

Psychological Safety

The foundation for a connected
and engaged team



MY PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY ACTION PLAN

1. How will you improve your onboarding process to quickly elevate the sense of belonging for new staff?

2. What specific changes will you make today around how you talk about, support, and respond to people asking for help, saying they don't know, and admitting they made a mistake?

3. What systems do you need to put into place to actively invite new ideas (e.g., Brené Brown's turn-and-learn strategy)?

4. How will you destigmatize failure?

5. What are your ideas to repair psychological safety that is damaged by an event such as a termination on the team, which you are not able to discuss in detail?

ASSESSING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Step 1: Answer each of the following questions using one of the following choices: Yes, Maybe, No.

Level 1: Belonging	Yes	Maybe	No
1. We know one another personally, not just professionally			
2. It's okay to talk about health issues and burnout			
3. I'm not afraid to ask questions and share my thoughts			
4. I feel welcomed by my team			
Level 2: Cognitive Diversity	Yes	Maybe	No
5. The team encourages me to disagree or think differently			
6. It is easy to ask my colleagues for help			
7. We can bring up problems and tough issues			
8. My unique skills and talents are valued and utilized			
Level 3: Innovation	Yes	Maybe	No
9. I feel safe to takes risks on this team			
10. We openly share and learn from our mistakes			
11. It's okay to challenge the status quo			
12. Questions are always welcome on our team			

Step 2: Using your yes/maybe/no answers from above *and* your overall impression of this level of psychological safety, assess each of the three levels using one of the following choices: Strong, Weak, Broken.

Level 1: Belonging	Strong	Weak	Broken
Level 1: Belonging			
Level 2: Congtivity Diversity			
Level 3: Innovation			

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY ACTION GUIDE

Use the suggested actions below to help your team move forward toward a higher level of psychological safety. Prioritize the actions that are most relevant to your team.

1. On this team, I understand what is expected of me.

- Ensure tasks are clear and well defined.

- Create agreed, shared protocols around the pace and quality of work. Create a shared definition of "done."

- Make behavior expectations explicit and clear.

- Deal quickly with negative behaviors so they don't become implicitly acceptable.

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2. If I make a mistake on this team, it is never held against me.

- Make it clear that a mistake is an opportunity for the whole team to learn and grow.

- Lead by example by being open with the team when you make a mistake and explaining what it has taught you.

- Deal quickly with members of the team who try to "blame and shame" others, reminding them of your values, to ensure that this does not become part of the team culture.

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3. All members of this team feel able to bring up problems and tough issues.

- Provide safe spaces such as unhurried, properly scheduled 1:1s for your team members to open up.
 - Model this behavior by being honest about the challenges you face.
 - Make a point in meetings of asking team members what is going well for them currently and what is not going so well, so it's clear you are not only there to celebrate wins.
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4. Members of this team never reject others for being different and nobody is left out.

- Include all team members in discussions and meetings that are relevant to them.
 - In a meeting, ensure everyone's voice is heard at least once. This is even more important in remote meetings.
 - Examine your team practices to ensure you are being as inclusive as possible.
 - Provide spaces for team members to share as much or as little as they feel comfortable with about their personal lives, and make it clear that you celebrate those differences.
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5. It is safe for me to take a risk on this team.

- Reward intelligent risk taking by explicitly thanking and praising team members, *even when those risks don't pay off.*
 - Invite team members to share measured risks they have taken.
 - Ask your team how they determine when a risk is worth taking. Try to cocreate some shared practices of calculating risk versus reward.
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6. It is easy for me to ask other members of this team for help.

- Praise and thank team members for asking for help.
 - Model this behavior by sometimes asking for help yourself.
 - Normalize asking for help by creating easy ways for people to do it (e.g., online chat channels where team members can post questions or challenges).
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7. Nobody on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.

- Praise and reward team members who go out of their way to help others, even if it impacts their individual productivity.
 - Invite team members to share, celebrate and appreciate each other's successes.
 - Be very firm with any negative behaviors such as people talking over each other, dominating conversations, or taking credit for someone else's work.
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8. My unique skills and talents are valued and utilized in my work as part of this team.

- Ensure that every team member is in a role they feel they bring value to.
 - Identify the strengths of each team member and share these with the team.
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Source: Geraghty, T. (n.d). The complete psychological safety toolkit. <https://psychsafety.co.uk/tool-kit/>