined by Oxford as what's necessary to sustain your health and your life. Yeah. So if you're not taking the time, you're robbing yourself of the life that you could be having while still being able to do everything that you want to do.

[00:41:27] Yeah. And that's why it's so important to visit those moments of self-care.

[00:41:31] **Carolyn:** I really appreciate our conversation today because. We need to look after ourselves if we are gonna be able to create these environments that are safe and cause us to create these areas of belonging and, and safety. And we can't do that when we're burnt out and fried, and we're just not able to show up.

[00:41:49] Greg, are we ready to go to my three questions for evolved leaders? Are you ready to, to go there? I, I think so, yes. All right. Before I go there, how can people in our. Get in touch with you if they so desire.



[00:42:07] **Greg:** It's really easy. You can visit me on LinkedIn and that is my only personal page in terms of, uh, where people can reach out and see what it is that I'm doing.

[00:42:17] Yep. I share content all the time. On creating psychologically safe environments, but also on my own mental health journey and how I navigate that. And then second to that, if you're interested in what we do through C M H A, your health space, you can visit yourhealthspace.ca and you can learn all about the programming that we offer there and what it is that we do.

[00:42:39] **Carolyn:** All right, fantastic. All right. Well, Greg, here are the three questions. Really form the foundation of being an evolv leader. So I'm gonna start off with the first one. Can you share a moment that was really uncomfortable for you, but one that yielded just really profound insight about yourself? So it was like a real moment of self-awareness.

[00:43:05] **Greg:** The first time I ever openly told anybody that I was struggling with my mental health, and I'll say on a professional level because family and friends knew, but the first time I ever shared it out loud at work was probably the most difficult thing I've ever done in my life. I cried in the office. It was probably one of the most uncomfortable feelings that I ever had.

[00:43:29] As every tier fell, so did every piece of armor that I ever had on and the relationship in the workplace. My professional and my personal life have only ever gotten better by finally opening up and sharing my story. And as I mentioned before, for employees. That's where innovation comes from is when they feel that feeling of safety and they don't have to wear that armor anymore and it's heavy.

[00:43:56] And when you can shed it, life gets so much better. And just being able to say that something was wrong and have somebody that sits on the opposite side of the desk from me say, that's tough. I hear you. Thank you so much for sharing that for me. Are you willing to hear my story too? Yeah. Formed connect.



[00:44:18] And forming connection was what allowed us to navigate what would've been really a really, really difficult time inside of our organization otherwise. Yeah. So that first time that you share, it's the hardest thing that you'll ever do, but it is the most important and the most valuable thing that you'll ever do as well.

[00:44:35] And I hope that that answers your question.

[00:44:37] **Carolyn:** Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. Second element here is what is a practice or ritual that keeps you in a calm, regulated state, or returns you to a calm or regulated state? Making my bed. Oh, interesting. And I love, I get different answers all the time to this question, and I've never heard making my bed.

[00:45:02] **Greg:** So here's why. Retired Ameral Naval Commander William McCraven said that the most important thing that you can do is to, every morning is to make your bed. And the reason being is because when you make your bed, you've accomplished the first small task of the day and it motivates you to do another and then another and another.

[00:45:21] And it allows you to. Bigger things every time that you do the small things, and you'll never be able to conquer the big ones unless you do the small tasks first. Wow. And if for whatever reason, the day doesn't go your way, you come home to a bed that's made that you made. and it represents a chance to start all over again tomorrow.

[00:45:42] **Carolyn:** Oh, it's so true. As I made my bed this morning, I love that feeling of getting in at night knowing that it's all nice and warm. Absolutely. That's really cool. Thank you. Thank you. And I'm guessing a really well-made bed. Doesn't need to have like those really tight corners cuz my tucked in. It's just, it's just got, it's just got the three sheets.

[00:46:00] Alright. And then last but not least, What is a song or genre of music that makes you feel connected to others or part of something bigger than yourself?



[00:46:11] **Greg:** There is an incredible Canadian band called Texas King, ironically

[00:46:16] **Carolyn:** Canadian. Never heard of them. Yeah. How can I not know of this band?

[00:46:19] **Greg:** I am surprised because it's right up your alley, but they're called Texas King and they have a song called You.

[00:46:26] And that song, the first time I ever heard it, it sounds like a love song, but to me it sounded more like the first time. I ever opened up about my mental health, and it was almost like it was a song written from my heart to my brain. And when you read the lyrics, you'll fully understand what I'm saying because it changed the way that I looked at sharing my story and how by sharing it, not only do I feel better today, But also every time that I share my story, I'm creating a survival guide for somebody else.

[00:46:57] The lyrics will hit a lot harder when you look at it that way, as opposed to just your regular love song. But it's an incredible song as is, but now you're gonna look at it totally differently. Wow.

[00:47:07] **Carolyn:** Wow. All right. Well, I am definitely gonna be picking up that song at the end of our recording. Greg, thank you so much for coming on again.

[00:47:16] And having this conversation with me, with us, all of us listening about the standard, about psych health and safety and, and also just these little glimpses into your own story as well, really, really means a lot. Well,

[00:47:29] **Greg:** thank you and I appreciate being here. It's always a pleasure and as I can never finish saying enough, I'm a huge fan of your work, so thank you for doing what you do and sharing stories like these.

[00:47:38] **Carolyn:** Thanks so much, Greg. You know, as I reflect on this discussion that I just had with Greg, I'm reminded that change is hard and asking ourselves as leaders to reflect on our own actions. Is one piece of the



work and the self-awareness, and we've talked about that in other episodes. This episode really reminded me of the importance using evidence-based tools and the standard is an evidence-based tool.

[00:48:17] It's been around for 10 years, as Greg shared with us. It is being, I'll say revised, but it's. Evolved or updated after having 10 years of experience. And so I really encourage you in whatever leadership role you might have to go have a look at it and understand what these 13 factors are. I've used it with a few clients and partnered with some other folks to use it in our work, and it really does help organizations, a framework that can help humanize the workplace.

[00:48:51] And that needs to happen in conjunction with our. Work in deepening our self-awareness. Thanks again for joining me on the podcast. I'm really glad you're here. You can find out more information about the work that I do and the exciting new program and my new book coming out soon. You can find that all@carolynsra.com.