



How to Foster Psychological Safety on Your Teams

Demonstrate engagement

- Be present and focus on the conversation (close your laptop during meetings)
- Ask questions with the intention of learning from your teammates
- Offer input, be interactive, and show you're listening
- Respond verbally to show engagement (*"That makes sense. Tell us more."*)
- Be aware of your body language; make sure to lean towards or face the person speaking
- Make eye contact to show connection and active listening

Show understanding

- Recap what's been said to confirm mutual understanding/alignment (*"What I heard you say is..."*); then acknowledge areas of agreement, disagreement, and be open to questions within the group
- Validate comments verbally (*"I understand."*, *"I see what you're saying."*)
- Avoid placing blame (*"Why did you do this?"*) and focus on solutions (*"How can we work toward making sure this goes more smoothly next time?"*, *"What can we do together to make a game plan for next time?"*)
- Think about your facial expressions - are they unintentionally negative (a scowl or grimace)?
- Nod your head to demonstrate understanding during conversations/meetings

Be inclusive in interpersonal settings

- Share information about your personal work style and preferences; encourage teammates to do the same
- Be available and approachable to teammates (make time for ad hoc 1:1 conversations, feedback sessions, career coaching)
- Clearly communicate the purpose of ad hoc meetings scheduled outside normal 1:1s/team meetings
- Express gratitude for contributions from the team
- Step in if team members talk negatively about another team member
- Have open body posture (face all team members, don't turn your back to part of the group)
- Build rapport (talk with your teammates about their lives outside of work)



Be inclusive in decision-making

- Solicit input, opinions, and feedback from your teammates
- Don't interrupt or allow interruptions (step in when someone is interrupted and ensure his/her idea is heard)
- Explain the reasoning behind your decisions (live or via email, walk team through how you arrived at a decision)
- Acknowledge input from others (highlight when team members were contributors to a success or decision)

Show confidence and conviction without appearing inflexible

- Manage team discussions (don't allow side conversations in team meetings, make sure conflict isn't personal)
- Use a voice that is clear and audible in a team setting
- Support and represent the team (share team's work with senior leadership, give credit to teammates)
- Invite the team to challenge your perspective and push back
- Model vulnerability; share your personal perspective on work and failures with your teammates
- Encourage teammates to take risks, and demonstrate risk-taking in your own work

Sources

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