

# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

*What it is.*

*What it isn't.*

*How to get it.*

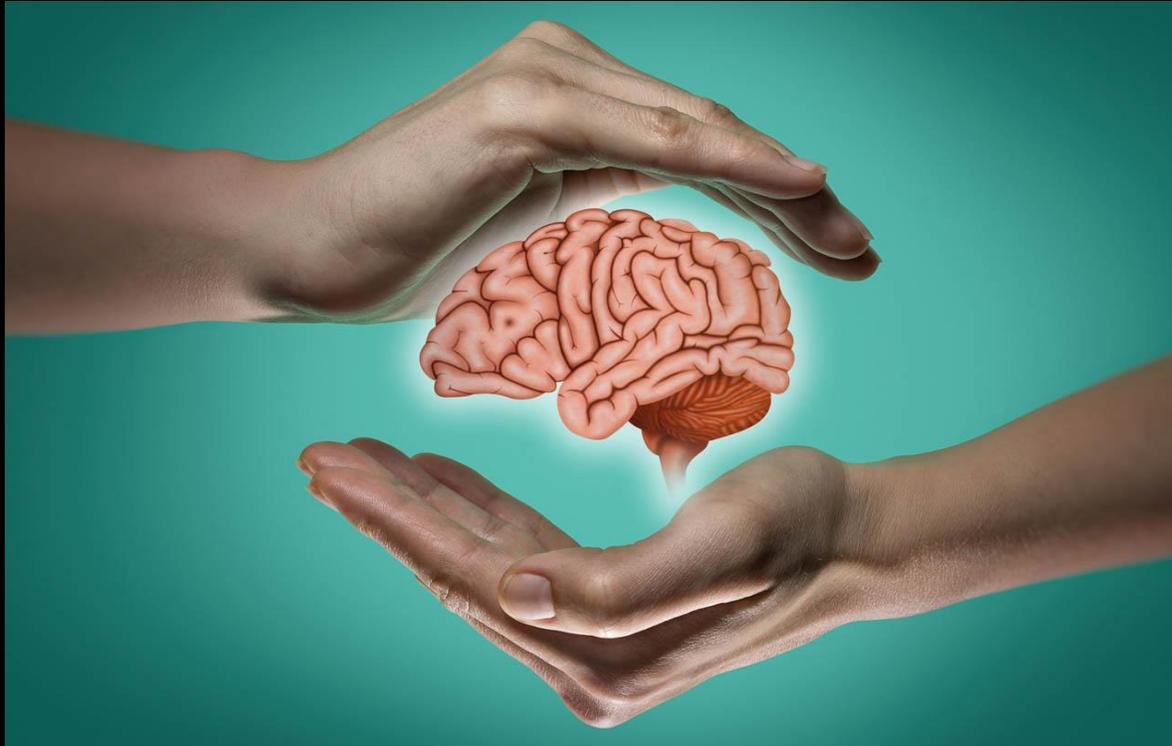
**Marcela Carneiro Millett, MS**

**LMHC, MCAP, CMHP**

*Senior Strategic Planning & Performance Analyst*

Palm Beach County  
Strategic Planning & Performance Management Division





# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

*What it is.*



## AN ENVIRONMENT OF REWARDED VULNERABILITY

*If you're trying to create a culture of excellence,  
then start by creating a foundation with an  
environment that is psychologically safe.*

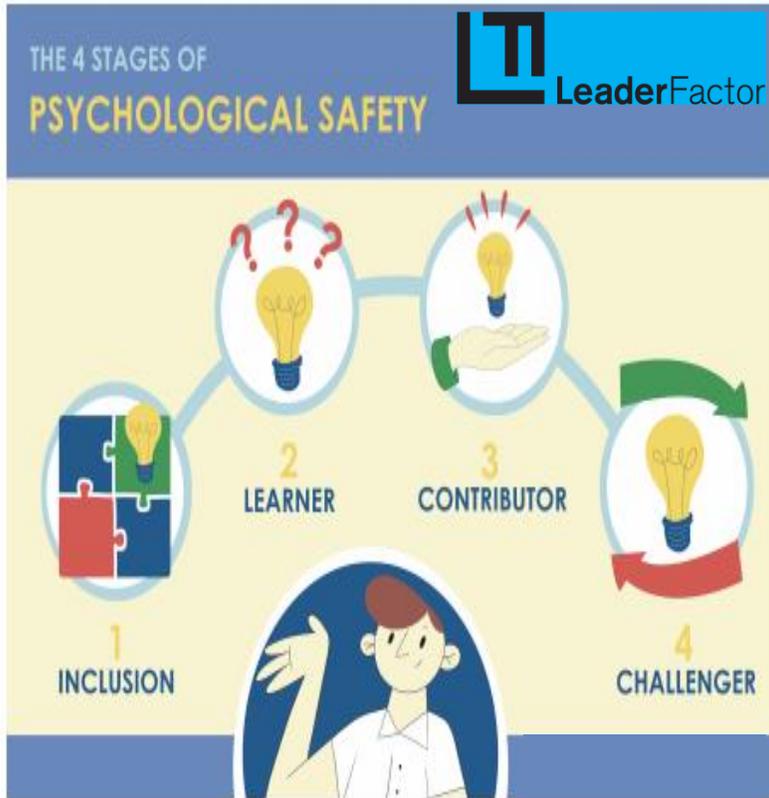
After years of research through “Project Aristotle,” Google discovered that psychological safety is “**the #1 factor in creating high-performing, successful teams.**” It is the key ingredient for producing inclusive environments, and the heart of innovative teams.”

It is where  
*Great Culture Begins!*

- Allows for **transparency** – no hidden problems or toxicity. Builds **trust**.
- High levels of **accountability** drive success.
- Employees **exceed** expectations.
- **Everyone has a voice**, and everyone is listened to.



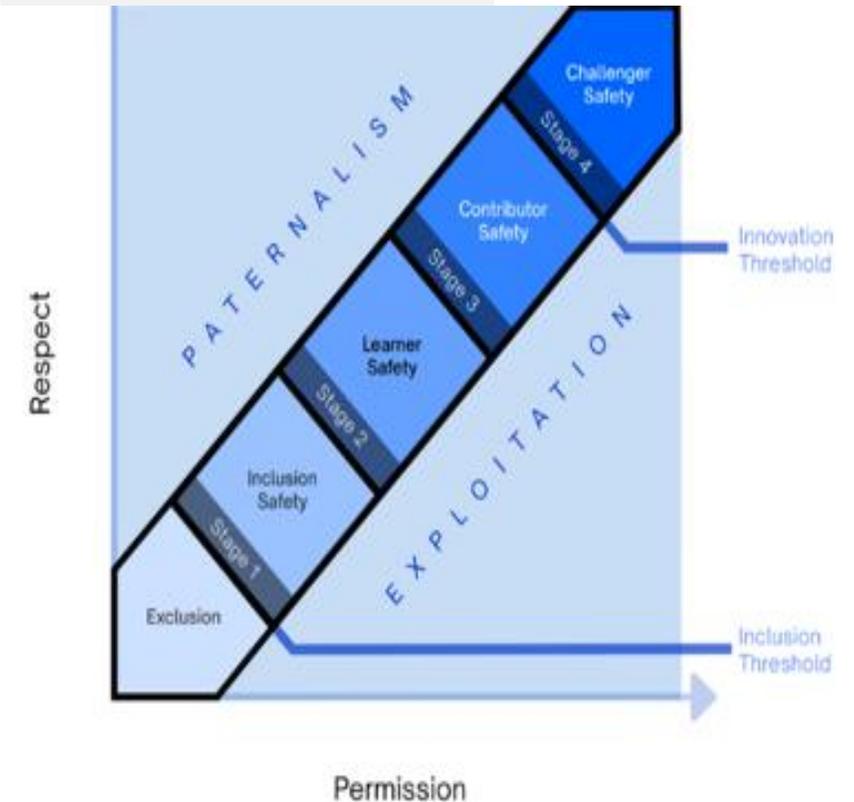
# THE 4 STAGES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY\*



## Universal Pattern of Human Needs in Social Settings

- Inclusion Safety
- Learner Safety
- Contributor Safety
- Challenger Safety

Teams progress through these stages as they intentionally create cultures of rewarded vulnerability and build trust.



\*As defined by Dr. Timothy Clark with Leader Factor

# #1 INCLUSION SAFETY

*Can I be my authentic self?*

## When you have it:



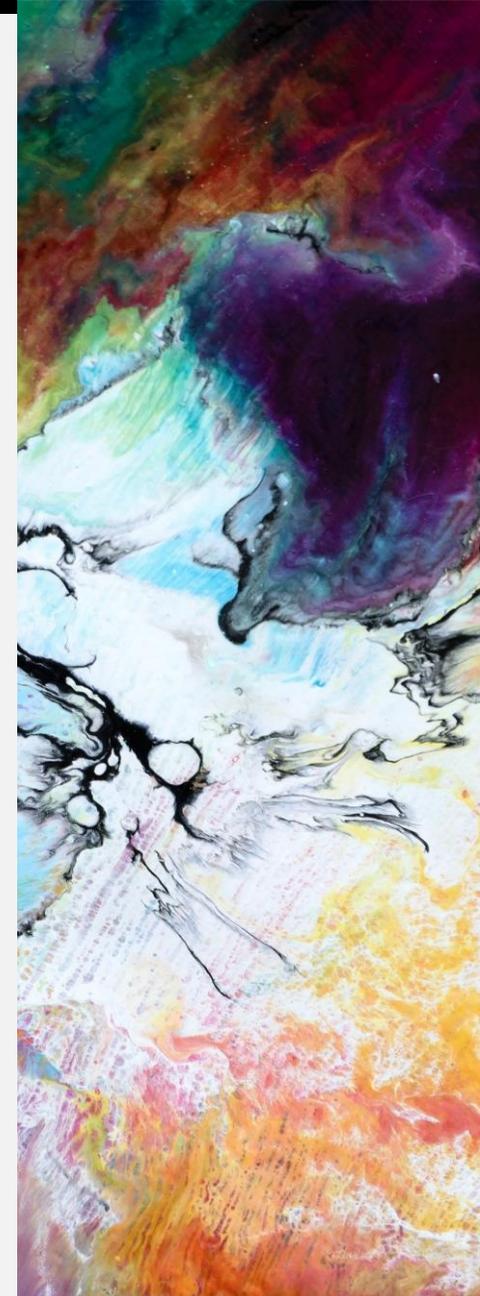
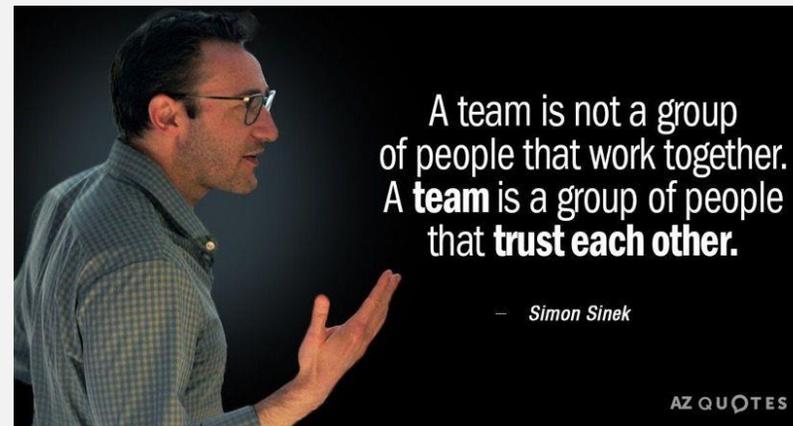
- Inclusion safety allows for everyone to connect and **feel that they belong**. This is true in any social setting – home, school, work.
- The **need to be accepted** overrides the need to be heard.
- You can bring your **whole authentic self** to work – what you see is what you get!
- You **know your team**, and they know you.
- Interact with teammates **without fear** of rejection, embarrassment, or punishment.
- **Increases confidence**, resilience and independence.



## When you don't:



- Excluding people from the team can become **debilitating to performance** and **breaks trust** among members.
- Superiority and **hierarchy dominate**.
- **Barriers are maintained** and reinforced.





# #2 LEARNER SAFETY

*Can I grow?*

## When you have it:



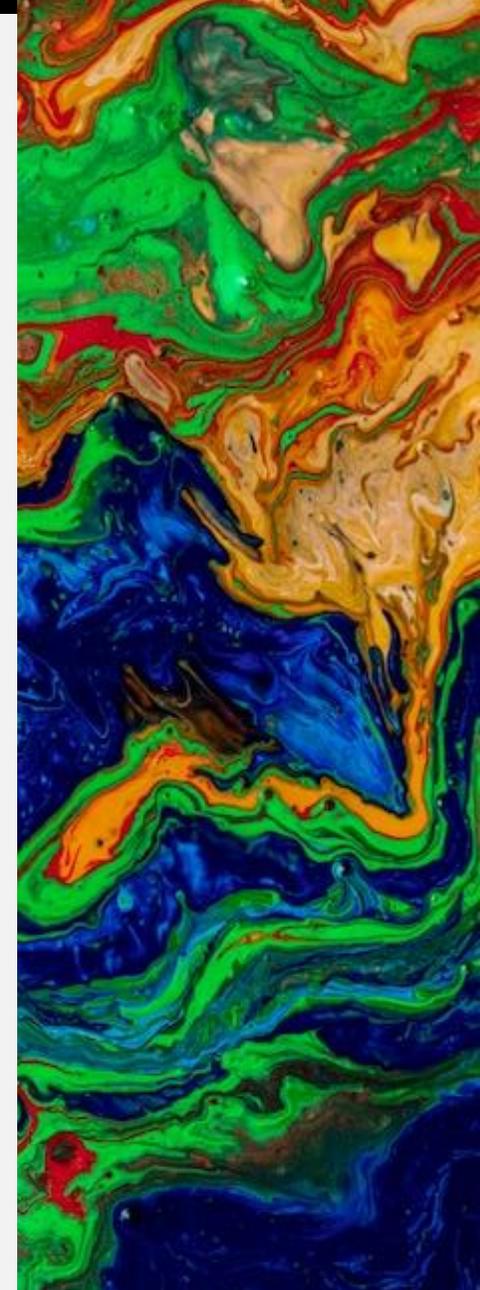
- Learner safety allows us to **feel safe during the learning process**. This is true when we're asking questions, giving and receiving feedback, and **even when we make mistakes**.
- Learning is both intellectual and emotional.
  - When we sense learner safety, we're more willing to be **vulnerable**,
  - **Take more risks** in innovation,
  - **Increase participation** within the team, and
  - Increase the development of **resilience**.
  - Learning is **encouraged** and **celebrated**.
  - Learners are **protected**.



## When you don't:



- Learner safety cannot exist in an environment where **mistakes are associated with fear!**
- When a leader or team punishes failure, the organization will **cease to grow or innovate**.
  - Team **shuts down, creativity decreases**.
  - Team members **execute more than they innovate**.
  - Team members only worries about **personal risks**.





## 4 COMPONENTS TO CULTIVATING A LEARNING CULTURE



**1. ATTRACT**  
& develop agile  
learners.



**2. CREATE**  
a psychologically  
safe environment.



**3. ENCOURAGE**  
better conversations  
& feedback.



**4. PRIORITIZE**  
learning throughout  
the organization.

# #3 CONTRIBUTOR SAFETY

*Am I making a difference?*

When you have it:



- Contributor safety helps us to **make a difference** and **provide meaningful contributions**. It allows us to use our full skills and abilities to **add value** to the team.
- When we create contributor safety for others, **we empower them with autonomy**, guidance, and encouragement in exchange for team effort and results.
  - Your **team thrives** under outcome accountability.
  - **Roles are clear.**
  - Small **wins are celebrated.**

CONTRIBUTION

When you don't:

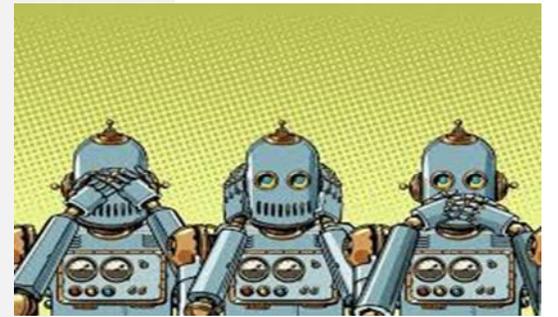


- Without contributor safety, the team's desires to add value **diminish significantly!**
- Team members **become task masters** and work **without passion or energy.**
  - Leaders **micromanage** and don't allow team to reach **full potential.**
  - Autonomy is given with **little to no guidance.**
  - Team members feel like **"benchwarmers" compared to the leaders.**

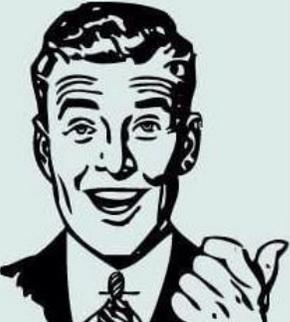




 <p>Select the right team members and leadership approach</p>	 <p>Establish project team mental models</p>	 <p>Establish a psychologically safe project environment</p>	 <p>Foster team cohesion and moderate conflicts constructively</p>	 <p>Conduct team performance feedback sessions</p>
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I hire professional staff, then micro manage them until they walk out the door.



# #4 CHALLENGER SAFETY

*Can I be candid about change?*

When you have it:



- Challenger safety allows us to **question and challenge the status quo without retaliation.**
- It helps us to make things better.
- When we create an environment where there is **permission for respectful disagreement** and dissent, it **opens up opportunities** for process improvement, advancement and ingenuity.
  - Your **team can speak up** when there is an opportunity to make improvements.
  - People **disagree productively.**
  - Challenge the status quo.
  - **No pressure to conform** for fear of damaging reputation.
  - Truth is a source of **competitive advantage.**

When you don't:



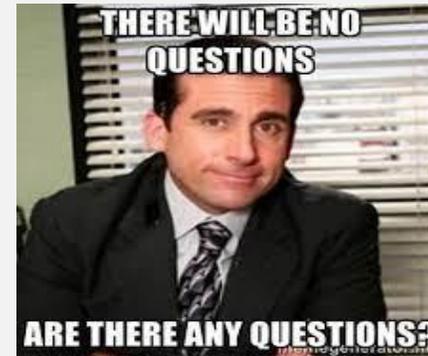
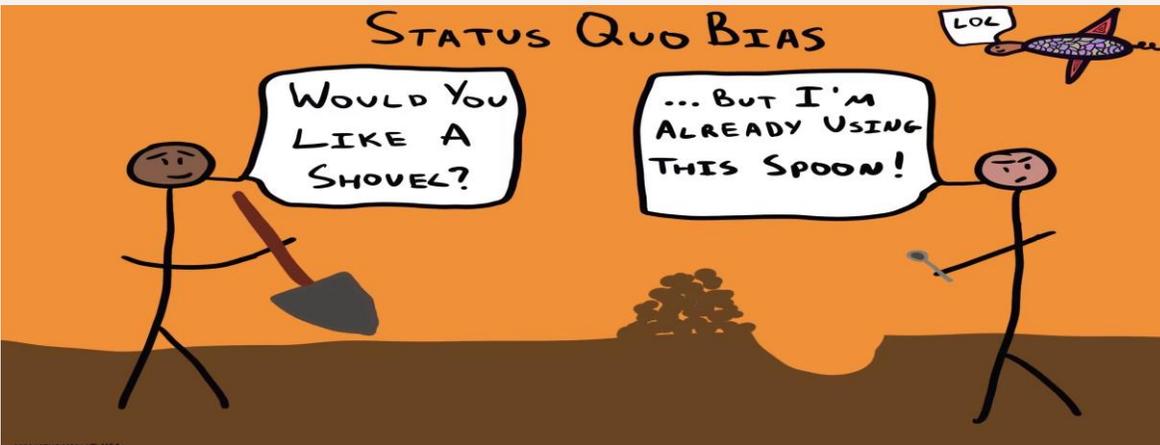
- If challenger safety is not present, the **organization will remain in the same failure patterns** and won't be able to keep up with the competition!
  - **Challengers are punished** for their bravery and candor.
  - **Questions are not allowed.** "I don't pay you to think! I pay you to do!"
  - Teams **fall silent.**





Put another way, there are four good ways we can try to disagree better:

1. Improve communication.
2. Question the mental models that inform our thinking, and avoid cognitive traps.
3. Hone our ability to stay calm and mentally agile during tension.
4. Organize the conversation differently.





**WHAT IS THE #1 FACTOR IN CREATING HIGH-PERFORMING SUCCESSFUL TEAMS?**

- A Emotional Safety
- B Empathy
- C Psychological Safety
-  Psychological Safety



**PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY HAS HOW MANY STAGES?**

- A 2
- B 4
- C 6
-  4

# IN SUMMARY: THE 4 STAGES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



## Stage One: Inclusion Safety

Can I be my authentic self?  
Inclusion safety satisfies the basic human need to connect and belong. In this stage worth precedes worthiness. All you have to do to qualify for inclusion safety is be human and harmless.



## Stage Two: Learner Safety

Can I grow? Learner safety satisfies the basic human need to learn and grow. In this stage, fear is detached from mistakes, and mistakes are rewarded as part of the learning process. To qualify for learner safety you must engage in the learning process.



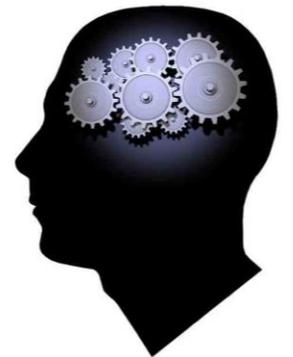
## Stage Three: Contributor Safety

Can I create value? Contributor safety satisfies the basic human need to make a difference and offer meaningful contributions. When we create contributor safety for others, we empower them with autonomy, guidance, and encouragement in exchange for effort and results.



## Stage Four: Challenger Safety

Can I be candid about change?  
Challenger safety satisfies the basic human need to make things better. When we create challenger safety, we give air cover (protection) in exchange for candor.





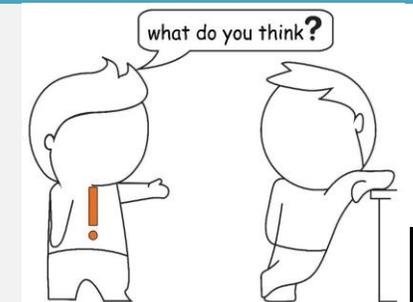
# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

*What it isn't.*

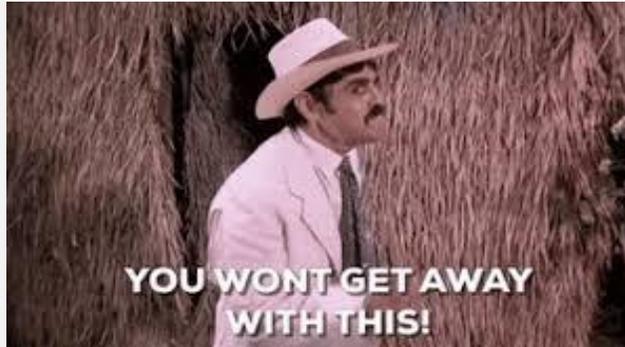
# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IS NOT...



- Doing and saying whatever you want **without having consequences**.
  - Since fear and intimidation are no longer used when there is psychological safety in place, it does **not mean teams can stop performing**.
  - Someone will still have to pick up the slack, which **creates resentment**.
- Does **not give you a new level of autonomy** you didn't have before.
  - Autonomy is still earned through competence and delivering results.
- **Not consensus-decision making**.
  - Reality is that not everyone gets a vote or seat at the table. There are still topics and decisions that come to one final person's say to represent all. The **key is that the leader is trusted** and respected to think of the whole team.
  - **Can't create group-think**... Can lead to poor decision-making.



# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IS NOT...



- It is not about **tattling**.
- It is **not simply about being nice**.
  - When niceness goes too far, it can become fake and invokes "**coddling**."
  - Coddling does not allow for growth – **growth happens outside comfort zone**.
- It is not about **perfect harmony** and agreement within the team.
  - *We're not all going to join hands and start singing "Kumbaya!"*
- It is **not an automatic subscription to political correctness**.
  - Implies **respect and sensitivity for personal views**, feelings, demographics, and human attributes **but NOT a political agenda**.
  - Not attached to any one person, affiliation, policy, or organization.



# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IS NOT...

## 1. Safety is not the same as comfort.

- The job of a leader is not to protect their team from discomfort. It's to protect them from harm—and to help motivate them to push through the discomfort and harness it for growth.

## 2. Disagreement is not the same as danger, and ideas are not the same as violence.

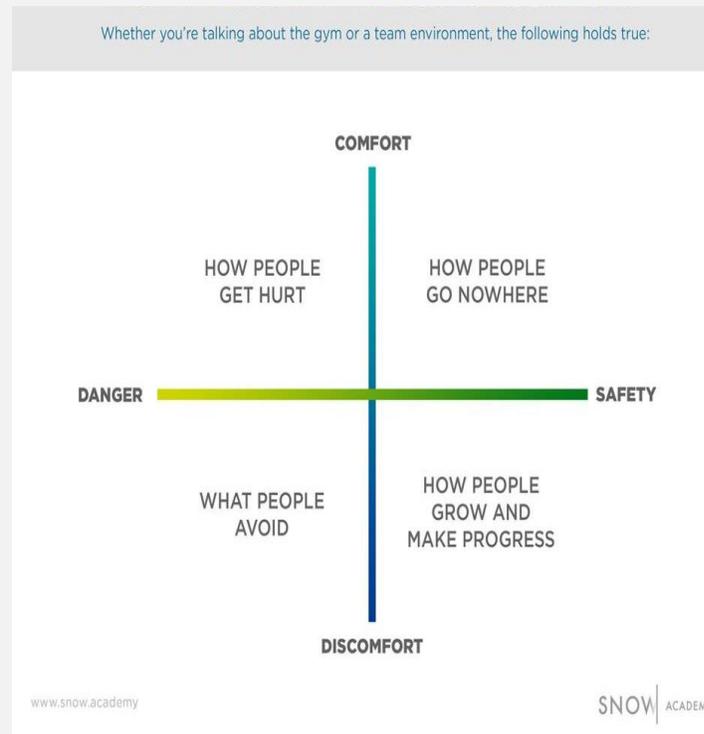
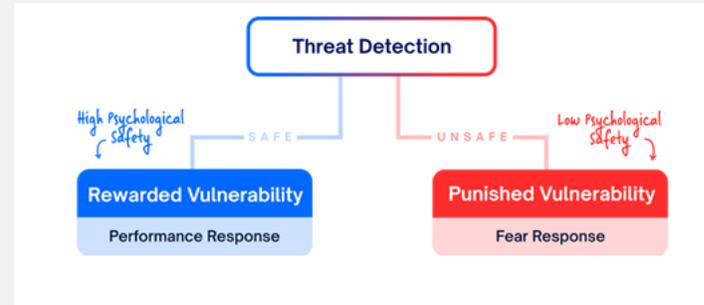
- The most reliable way to overcome psychological pain and discomfort is not to avoid it; it's to gradually diminish the effects of discomfort by systematic exposure.

## 3. Risky business...taking risks only makes sense when it helps the team.

- Providing new ideas is uncomfortable but helps the team become more innovative and inclusive. Commit to treating each other “charitably.”

## 4. Feeling safe enough to hurt people means there is no safety.

- In a team environment, psychological safety actually means that you know that things you say and do won't be used against you... *as long as you're not being malicious.*



### The Performance Response

When our acts of vulnerability are met with rewarded vulnerability, instead of punished vulnerability, we experience what's called a blue zone. In blue zones, we can show up as our authentic selves. We're finally allowed to thrive, so we give our discretionary effort, seek development opportunities, and work towards innovation, all under a foundation of inclusion.

### The Fear Response

Negative interactions, which we call acts of punished vulnerability, bring out a natural fear response called a red zone. Essentially, we're in survival mode. We avoid disruption, throw ourselves into executive function, and do everything in our power to keep the boat steady and sailing. We even edit and modify our authentic selves to become someone who can't be punished for who we are.



**TRUE OR FALSE? PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY ALLOWS A PERSON TO DO AND SAY WHATEVER THEY WANT.**

**A** True

**B** False

 **False** – there are still consequences for doing/saying negative things. Teams can't just stop performing and people don't automatically become self-autonomous.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IS:

- A** Risky business
- B** The same as comfort
- C** Not necessary
-  **Risky business** - taking risks only makes sense when it helps the team.



# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

*How to get it.*

# HOW DO I BUILD PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AT WORK?

## 1. Approach your culture by design, not by default.

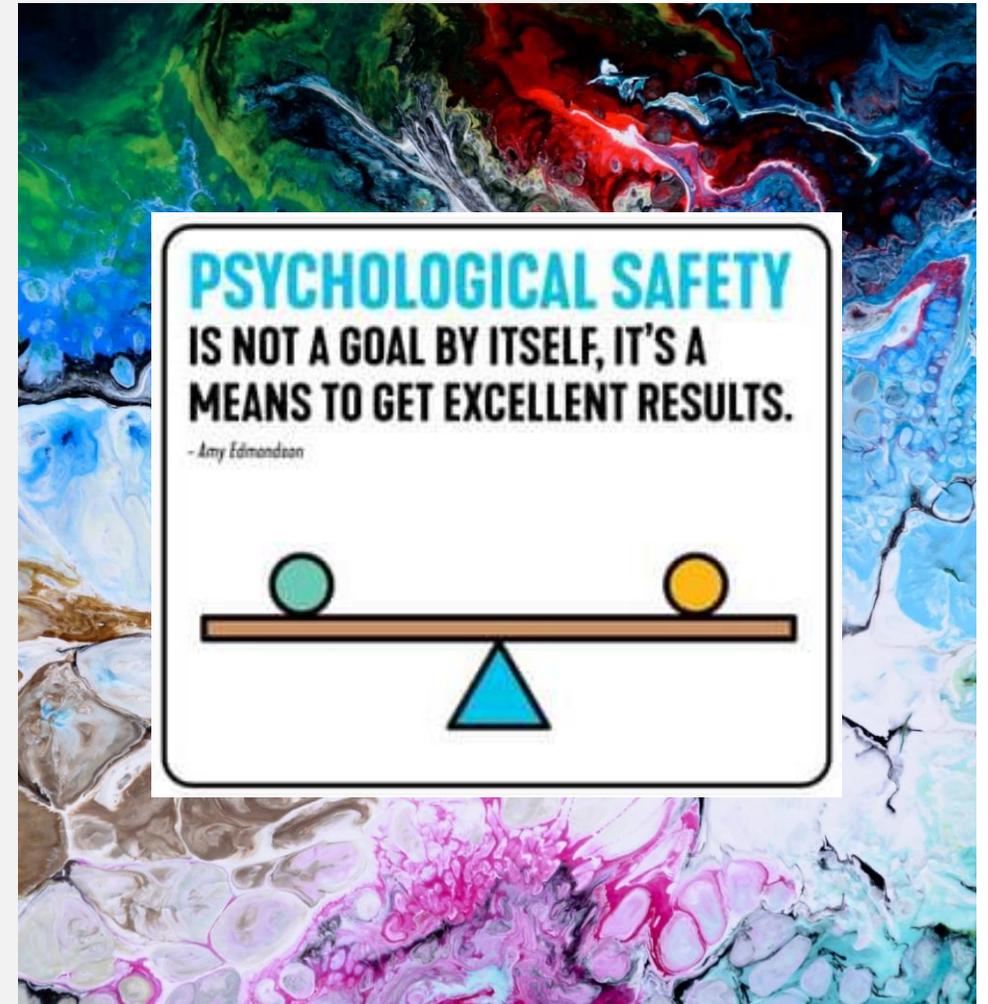
- Psychological safety doesn't just happen—but culture does! It's either the default culture, or the one you're actively trying to create.
- Default cultures are not inclusive or innovative and have a myriad of hidden problems.

## 2. Accept your role as a “Cultural architect.”

- You must approach your culture with intentionality and build it, no matter your position, your title, or your authority.

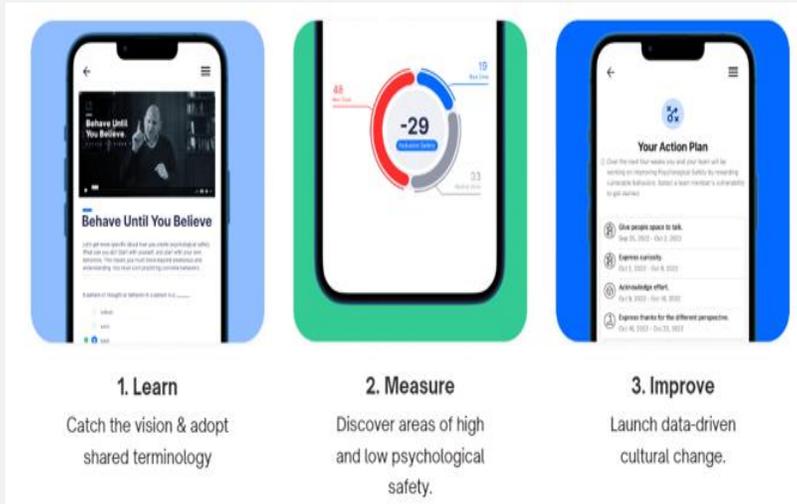
## 3. Practice modeling and rewarding vulnerability.

- You must model and reward acts of vulnerability if you want to improve psychological safety in your organization.



# HOW DO I BUILD PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AT WORK?

## Three steps to put Psychological Safety into Action



### 1. Learn

- Get resources, such as “The Complete Guide to Psychological Safety” found on the Leader Factor website.
- Complete a self-assessment and truly ask yourself if you provide a psychologically safe environment for your team...are folks afraid of you? Do you have an “open door policy” but never really invite people in?

### 2. Measure

- Look for areas where there are high levels of psychological safety and discover what is working well. Copy it!
- Conversely, where are levels low? What needs to be implemented to increase those levels?

### 3. Improve

- Use the data to create a strategic plan, goals, objectives...then put it into action!
  - *Walk the walk!*



# TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION...

## How a CEO Creates Psychological Safety in the Room

### 1. Assign someone else to conduct the meeting.

Visibly redistribute power by leveling yourself down to be more of a player-coach.

### 2. Don't sit at the head of the table.

In many physical settings, seating reflects the hierarchy, but you can disrupt those rituals.

### 3. Create warmth and informality.

Create an atmosphere of psychological safety to convey warmth and encourage collaboration.

### 4. Model acts of vulnerability.

You have a first-mover obligation to model acts of vulnerability to give others permission to do the same.

### 5. Stimulate inquiry before advocacy.

If you move from asking questions to advocating your position too soon, it softly censors your team and signals the end of the discussion.

### 6. Reward challenges to the status quo.

If you encourage it, your team can help you see your blind spots and tell you when you're missing.

### 7. Push back with humor and enthusiasm.

Humor and enthusiasm inject excitement into the process and encourage rigorous debate.

### 8. Buffer strong personalities.

Your job is to create a shame- and embarrassment-free environment.

### 9. Listen and pause.

When you do this in the presence of other members of your organization, you send a clear message that the individual matters.

### 10. Give highly targeted praise and recognition.

Don't withhold or be stingy with praise or recognition. Just give it in the moment with an explanation and genuine encouragement.

## 7 Questions to Assess Your Personal Impact on Psychological Safety.

To assess your personal impact on the psychological safety of your team, ask yourself the following seven questions:

**1. Presence:** Your presence has an impact on the tone and tenor of a meeting. When you enter a room, does your influence warm or chill the air?

**2. Collaboration:** When you collaborate with your peers, does your influence accelerate or decelerate the speed of discovery and innovation?

**3. Feedback:** Fear breaks the feedback loop. If there's pervasive fear, people filter or withhold feedback. Does your influence increase or restrict the flow of feedback?

**4. Inquiry:** Telling has a tendency to shut people down, while asking has tendency to draw people out. Does your influence draw people out or shut them down?

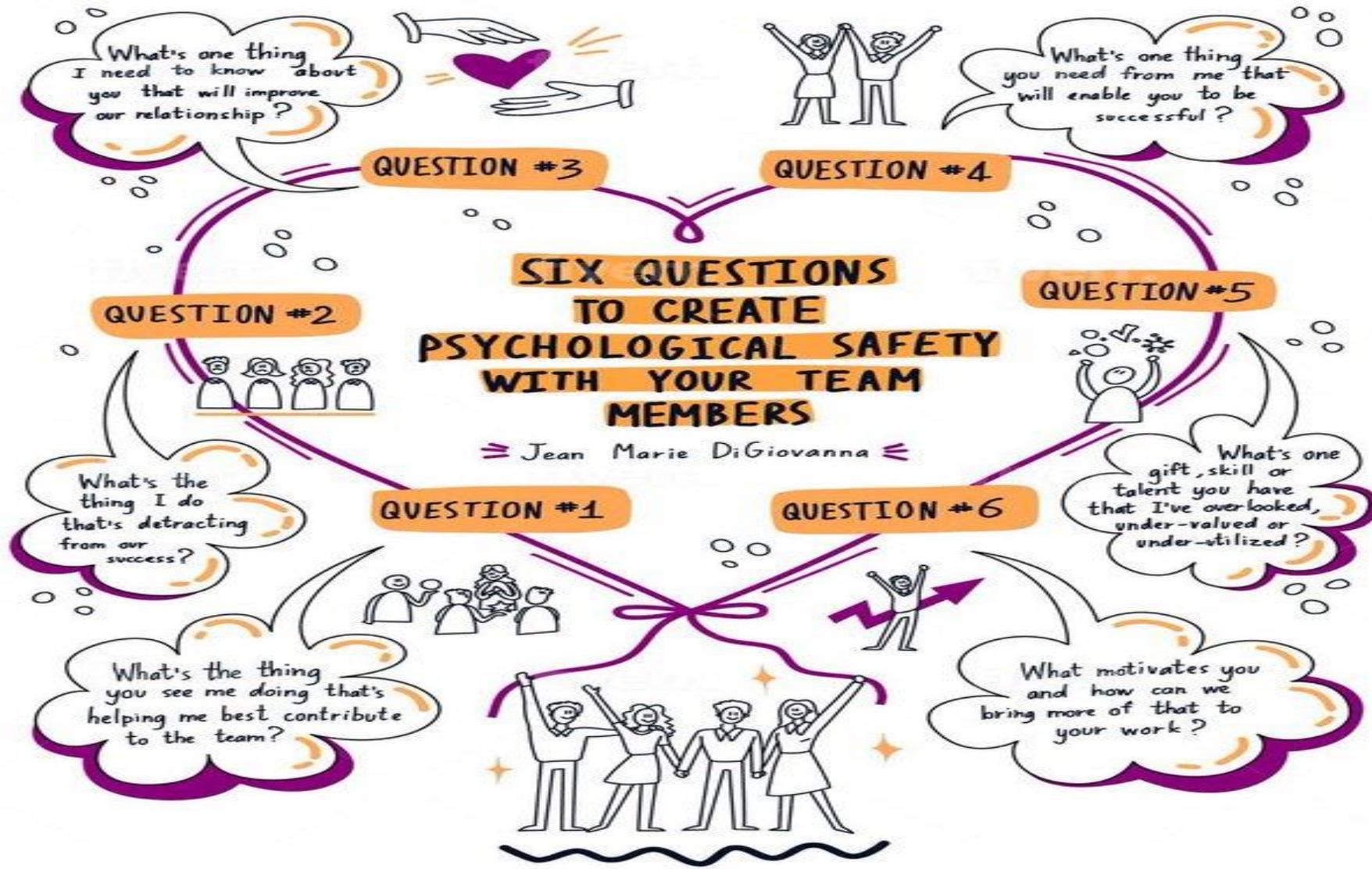
**5. Dissent:** Dissent is critical to making good decisions by thinking carefully about different potential courses of action. Do you encourage and reward dissent or discourage and punish dissent?

**6. Mistakes:** Mistakes are clinical material for learning and progress. Do you celebrate mistakes and the lessons learned or overreact and marginalize those who make them?

**7. Unvarnished Truth:** No one likes to hear the unvarnished truth when it's unflattering. And yet we need to hear it or suffer the consequences of willful blindness. Can people tell you what you don't want to hear when you don't want to hear it?

Now go find a trusted advisor who can tell you the truth and reveal any blindspots related to these questions.





# WHAT PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY LOOKS LIKE

**Confidence and comfort**  
Ability to share ideas and take risks without feeling insecure or embarrassed.



THANKS TO PINKSUPERSTAR AND PCHVECTOR OF FREEM

**Trust and camaraderie**  
Feeling accepted and at ease with one another and having the freedom to be oneself.



BOHEI.COM





## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY CAN BE BUILT IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT THROUGH THE FOLLOWING:

- A** Intentionally creating a culture of inclusivity
- B** Role modeling and rewarding acts of vulnerability
- C** Assessing your personal impact on Psychological Safety
- All of the above!**

# RESOURCES

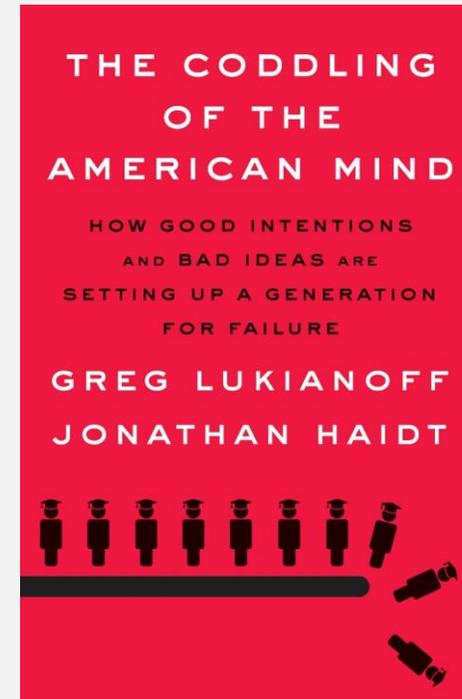
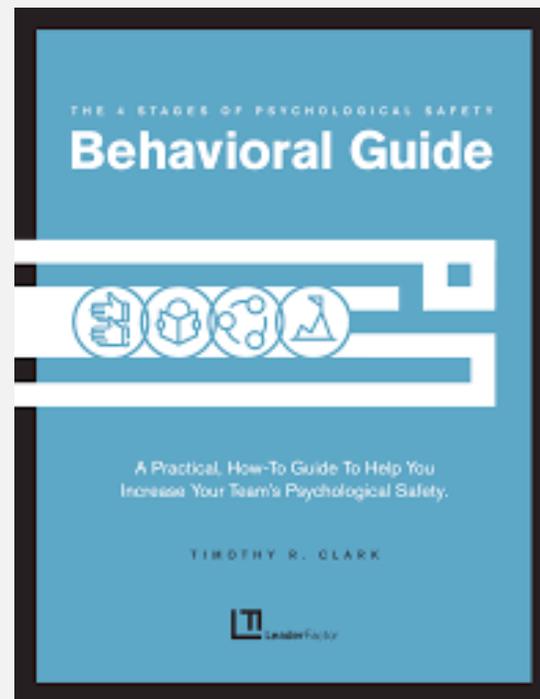
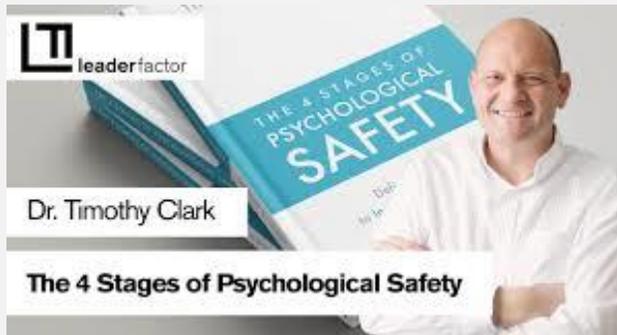
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/shanesnow/2020/05/04/how-psychological-safety-actually-works/?sh=4d6d7494f864>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01581/full>

[Shane Snow: Author, Explorer, Teamwork & Storytelling Keynote Speaker](#)

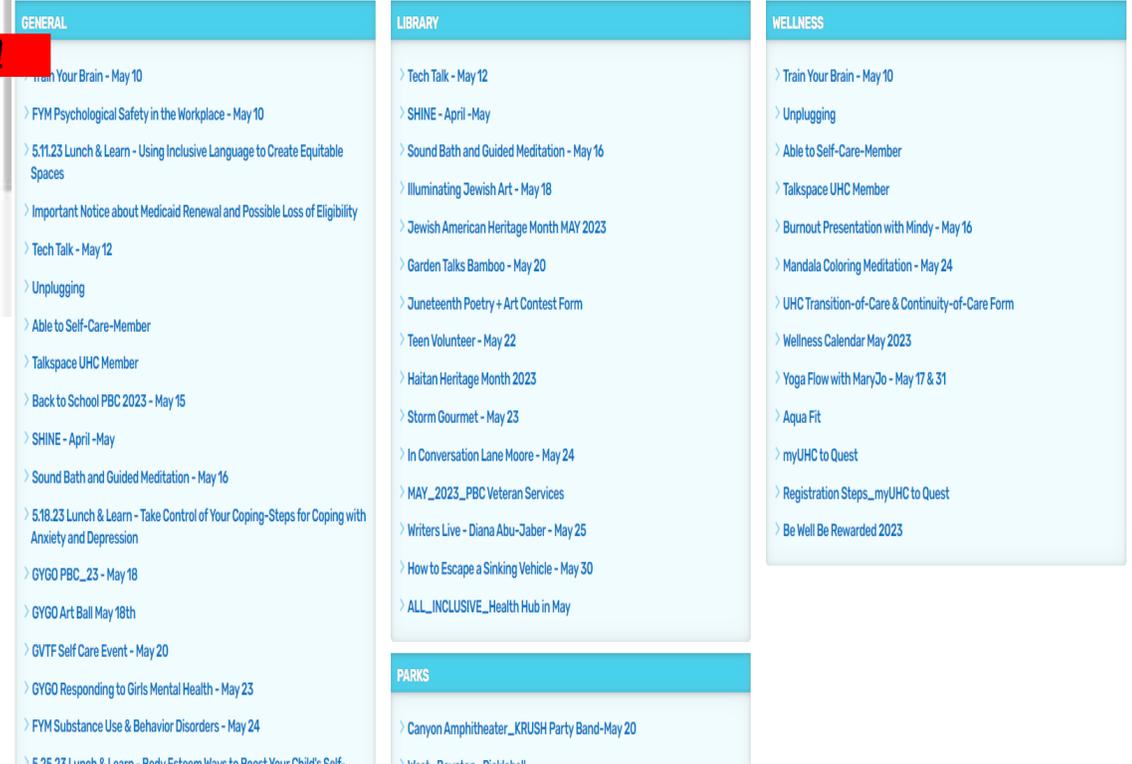
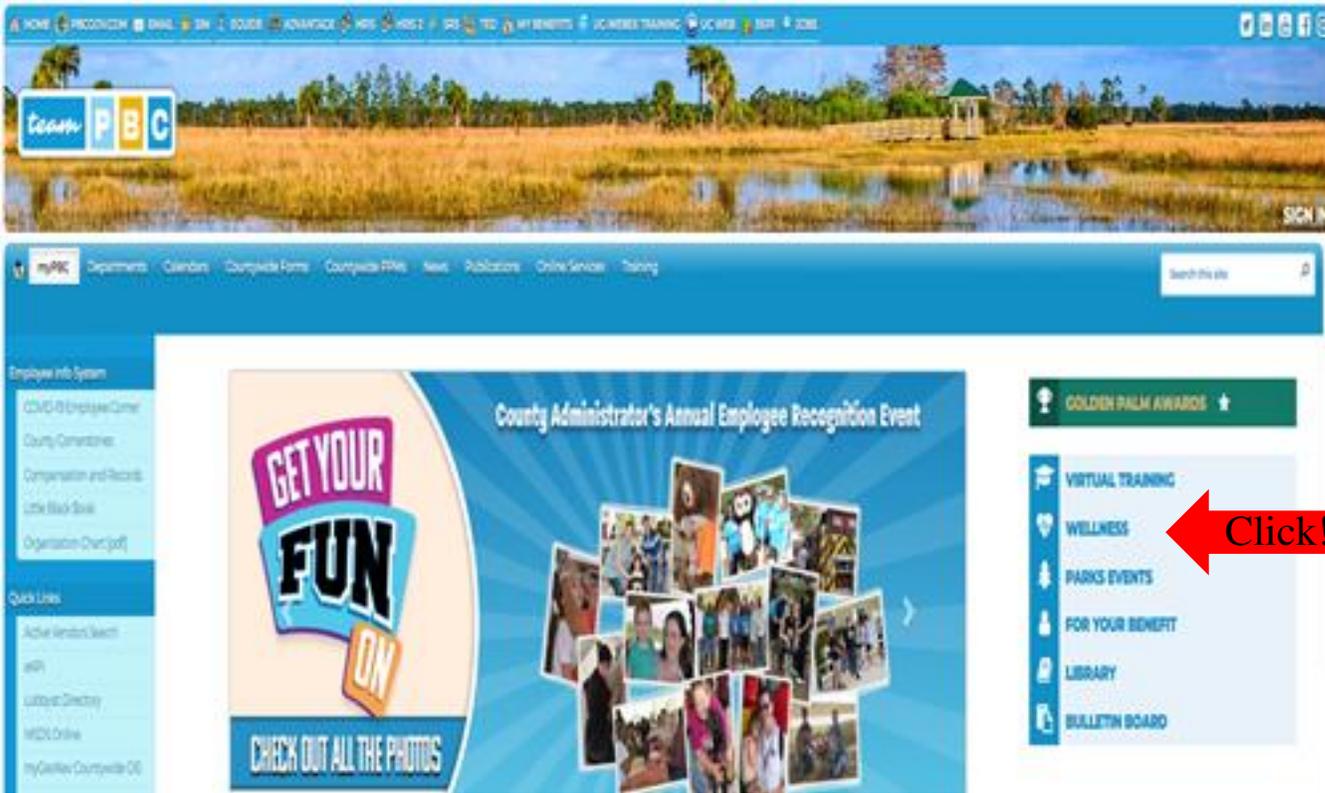
<https://www.leaderfactor.com/psychological-safety>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUePfXsuHLE>



Empathetic leadership means having the ability to understand the needs of others and being aware of their feelings and thoughts. Our research found that managers who practiced empathetic leadership toward direct reports were viewed as better performers by their bosses.





**Resources for County employees found on the intranet (Home Page). Click on “Wellness” and then select resources that show up on the next page.**

**Enjoy!**



Palm Beach County  
Youth Services Department  
Residential Treatment & Family Counseling Division  
Education and Training Center  
PRESENTS



## Lunch & Learn

Using Inclusive Language  
to Create Equitable Spaces

Presenter: Danniella Jones, Psy.D.



### REGISTRATION LINK:

[HTTPS://  
WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/  
WX2Q2YR](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WX2Q2YR)

If you have trouble accessing  
the survey, please copy the  
link and paste it directly into  
your browser

### Date & Location

THURSDAY,  
MAY 11, 2023  
12:00 pm—1:00 pm  
ZOOM REMOTE VIDEO  
CONFERENCE

Once registration is  
confirmed, link to access  
the training will be  
provided



There is no cost associated with this program.

### Description

While the words we use may seem harmless, the way we speak to and about each other influences how we treat each other. According to the Linguistic Society of America (2016), "inclusive language acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities." This presentation will aim to explain the relationship between societal norms, bias, and language as well as describe the importance of using inclusive language. Finally, the presentation will provide strategies that promote inclusive environments through language.



## Say hello to Self Care from AbleTo

On-demand access to self-help for stress and emotional well-being

Get access to self-care techniques, coping tools, meditations and more—anytime, anywhere. With Self Care, you'll get personalized content that's designed to help you boost your mood and shift your perspectives. Tap into tools created by clinicians that are suggested for you based on your responses to a short, optional assessment. Self Care is here to help you feel better—and it's available at no additional cost to you.



#### Daily mood tracking

Answer daily questions to record your current mood, identify patterns and self-assess your progress.



#### Meditation tools

Explore classic methods of relaxation—like deep breathing and positive visualization—in the moment when you need them.



#### Collections

Build life skills with curated content, tools and resources for the stuff that matters most to you—from work life balance to sleep, and much more.



#### Personalized roadmap

Track your progress, set goals and make strides through weekly check-ins—Self Care helps you create a roadmap to support your self-guided journey to better mental health.



### Ready to get started?

- Visit [ableto.com/begin](https://ableto.com/begin)
- Have your health plan ID handy
- Follow the steps to sign up
- Begin your self-care program

Learn more

Visit [ableto.com/begin](https://ableto.com/begin) > Have your health plan ID handy

[linktree.com/pbcmmentalhealth](https://linktree.com/pbcmmentalhealth)

@pbcmmentalhealth

Substance Use & Mental Health Services are available! We would love to connect!

Office of Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorders

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Passport to Health

Parks & Recreation

Community Development

Criminal Justice

Youth Services

Public Safety

Fire Rescue - M...

Palm Beach County Library System

Resource Guide for Substance Use & Mental Health

Palm Tran can bring you to us!

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Stamp Out the Stigma

JOIN US

GET YOUR GREEN ON



### Quick Reference Resource Guide Substance Use & Mental Health Services

Created by:  
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**Our Mission:** To drive a continuous improvement culture of excellence that achieves a measurably high level of public satisfaction.

Information provided by Strategic Planning and Performance Management's Substance Use and Behavior Disorders Cross-Departmental Team

## PBC EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

# MAY 2023



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1 STAMP OUT STIGMA	2 YSD PRESENTS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION VIA ZOOM 12PM-1PM	3	LUNCH WITH UHC - FREE FOOD! 12-1PM AQUA-FIT 5:45PM AND 6:30PM	5	May is Mental Health Awareness Month! Stamp out the stigma with PBC this month by wearing green and participating in a series of mental well-being initiatives offered by the PBC Employee Wellness Program.	
8	9	10 TRAIN YOUR BRAIN: NOURISH YOUR MIND WITH MINDY - MOUNTS AUDITORIUM AND LIVESTREAM 12PM-1PM	11 AQUA-FIT 5:45PM AND 6:30PM SANTALUCES AQUATIC COMPLEX POOL 6750 LAMRENCE RD LANTANA, FL 33462	12		
15 	16 EXTINGUISHING EMPLOYEE BURNOUT WITH MINDY 12-1PM MOUNTS AUDITORIUM AND LIVESTREAM	17 YOGA WITH MARTJO LIVESTREAM 6PM-7PM	18 Get Your Green On! AQUA-FIT 5:45PM AND 6:30PM	19	20	21
22 BIOMETRIC SCREENINGS	23	24 MANDALA COLORING MEDITATION WITH EAP	25 AQUA-FIT 5:45PM AND 6:30PM SANTALUCES AQUATIC	26	SIGN UP FOR YSD LUNCH & LEARNS HERE: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WX2Q2YR">HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/WX2Q2YR</a>	



# THANK YOU!

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🔗 <https://discover.pbcgov.org/ofmb/Pages/Performance-Management.aspx>



**Our Mission:** To drive a continuous improvement culture of excellence that achieves a measurably high level of public satisfaction.

