5 ways to create ...

Psychological safety in the workplace

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What is *psychological safety?*

The term 'psychological safety' was first coined in 1999 by Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmundson. It can be defined as "a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes."

It's also been proven to work. Tech giants Google conducted an extensive two-year study on what makes a great team. What they found was that being 'psychologically safe' was one of the key components of a high performing team.

So now we know what it is, how do you go about creating psychological safety in your teams? Here are our top tips…

1) Normalise *failure*

Instead of failure being something we avoid, or hide, or leave out of our CVs, creating a culture of psychological safety involves being open and honest about failure.

It's about being vulnerable, reflective, and having honest conversations around what went right and what could have gone better. We all fail from time to time, but it's only when we drive home the message that it's OK that we start to shift the dial on it.

2) Share the *mic*

One recent study found teams where the manager speaks more than 80% of the time are less successful than the ones where people are able to speak in equal proportion.

For a team to be psychologically safe there needs to be real discussion and dialogue, where all voices are heard, rather than people simply being told what to do by the leadership team.

It's only then that different views and perspectives can be heard – and actioned.

3) Celebrate *differences*

Psychological safety celebrates differences and allows people to show up as their authentic selves.

At Insights we believe that everyone has a unique combination of four different colour energies: Fiery Red, Sunshine Yellow, Earth Green, and Cool Blue. Our communication preferences show up in different ways and each combination brings huge value… and makes the team stronger as a whole.
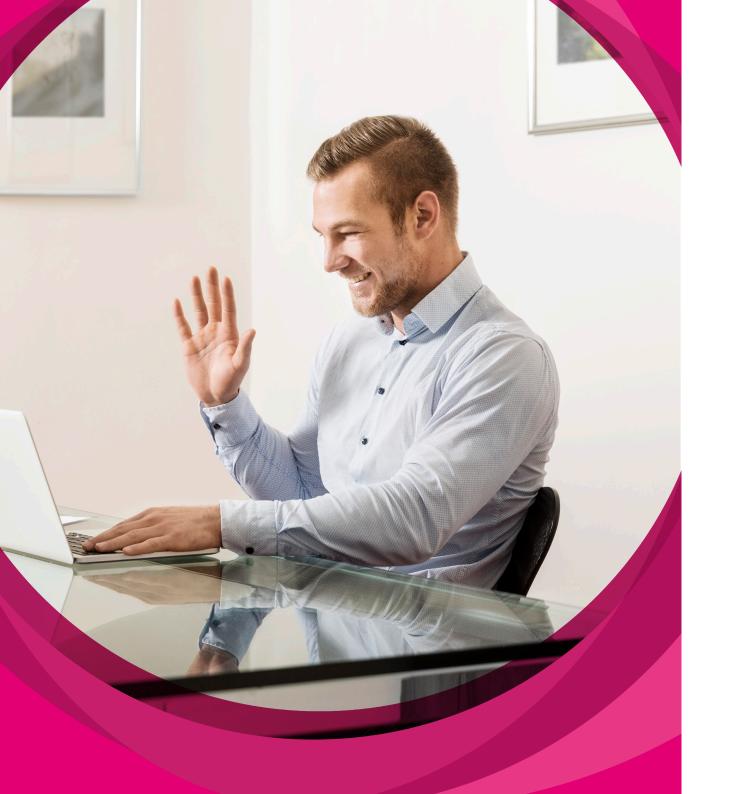
4) Enable your team to *shine*

If you want people to feel safe at work then it's important to think about how you can enable them to show up at their best each day.

How often do they want to check in? What level of autonomy do they need? How can you help them get the most out of meetings?

It'll be different for everyone, but tuning into personal preferences and tailoring your style to fit will help your team to feel safe - and shine.

5) Keep *connecting*

We've probably all heard stats reporting on how high productivity has been since the shift to remote working. That's great – but are we still connecting as well as we did, or has that been allowed to slide?

If your organisation becomes all about work then people stop feeling safe and start burning out. It's never been more important to keep your community alive.

Want to find out more about how you can create *psychological safety* at work?

Get in touch
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