Three Ways to Build Psychological Safety

What is Psychological Safety?

Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes.

~ Amy Edmondson in *"The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth"* (2019), p.xvi.

Consider these strategies to build Psychological Safety in your team.

1) Change Blame-Based Language

Blame-Based	Psychologically Safer
We'll *investigate*	We'll debrief (or do an After Action Review)
There was a *violation*	I saw something unexpected
He *failed* to…	What he did was…let's ask why
What they *should* have done was…	What I expected them to do was…
You need to minimize errors like me	I may miss something too, and want you to help check me
Why didn't you tell me this before now?!	What can I do to make it easier for you to tell me things like this sooner?

2) Ask Questions That Make It Easy for Others to Share Errors and Problems

1. How do we actually get this job (X) done correctly 99% of the time?
2. If you were in my job, what's one change would you make?
3. What do I do that creates, sustains, or deepens the problem?
4. May I have permission to give you feedback?

3) Ask a Trusted Peer to be On-Call to Help You Apply Psychological Safety in a Crisis

Imagine the colleague you trust the most at work. In some ways, they may know you even better then you know yourself. Talk with them about Psychological Safety. Consider asking them to be your Go To person in a crisis. Here's how.

"Hey, if an incident or crisis happens, and I think I'm about to get punitive and blame-based with my team, may I call you? Can you remind me why Psychological Safety is so important, especially during crises, and perhaps give me some input on how to build it and strengthen it when I'm most at risk for losing it? I'd be glad to do the same for you if you want."

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