

Psychological safety tips for managers at any level



Psychological safety is a shared belief that the team is a safe place for interpersonal risk-taking. It is the most important characteristic of high-performing teams. As a leader, you can create psychological safety on your team. Use the tips below to help you.

Questions to Consider:

- What could you be wrong about today?
- What could you be more transparent about?
- What risks could you take? Think about your team: What improvements can you make with minimal risk? What do you hope to do later on that may require more planning?

Standards to Set:

- Zero tolerance for lack of respect toward others.
- Assume positive intent.
- Speaking up is the norm, rather than an act of courage.
- Do not assign blame. Instead look for lessons to be learned.

Actions to Take Now:

- **Hold a meeting** with your team ([Meeting-in-a-box](#)). Use a list of questions to understand barriers to safe environments for speaking up and seek good examples employees have seen in action.
- **Ask challenging questions.** Lead your next meeting by asking more than telling.
- **Assign a contrarian role in meetings** (aka “the loyal opposition”). Bring a flag or other symbolic item to set in the middle of the table for this role to be shared during the meeting.
- **Solidify your open-door policy.** Set office hours, or another time, place and structure for team members to speak up.
- **Proactively invite input and ideas.** Directly ask team members what they think during the course of any meeting.
- **Create a process for blameless post mortems** following a major project or meeting. Check out [this helpful approach](#).
- **Build a personal board of directors for yourself.** Include people who are willing to tell you that you’re wrong.
- **Learn more:** See [this article by the Neuroleadership Institute](#) or this [Strategy + Business](#) read by Amy Edmondson.