

Microsoft Viva presents...

Building Psychological Safety

How to cultivate patterns and
behaviors for healthy and
engaged teams

Dr. Julie Morris
November 2024



Webinar Recording and Privacy

- This webinar is being recorded
- The recording will be available on the Viva Community post-event.
- 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 What is psychological safety?
15 min

03 Three ways to start building
30 min

04 Practicing with Copilot Demo
5 min

A little about me...



Dr. Julie Morris

Program Manager, Viva People Science Research & Development



Reflection prompt

Think about a time you felt relaxed, curious, or empowered at work. How did that feel? How did it impact your work?

What contributed to you feeling relaxed/curious/empowered?



What is psychological safety?


(and why do we need it?)



What is psychological safety?

Definition:

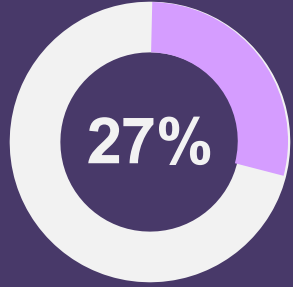
"A shared belief held by a team that it's okay to take risks, express their ideas and concerns, speak up with questions and to admit mistakes, all without fear of negative consequences."¹

A photograph of a person walking away on a wooden bridge over a stream in a forest. The bridge has wooden railings. The forest is dense with trees, some bare and some with green foliage. The lighting suggests it might be late afternoon or early morning, with a warm glow from the sun filtering through the trees.

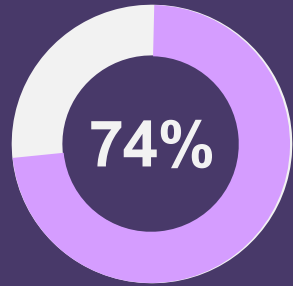
A psychologically safe environment promotes interpersonal trust and higher team performance.²

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

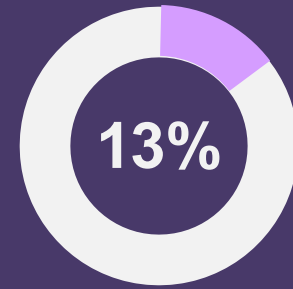
The effects of psychological safety



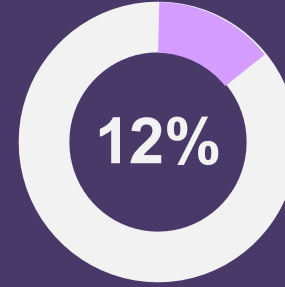
27% Reduction in employee turnover



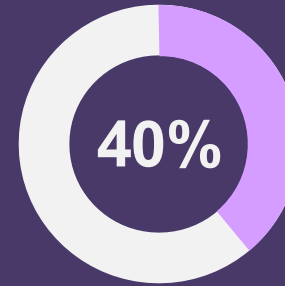
74% Less stress



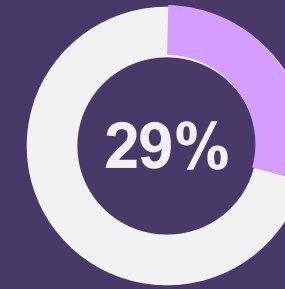
13% Fewer sick days



12% Increase in productivity



40% Reduction in safety incidents



29% More life satisfaction

Poll: Describe signs of a psychologically safe environment in 1-3 words.

(put your answer in the chat)

What has helped create a psychologically safe environment for you?



Signs of psychological safety

Collaboration

Employees work well together and help each other succeed

Asking for help

Invested in colleagues' success

Willing to take risks

Candor

Employees are engaged, authentic and open

Admitting mistakes

Respectful dissent w/leadership

Open communication

Belonging

Employees accept each other and treat one another with dignity

Assumed best intent

Trust and respect one another

Differences are expected & celebrated



Three ways to
start building
psychological
safety



Lesson #1: Check your reactivity

Knee-jerk reactions rarely lead to productive outcomes and often lead to conflict or communication breakdowns

What is it?

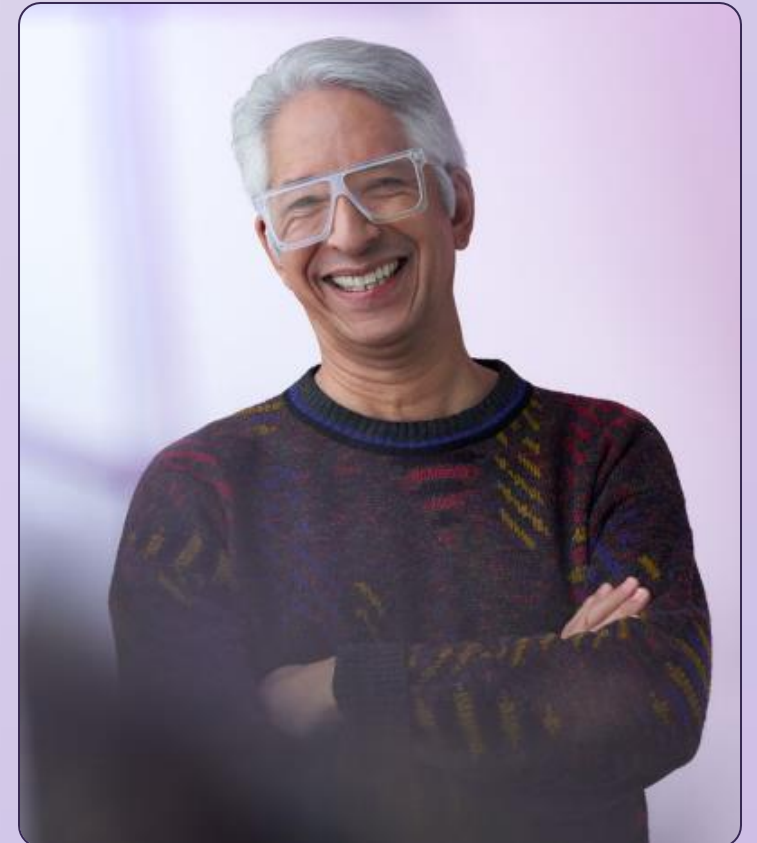
Reactivity is an impulsive response often characterized by knee-jerk reactions.

Signs of reactivity:

- Defensiveness
- Racing heart
- Irritation or feeling insulted
- Flash of anger
- Desire to reject or shut down the other person

Guideposts:

1. Build self-awareness & slow down
2. Resist taking it personally



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)



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. Replace blame with curiosity
2. Identify your own reactivity patterns by keeping a trigger log
3. Create a habit of asking yourself "How am I feeling" and "Why?"

Lesson #2: Listen without agenda

Listening is not just about information gathering. It's about existing with each other in uncertainty.

What is it?

Listening without agenda is a practice where the listener's primary focus is on understanding and empathizing with the speaker rather than problem-solving or explaining.

Guideposts:

1. Trust begins with hearing people
2. This will not be a one-and-done. And it might be frustrating or uncomfortable (that's okay!)



Practical application

What kinds of strategies could you implement to start listening without agenda on your team (e.g., schedule regular check-ins)?

(put your answers in the chat)



Practical application

What kinds of strategies could you implement to start listening without agenda on your team (e.g., schedule regular check-ins)?

(put your answers in the chat)

Ideas to start practicing:

1. Ask which “hat” you should put on: problem-solving or listening.
2. Respond with **questions** (“How can I support you right now?”) or **listening validations** (“That sounds really frustrating.”)
3. Schedule regular check-ins specifically for emotional/psychological well-being.
4. **Use Viva Pulse** to send temperature-check polls to hear how people are doing.



Lesson #3: Model the vulnerability you hope to see

People are more inclined to risk vulnerability when they see it's received well.

What is it?

Vulnerability is the courage to show up and be seen when we cannot control the outcome or when our feelings could be interpreted as a weakness.

Guideposts:

1. Admit your own mistakes
2. Honor the risk of being vulnerable



Practical application

What kinds of strategies could you implement to start modeling vulnerability to your team (e.g., admitting mistakes)?

(put your answers in the chat)



Practical application

What kinds of strategies could you implement to start modeling vulnerability to your team (e.g., schedule regular check-ins)?

(put your answers in the chat)

Ideas to start practicing:

1. Focus on learning rather than the mistake made.
2. Share personal stories.
3. Don't put on your corporate-face. Moments of vulnerability are moments to be human.

Practice with Microsoft 365 Copilot

Microsoft Teams

Copilot Demo

2024-09-12 23:07 UTC

Recorded by

Julie Morris (SHE/HER)

Organized by

Julie Morris

Prompts to practice with Microsoft 365 Copilot

Check your reactivity

I want to practice a skill by role-playing with you. You play the part of my employee, and I am your manager. I'm going to try not to be reactive by being self-reflective and not take things personally. I would like you to ask me hard questions about a decision I made asking the team to work late on a Friday. Your tone is frustrated, and you are doubtful of my decision. Your questions should make it easy for me to feel defensive and frustrated with you. 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.

Listen without agenda

Let's role-play a scenario where you, as my employee, express your concerns about recent layoffs and how they affected your sense of job security. You feel scared, frustrated, and resentful. I'll practice my listening skills by affirming your feelings, asking open-ended questions, and not jumping to problem solving. We'll role play back and forth with you responding and sharing more about how you are feeling until I say the exercise is over. Please begin by sharing your feelings about the situation. After I type 'finish', please provide me with constructive feedback about what went well and how I could improve for the future.

Risk Vulnerability

Imagine I am a team leader who has just made a difficult decision that didn't turn out as well as expected, leading to a setback for your team. I want to address this in my next team meeting to model vulnerability and encourage open communication. You play the role of a team member responding to my approach. I'll start by sharing my feelings about the decision and what I learned. Your role is to listen, ask questions, and share your own thoughts on the situation. We'll go back and forth, with you responding and sharing more about your perspective until I say the exercise is over. Please begin by asking me how the difficult decision went. We will 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...

Dashboard

Focus Areas

Feedback

My Surveys

Reports

Focus Areas

My Focus Areas

Company

FY 2025

Improve Belonging for my team

Mar 31

1

0

Complete

View

Improve Care for my team

Dec 31

0

1/4

Off Track

View

Improve Communication for my team

Dec 31

0

2/3

On Track

View

Improve Empowerment for my team

Dec 31

0

2/3

On Track

View

Current Period

+ New Focus Area

Focus Area

Current Period

+ New Focus Area



How did we do?

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

Please fill answer our two-question poll to let us know how we did.



Register for this month's events

People-Centric AI Transformation Cohort Meeting

[April 15, 8am PDT](#)

Technology Cohort Meeting

[April 22, 9am PDT](#)

Building Psychological Safety Amidst Change

[April 22, 10am PDT](#)

Learning Circles: Q2 Edition

[April 30, 8am PDT](#)

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

[May 8, 8 am 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](#)

Resources

Complete our learning course and receive a badge in psychological safety.
[Check it out here!](#)

Stay up to date on this series and find all of our resources for psychological safety [here!](#)

