CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING is central to hospital efforts to improve processes and outcomes of care for patients with AMI, including reduced door-to-balloon times\(^1\)-\(^2\) and 30-day risk-standardized mortality rates (RSMRs).\(^3\)-\(^4\) In hospitals with exceptional performance in RSMRs, adverse events are viewed as opportunities to analyze root causes and learn from experiences in order to improve care. Innovation is fostered by deep organizational commitment to trial and error and empowerment of front line staff to experiment.

LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS, where problem-focused experimentation and innovation is expected, are characterized by a supportive learning environment, concrete learning processes and practices, and leadership behaviors that reinforce learning.\(^5\)-\(^6\) While learning can initially be facilitated by importing best practices, internal creative problem solving is a critical capacity for later phases of improvement in the organization.\(^7\) Team performance in creative problem solving can be supported through facilitation of the problem solving process,\(^8\)-\(^9\) specific group exercises to spark creativity,\(^10\)-\(^17\) and engagement of diverse individuals.\(^18\)

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY, a central feature of learning organizations, can foster creative problem solving. Psychological safety is a characteristic of the working environment in which employees feel free to express new or different ideas without fear of negative consequences or being judged harshly.\(^19\)-\(^20\) Psychological safety is associated with staff engagement in quality improvement efforts in health care,\(^21\)-\(^22\) and organizational performance in various industries.\(^23\) Conditions of psychological safety include norms that reward risk taking; innovative thinking and experimentation; freedom to bring up tough issues and to ask for help; and valuing of unique skills and differences.\(^20\),\(^24\) Psychologically safe environments engender mutual trust that allows for disagreements and input from front line staff, who are key to successful quality improvement teams in AMI care\(^1\) and patient safety efforts.\(^25\)
References:


