

Speak up in the moment

Coaching without blame

Silence makes it normal.

The risk

Unsafe actions or conditions continue because no one interrupts them. by speaking up.

Why this matters

When kōreo (conversations) about safety feel blame-focused or corrective, kaimahi (workers) may stay silent, push through or hide concerns. Over time, this allows unsafe actions, equipment issues and risky work habits to continue without interruption. This can lead to injury.

Your role as a leader

As a leader, you play a key role in shaping how safety conversations happen. People are more likely to speak up when they feel safe to do so. Coaching kaimahi (workers) on why, when and how to speak up, and backing them when they do, sends a clear message that calling out safety issues is an important part of their mahi (work).

What this looks like in practice:

- Coach kaimahi (workers) in how to speak up and practise it with them.
- Focus on what's happening rather than who's at fault.
- Show curiosity before offering solutions.
- Reinforce that calling out unsafe situations is supported.
- Follow up to confirm issues are actually fixed and kaimahi (workers) know what has changed.

Barrier-busting

Here are some common barriers that stop kaimahi (workers) from speaking up and what you as a leader can remove:

- **They don't know what to say:** coach kaimahi (workers) about how to have a kōreo (conversations) about safety and what they can say when they speak up.
- **Pressure to keep going or not slow others down:** make it clear that speaking up for safety is expected.
- **They don't feel like they have the authority to speak up:** reinforce that safety is part of everyone's role.
- **Past experiences where nothing changed:** close the loop. Share with kaimahi (workers) what's been fixed or improved.

Ask the team

Use these questions to open up a **kōrero** (conversation) about what your team is really experiencing:

1. When something doesn't seem right, what makes it easier or harder to speak up?
2. What gets in the way of stopping or pausing work when risks show up?

Commitment

Complete this commitment with your team or with individuals eg, **'This week I/we will use at least one safe speaking-up phrase'**.

This week I/we will...

Continue the **kōrero** (conversation):

Follow up regularly to focus on using the right help by asking curious questions such as **'Since we talked about this, what have you noticed when people speak up?'**



Other resources

- **Speak up in the moment** quick reference guide
- **Speak up in the moment** micro card
- **Move Well: Skills for kaimahi** elearning
 - Conversations that matter
 - Communicating my safety
- **Move Well: Focus on leaders** elearning
 - Your role
 - Vision and support
 - Conversations that matter
 - Applying the learning - coaching guide