

Microsoft People Science presents...

Building Psychological Safety Amidst Change

How to support your team
(and learn what they need)
during change

Dr. Julie Morris

April 2025



Webinar Recording and Privacy

- This webinar is being recorded
- Participant names will be visible to others during the meeting.
- We advise against using external AI bots to protect personal information and in the spirit of [Responsible AI](#).



Agenda

- 01** Introduction
10 min
- 02** Impacts of change & the benefits of psychological safety
15 min
- 03** 3 ways to support people through change
30 min
- 04** Practicing with Copilot Demo
5 min

A little about me...



Dr. Julie Morris

Program Manager, Viva People Science Research & Development



Impacts of change on employees

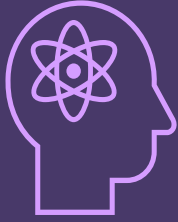


Reflection prompt

What kind of changes
are you currently navigating?
(put your answer in the chat)



Types of changes employees experience



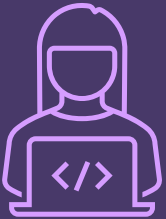
Leadership
changes



Schedule (hours
or days worked)



Policy
changes



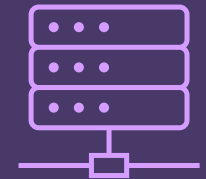
Org
restructuring



Layoffs



External
changes



New technology
introduced
(e.g., AI)

Psychological safety & change

Impacts of change on employee experience

48%

Feel increased
stress

54%

Consider **leaving**
their jobs

71%

Feel **overwhelmed**
by the amount of
change at work

38%

Are hesitant to
embrace change
due to **uncertainty**

25%

Feel **excluded** from
change-related
decisions

Reflection prompt

Think about a time you navigated change at work? What went well?

What contributed to you feeling relaxed/curious/empowered?




Why is
psychological
safety crucial
for successful
change?



What is psychological safety?

Definition:

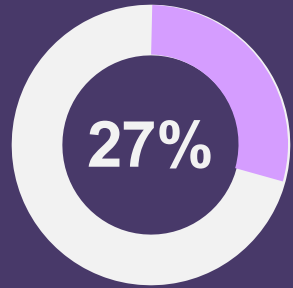
"A shared belief held by a team that it's okay to take risks, express their ideas and concerns, speak up with questions and to admit mistakes, **all without fear of negative consequences.**"¹

A photograph of a person walking away from the camera on a wooden bridge or path that crosses a small stream. The path is surrounded by tall, bare trees, suggesting a late autumn or winter setting. The sun is low in the sky, creating a warm, golden light that filters through the branches. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a hat. The bridge has wooden railings on both sides.

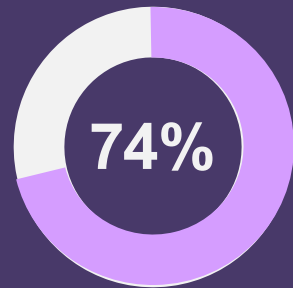
A psychologically safe environment promotes interpersonal trust and higher team performance.²

1. Amy Gallo, "What is Psychological Safety?" in *Harvard Business Review*. Feb. 15, 2023
2. Craig Ramsay, "Employee Happiness and Success in the New World of Work," *People Success 2.9 Research*. April 2024

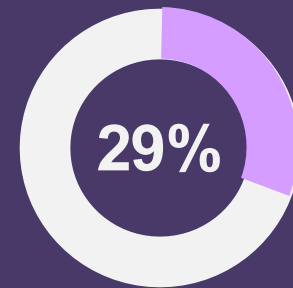
The effects of psychological safety on change



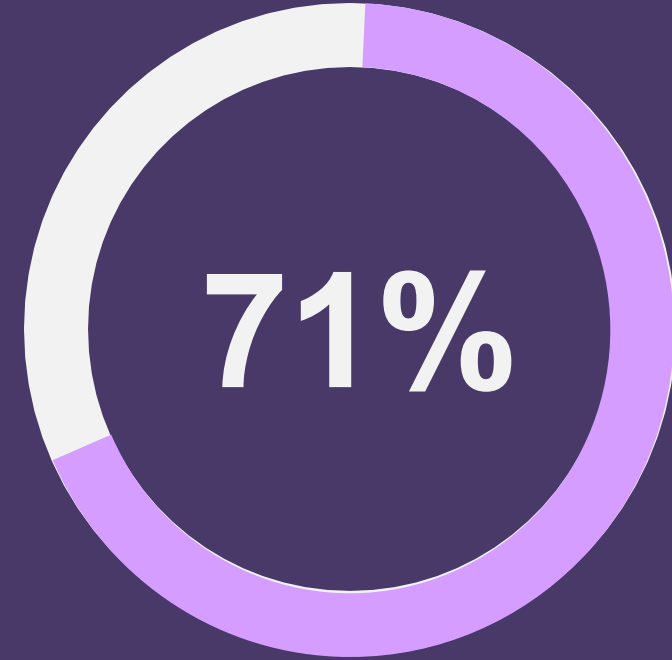
Reduction in
employee turnover



Less stress



Increase in life
satisfaction



Effective leadership accounts for
71% of successful change.

The Neuroscience of Trust: Management behaviors that foster employee engagement by Paul J. Zak, [The Neuroscience of Trust \(hbr.org\)](https://hbr.org)

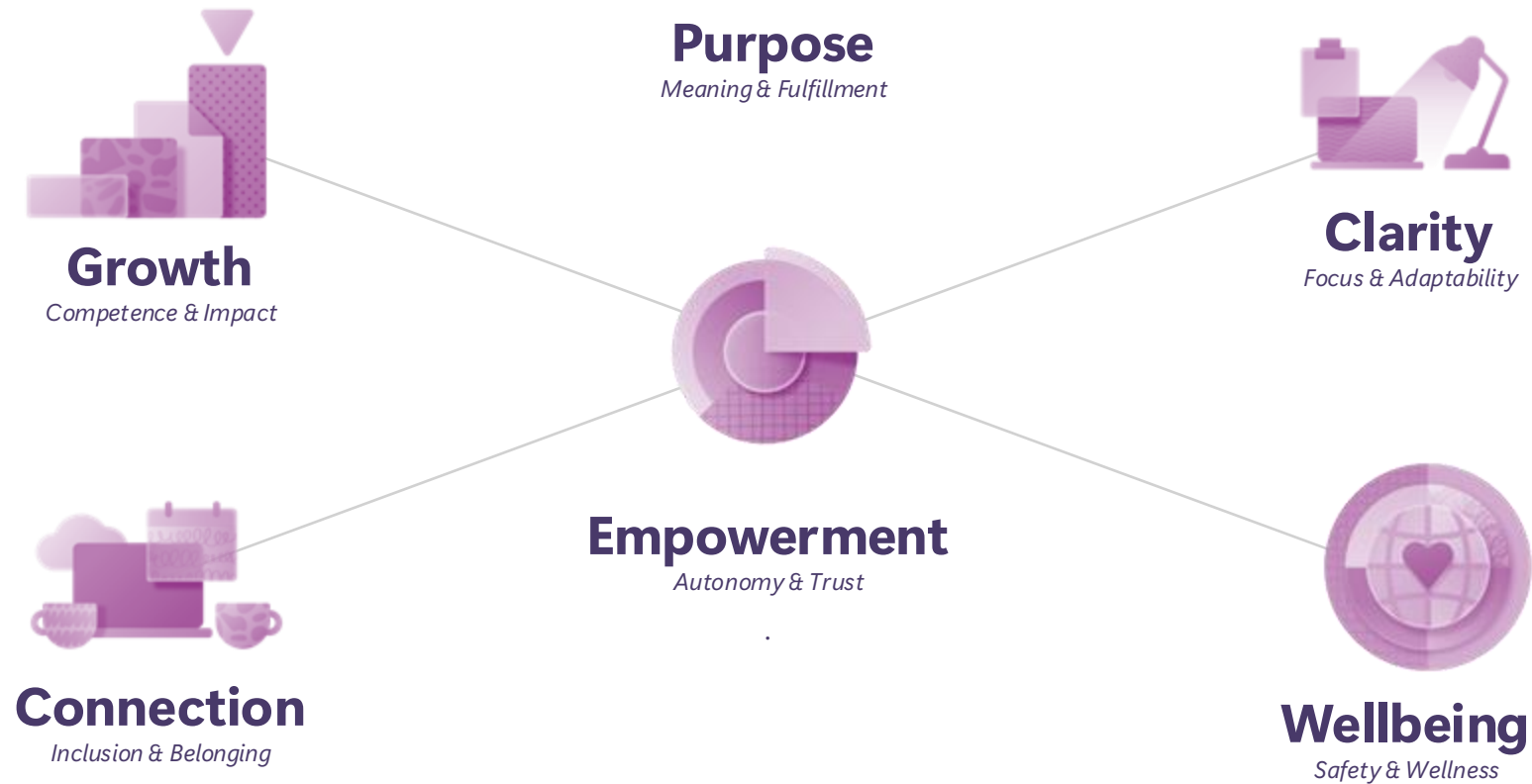
How to Create a Culture of Psychological Safety (gallup.com) <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236198/create-culture-psychological-safety.aspx>

Lee, K., & Song, H. D. (2020). Linkages between social goal orientation and innovative behavior: Examining the mediating role of knowledge sharing and employee engagement. *Sustainability*, 12(23), 9886.

[Psychological Safety at Work: Fostering Engagement & Wellbeing | Workhuman](#)

Khaw, K.W., Alnoor, A., AL-Abrow, H. *et al.* Reactions towards organizational change: a systematic literature review. *Curr Psychol* **42**, 19137–19160 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03070-6>

People Success Elements Model



Describe signs of an environment that supported change in 1-3 words.

(put your answer in the chat)

What has helped create a psychologically safe environment for you?



People don't resist change. They
resist loss.

- Ronald Heifetz

Three ways to
start building
psychological
safety amidst
change



Lesson #1: Bring people into the process

Empowering people during transition builds trust and increases buy-in

What is it?

Find opportunities for people to participate in the change and the change process.

Giving people a sense of autonomy and choice during transition can ease the knee-jerk alarm-response.

Guideposts:

1. Invite feedback
2. Empower decision-making



Practical application

What kinds of strategies could you implement to practice bringing people into the process (e.g., 1:1 coaching, feedback channels, etc.)?

(put your answers in the chat)



Practical application

What kinds of strategies could you implement to practice bringing people into the process (e.g., 1:1 coaching, feedback channels, etc.)?

(put your answers in the chat)

Ideas to start practicing:

1. Establish a safe environment for learning new skills
2. Find areas to be flexible
3. Allocate innovation time each week

Lesson #2: Create stability¹

A sense of stability helps people navigate the fear and anxiety that comes with change

What is it?

Creating stability amidst change means to provide a consistent, predictable, and supportive atmosphere where employees **expect change** and **trust** that they will get the support they need to succeed through it.

Guideposts:

1. Normalize continuous change
2. Name what *isn't* changing



Practical application

What kinds of strategies could you implement to practice creating stability with your team (e.g., refresh on core values exercise)?

(put your answers in the chat)



Practical application

What kinds of strategies could you implement to practice checking your reactivity with your team (e.g., ask questions first)?

(put your answers in the chat)

Ideas to start practicing:

1. Host a ways of working session
2. Create a change roadmap
3. Revisit (or create!) your team charter

Lesson #3: Model the behavior you want to see

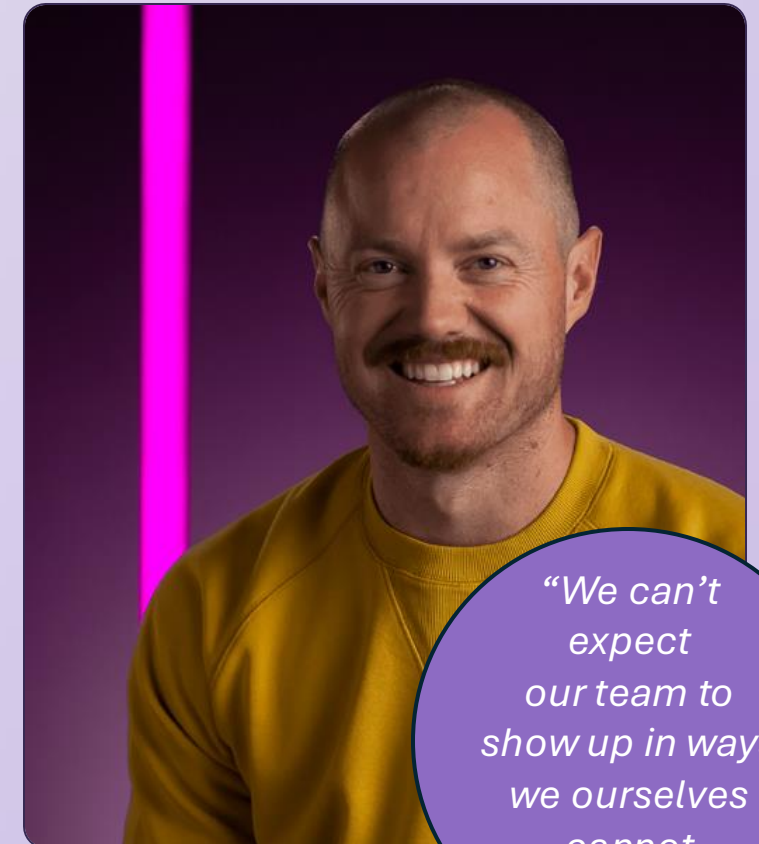
“What walks in leaders, runs in teams.” – Phil Nosworthy

What is it?

Learn to recognize your own discomfort and process during change, so you can intentionally demonstrate the behaviors you want your team to adopt.

Guideposts:

1. Cultivate self-awareness of your own change process
2. Model curiosity



“We can’t expect our team to show up in ways we ourselves cannot manage.”

Practical application

What kinds of strategies could you implement to practice modeling the behavior you want to see on your team (e.g., taking a day to process negativity)?

(put your answers in the chat)



Practical application

What kinds of strategies could you implement to practice modeling the behavior you want to see on your team (e.g., taking a day to process negativity)?

(put your answers in the chat)

Ideas to start practicing:

1. Ask open-ended questions
2. Acknowledge loss (for yourself and others)
3. Model flexibility and optimism

Practice with Microsoft Copilot

Microsoft Teams

Copilot Demo

2025-03-01 00:11 UTC

Recorded by

Julie Morris

Organized by

Julie Morris

Practice with Copilot

"I want to practice a skill by role-playing with you...."



Hi Julie, I'd be happy to help you with this role-playing exercise. Let's get started.

Employee (Assistant): Hi Julie, I appreciate you taking the time to talk to me about the upcoming restructuring. I have a few concerns that I'd like to discuss.

First, I'm feeling quite anxious about the changes in management. With new managers coming in, I'm worried about how their expectations might differ from what I'm used to. How can I ensure that I meet these new expectations and continue to perform well in my role?

Feel free to respond, and I'll continue with more questions based on your answers.



Prompts to practice with Microsoft 365 Copilot

Bring people into the process

I want to practice a skill by role-playing with you. You play the part of my employee, and I am your manager. The scenario is that our company is rolling out Copilot to all employees. I'm going to practice bringing people into the process by inviting feedback and empowering decisions. I would like you to ask me hard questions about this upcoming change, such as concerns about job security, potential lay-offs, unclear expectations, and anxiety about using AI. Feel free to improvise here on what concerns employees may have. We'll role-play back and forth with you responding and asking questions until I say the exercise is over. After I type 'finish', please provide me with constructive feedback about what went well and how I could improve for the future.

Create stability

I want to practice a skill by role-playing with you. You play the part of my employee, and I am your manager. The scenario is that our company is going through a significant restructuring; many people are changing teams and managers. I'm going to practice creating stability by normalizing continuous change and naming what isn't changing. I would like you to ask me hard questions about this upcoming change, such as anxiety about changing expectations with new management, feelings of loss with a team change, and anger at an unexpected change. Feel free to improvise here on what concerns employees may have. We'll role-play back and forth with you responding and asking questions until I say the exercise is over. After I type 'finish', please provide me with constructive feedback about what went well and how I could improve for the future.

Model behavior

I want to practice a skill by role-playing with you. You play the part of my employee, and I am your manager. The scenario is that our company is rolling out Copilot to all employees. I'm going to practice the skill of modeling the behavior I want to see by cultivating self-awareness and modeling curiosity. I would like you to ask me hard questions about this upcoming change, such as concerns about their ability to acquire these new skills and adapt, job security, potential lay-offs, unclear expectations, and anxiety about using AI. Feel free to improvise here on what concerns employees may have. We'll role-play back and forth with you responding and asking questions until I say the exercise is over. After I type 'finish', please provide me with constructive feedback about what went well and how I could improve for the future.

Start now...

The screenshot shows the 'Focus Areas' dashboard in Microsoft Viva Glint. The top navigation bar includes 'Dashboard', 'Focus Areas' (selected), 'Feedback', 'My Surveys', and 'Reports'. The main header 'Focus Areas' has sub-tabs for 'My Focus Areas' and 'Company'. Below this, it shows 'FY 2025' and a list of four focus areas:

Focus Area	Comments	Progress	Status	Action
Improve Belonging for my team <small>Mar 31</small>	1	0	Complete	View
Improve Care for my team <small>Dec 31</small>	0	1/4	Off Track	View
Improve Communication for my team <small>Dec 31</small>	0	2/3	On Track	View
Improve Empowerment for my team <small>Dec 31</small>	0	2/3	On Track	View

Two callout boxes highlight key features:

- A dashed box at the top right of the dashboard highlights the 'Current Period' dropdown and the '+ New Focus Area' button.
- A larger dashed box on the right side shows a zoomed-in view of these two elements, with an arrow pointing from the first callout to it.



Microsoft Viva Glint – Voice of the employee

Register for this month's events

Learning Circles: Q2 Edition

[April 30, 8am PDT](#)

Viva Glint Town Hall

[Option 1: May 6 at 3pm BST](#)

[Option 2: May 6 at 1pm EDT](#)

[Option 3: May 8 at 1pm SGT](#)

Think Like a People Scientist: Driving AI Change with Employee Sentiment

[May 8, 8am PDT](#)

Stay informed about Viva Glint including upcoming events, research drops and product updates.

Viva Glint Newsletter: [sign up](#)

Learn about the combined power of Viva & Copilot including customer success stories, new research, and upcoming events.

Viva + Copilot Newsletter: [sign up](#)

Resources

Visit our Psychological Safety website for more resources and helpful links:

- Learning course w/badge
- Additional reading & research we've done on psychological safety
- Upcoming events



How did we do?

Your feedback helps inform our sessions and what we offer in the future.

Please answer our two-question poll, and let us know what you think!



Thank you!