

The Trust Factor: How Psychological Safety Drives Team Performance



Part 2: Implementing Psychological Safety in Your Team

Building on our understanding of psychological safety, leaders need to implement practical strategies that nurture this environment within their teams. Research by Timothy R. Clark outlines the Four Stages of Psychological Safety, which serve as a roadmap for fostering a culture of trust and innovation.

Stage 1: Inclusion Safety

The foundation of psychological safety is making every team member feel valued and accepted. Leaders should:

- ✓ Ensure all voices are heard.
- ✓ Encourage open discussions where team members feel respected.
- ✓ Celebrate different perspectives and backgrounds to foster belonging.

Stage 2: Learner Safety

Once individuals feel included, they must feel safe to learn, ask questions, and make mistakes. Leaders can promote Learner Safety by:

- ✓ Modeling vulnerability—admit your own mistakes and encourage others to do the same.

- ✓ Creating growth-focused feedback loops to support learning.
- ✓ Viewing errors as opportunities for improvement rather than failures.

Stage 3: Contributor Safety

Team members need to feel secure enough to share ideas and actively participate. To strengthen Contributor Safety, leaders should:

- ✓ Provide clear roles and expectations, ensuring everyone understands their contributions.
- ✓ Encourage ownership by giving employees autonomy over their work.
- ✓ Recognize and reward contributions, reinforcing that efforts are valued.

Stage 4: Challenger Safety

The highest level of psychological safety enables team members to challenge the status quo and voice concerns without fear. To cultivate Challenger Safety, leaders must:

- ✓ Encourage constructive debate to inspire innovation and problem-solving.
- ✓ Foster an environment where questioning existing processes is welcomed.
- ✓ Assure employees that disagreement, when respectful, leads to progress.

By implementing these strategies and understanding the Four Stages of Psychological Safety, leaders can create an environment where trust, engagement, and innovation thrive. Psychological safety is an ongoing process - it requires continuous effort, feedback, and leadership commitment. When achieved, it transforms workplaces into spaces of collaboration, creativity, and long-term success.

Your Next Step

If you're ready to take your team's performance, trust, and innovation to the next level, WYVERN's Safety Leader Training is the key to fostering a culture where safety and success go hand in hand.

We help organizations implement best practices, equipping attendees with the latest strategies in aerospace safety leadership.

- ✓ Developing strong, trust-based leadership
- ✓ Creating an open-door culture where employees feel safe to share concerns
- ✓ Enhancing communication skills to promote collaboration

- ✅ Providing tools to identify and address psychological safety challenges in teams



Click the image to watch our short video on Safety Leader Training

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References

Visit our [Resource Center](#) for this and other interesting documents:

Delizonna, L. (2017). [*High-Performing Teams Need Psychological Safety. Here's How to Create It.*](#) Harvard Business Review.

Kutnick, V. (2024). [*The Four Stages of Psychological Safety.*](#) [management30.com](#)

Clark, T. R. (2021). The Four Stages of Psychological Safety. In T. R. Clark, *The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety: Defining the Path to Inclusion and Innovation* (<https://psychsafety.com/the-four-stages-of-psychological-safety/>).