

# FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

## MODULE 2: PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



**Slide:** Psychological Safety



**Slide Goal:** Introduce the module topic.

**Content Notes:** Psychological safety is focused on creating the climate for us to feel comfortable in our teams. Members of a psychologically safe team feel safe and encouraged to share ideas and questions. We'll learn more about it in this session.

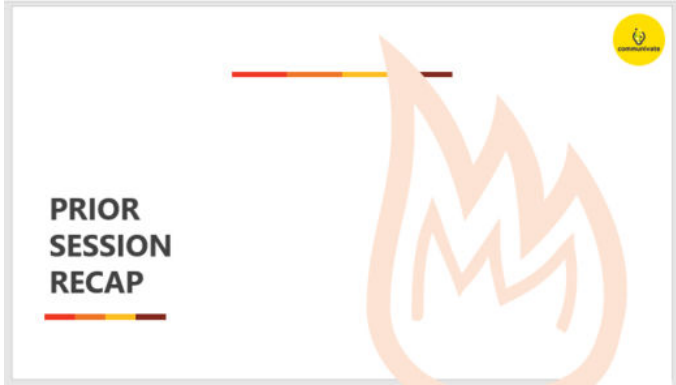
**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Prior Session Recap



**Slide Goal:** Revisit discussion of TAG from last session

**Content Notes:** Revisit goals & commitments to action from last session. – “How’s it going?”

If applicable, discuss facilitators and barriers to goal related to theme.

**Adapting to Team’s Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Team Experience Modules



**Slide Goal:** Briefly remind team members of the experience module topics/order.

**Content Notes:**

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Warm-Up



**Slide Goal:** Get the team excited about the session

**Content Notes:**

**Warm-up: something short, fun, and energizing, related to content**

- **Exercise Title:** One word at a time
- **Exercise Objective/Debrief Points:** Players experience team identity by creating a unique story, one word at a time
  - Emphasize conversational turn taking & listening to others (can't pick your word if you don't listen to the words before you)
- **Goals:** To be in the moment at all times. To let go of the need to figure out the ending or steer the outcome. To experience trusting that the end results will be correct however it turns out
- **Process:** see this website for good, full instructions:  
<https://www.izygy.com/images/file/playingalong-oneword.pdf>

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Heat Up



**Slide Goal:** Begin session content

**Content Notes:**

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed


**Coach Notes:**




**Slide:** Module Objectives

**MODULE OBJECTIVES**

- 1 LEARN**  
Learn what psychological safety is and the components of a psychologically safe team
- 2 UNDERSTAND**  
Understand the importance of psychological safety for creating an inclusive team climate
- 3 REFLECT**  
Consider our learnings in the context of our current team's behaviors – How is our psychological safety?
- 4 PLAN**  
Create action plans to apply today's learnings to our daily individual and team activities





**Slide Goal:** Tell them what they will learn

**Content Notes:**

1. Learn what psychological safety is and the components of a psychologically safe team
2. Understand the importance of psychological safety for creating an inclusive team climate
3. Consider our learnings in the context of our current team's behaviors – How is our psychological safety?
4. Create action plans to apply today's learnings to our daily individual and team activities

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Defining the "Perfect Team"



**Slide Goal:** Go over what good teams look like.

**Content Notes:** Google set out to answer the question, but let's give it our own try first.

Have the team make a list. What is a perfect team?

- What do you think of?
- Who is on the team?
- Intelligence? Personalities? Experience?

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-its-quest-to-build-the-perfect-team.html>

Article summary:

- There's no escaping teams in today's workforce... so how do we make the best of them? Are the best teams made up of those with similar personalities? Workstyles? How do they interact?
- Google reviewed the research and studied 180 of their own teams.
- No strong data patterns were found that showed personality, skills, or backgrounds made any difference. "the 'who' part of the equation didn't seem to matter"
- What did matter? Group Norms. [find a specific definition not from NYT]. Things that are described as "unwritten rules" and things that are part of the "team's culture."
- After following the teams for more than a year, Project Aristotle researchers concluded that understanding and influencing group norms were the keys to improving Google's teams. But which norms matter most? Which norms are the one successful teams share?
  - Equality in conversational turn-taking – in good teams, all members speak in roughly the same proportion. It doesn't have to be the same from assignment to assignment, but at the end of the day, it evens out to roughly the same amount per person.





- Members have high average social sensitivity – skilled at intuiting how others feel based on their tone of voice, expressions, and nonverbal cues.
- Both are aspects of psych safety: “A sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject, or punish someone for speaking up.” – Edmondson, 1999. “A team climate characterized by interpersonal trust and mutual respect in which people are comfortable being themselves.”
- What distinguishes “good” teams from dysfunctional ones is how teammates treat one another. The right norms can raise a group’s collective intelligence, while the wrong norms can hinder a team’s progress, even if the individuals are all bright.
- We should encourage equal speaking time (don’t monopolize the conversation AND speak up) and be sensitive to one another’s moods and share personal stories and emotions. This is how we make the whole greater than the sum of its parts.
- Psych safety, more than anything else, is critical to making a team work.
  - Clear goals and creating a culture of dependability matter too, but these behaviors are secondary to psych safety.

**Adapting to Team’s Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** What Matters in Making "Good" Teams?



**Slide Goal:** Share findings from Google research

**Content Notes:** Google set out to answer the question. They found that group norms and team culture are what matter most. Specifically, psychological safety. More is better, across all teams.

Some teams may be full of extroverts, or introverts, or a mix of both and they can be successful or not. Same goes for educational background, experience, preferred work style, many other variables.

*Our ability to improve teams comes from understanding and influencing group norms*

The only "secret sauce" is understanding and managing our team's expectations for how we treat one another.

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** What is Psychological Safety?



**Slide Goal:** Introduce main concept

**Content Notes:** A group norm (definition on the next slide)

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Psychological safety definition



**Slide Goal:** Share the definition of psychological safety (on slide).

**Content Notes:** My team WILL NOT embarrass, reject, ridicule, or think less of me for saying something

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Psychological safety in teams

**Psychological Safety in Teams**

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**WHAT'S THE DIFF?**  
Trust and Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is the belief that your environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. It's similar, but slightly different from, trust.

**TRUST**

Will **YOU** give others the benefit of the doubt when you take a risk?



*"Bob is probably going to freak out if I disagree with him."*

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY**

Will **OTHERS** give you the benefit of the doubt when you take a risk?



*"My team expects me to speak up. It's how we do things."*

Sources: Edmondson, A. C. (2012). Managing the risk of learning: Psychological safety in work teams. Boston, MA: Division of Research in Adult Business School and Foster. M. L., Townsend, S., Higgs, G. L., & Proctor, G. B. (2013). Psychological safety: A meta-analytic review and extension. *Personnel Psychology*, 56(1), 322-356.

SCIENCE FOR WORK

**Slide Goal:** Share the difference between trust and psychological safety.

**Content Notes:** The key difference is the focus on one-on-one interactions in trust vs. the focus on the team climate in psych safety.

Trust involves an individual’s choice to give *someone else* the benefit of the doubt – indicating a focus on others’ potential actions or trustworthiness. For example, do you trust Bob? In contrast, in discussing psychological safety, the question is whether the team will give you the benefit of the doubt when, for instance, you have made a mistake or asked an apparently stupid question.

An example of psych safety would be the following, "I don't have to wear a mask in this team...it's easy to be myself." When people describe their situation at work in this way, they are revealing a sense of psychological safety, a sense of comfort expressing their true selves.

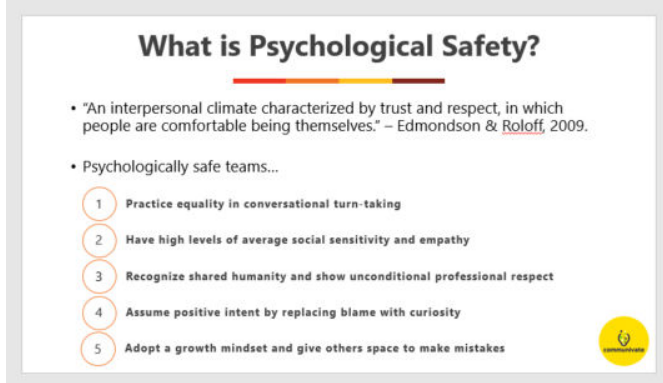
**Adapting to Team’s Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** What is Psychological Safety?



**Slide Goal:** Identify characteristics of psychologically safe teams

**Content Notes:** My team WILL grant me trust and respect, and wants me to express myself.

"An interpersonal climate characterized by trust and respect, in which people are comfortable being themselves." – Edmondson & Roloff, 2009.

"In psychologically-safe environments, people believe that if they make a well-intentioned mistake, **others will not think less of them for it**, nor will they resent or penalize them for asking for help, information, or feedback. Psychological safety thus fosters the confidence to take interpersonal risks, allowing oneself and one's colleagues to learn and focus on collective goals and problem prevention rather than on self-protection." – Amy Edmondson, 2009, Leveraging Diversity Through Psychological Safety

[http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/afriberg/files/leveraging\\_diversity\\_through\\_psychological\\_safety\\_hbs\\_article.pdf](http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/afriberg/files/leveraging_diversity_through_psychological_safety_hbs_article.pdf)

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** How does it feel?

<b>How Does it Feel?</b>	
<b>Like this...</b>	<b>NOT like this...</b>
People are encouraged to share ideas or try new things	People feel the need to make things perfect before sharing with the team
Team members offer constructive feedback on ideas	Team members criticize people and capability instead of ideas or actions
Energizing or motivating; safe	Exhausting or draining; guarded
Admitting to errors and discussing them openly	Blaming, covering up, or avoiding errors and their discussion
Benefit of the doubt is the default	Assumptions prevent conversation
My team wants me to express myself and will grant me trust and respect, even if I make a mistake.	My team may embarrass, reject, ridicule, judge, or think less of me for speaking up or making a mistake.

**Slide Goal:** Describe how psychologically safe teams feel

**Content Notes:** Go through a few example of what it feels like and does not feel like.

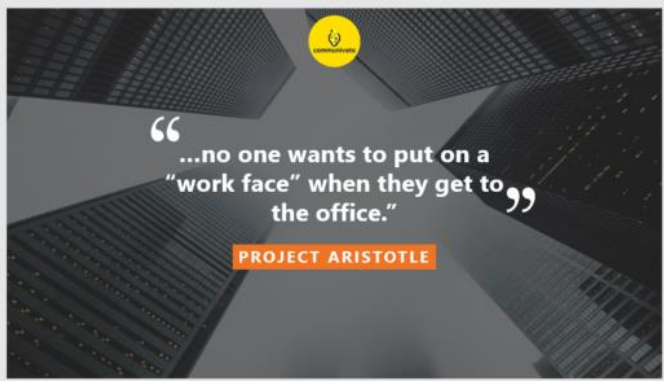
**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** “Work face”



**Slide Goal:** Emphasize the importance of psychological safety for authenticity and belonging

**Content Notes:** From the NYT article on Project Aristotle:

“What Project Aristotle has taught people within Google is that no one wants to put on a “work face” when they get to the office. No one wants to leave part of their personality and inner life at home. But to be fully present at work, to feel “psychologically safe,” we must know that we can be free enough, sometimes, to share the things that scare us without fear of recriminations. We must be able to talk about what is messy or sad, to have hard conversations with colleagues who are driving us crazy. We can’t be focused just on efficiency. Rather, when we start the morning by collaborating with a team of engineers and then send emails to our marketing colleagues and then jump on a conference call, we want to know that those people really hear us. We want to know that work is more than just labor.”

**Adapting to Team’s Needs:**

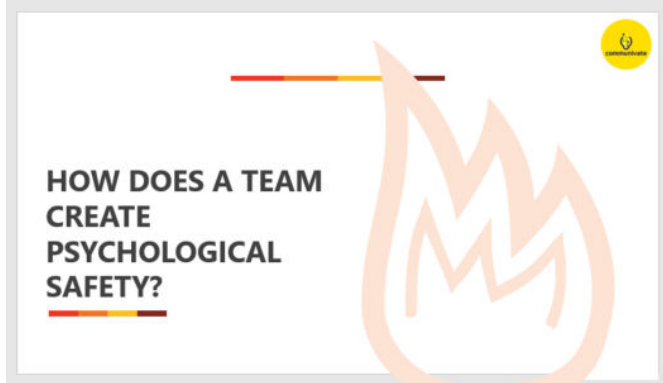
High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**





**Slide:** How does a team create psychological safety?



**Slide Goal:** Introduce the section on how to create psychological safety

**Content Notes:** Google finds that psych safety is good. But, we don't know how to create it. So what do you think?

Google knew it was important, but didn't know how to create it in a team. What do you think? Brainstorm.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-its-quest-to-build-the-perfect-team.html>

Vulnerability

Open up about your struggles

Speaking honestly about things that bother you

Let the team know how their work fits into the larger mission

Notice when someone is feeling excluded or down

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Emotional Conversations & Vulnerability



**Slide Goal:** Discuss the importance of vulnerability and open conversations

**Content Notes:** Conversational turn-taking and empathy create psych safety.

- They are also part of the same unwritten rules we turn to when we want to establish a bond
- We should encourage equal speaking time (don't monopolize the conversation AND speak up) and be sensitive to one another's moods and share personal stories and emotions. This is how we make the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Establish a starting point:

Any group can create psych safety by encouraging emotional conversations and discussions of norms among people who might otherwise be uncomfortable talking about how they feel

- By putting things like empathy and sensitivity into charts and data reports, it makes them easier to talk about. It's easier to talk about our feelings when we can point to a number.
- When it's tangible and described in common language, it's easier to interact with.

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Vulnerability Quote



**Slide Goal:** Emphasize the importance of vulnerability

**Content Notes:** Vulnerability is not just okay, it's GOOD.

Leader can talk about supporting vulnerability here, if comfortable.

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Let's have the conversation: Our starting point

**Let's Have the Conversation:  
Our Starting Point**

**Our team's IHI Score for Psychological Safety**

- Initial reactions?
- 1. Conversational turn-taking:
  - Do we listen to one another?
- 2. Empathy expression:
  - Do we show sensitivity to feelings and needs?
- 3. Shared Humanity:
  - Do we practice unconditional professional respect?
- 4. Assuming positive intent:
  - What is our default assumption?
- 5. Growth Mindset:
  - Do we provide a safe space to make mistakes?

DISCUSS

**Slide Goal:** Review team's IHI scores for psychological safety. Discuss initial reactions.

**Content Notes:**

- Having data and language around something makes it easier to discuss.
- Practice on ourselves! What's our psych safety number? What do you think about that?
- Get initial reactions first, then talk about the 5 behaviors and present questions to the team.

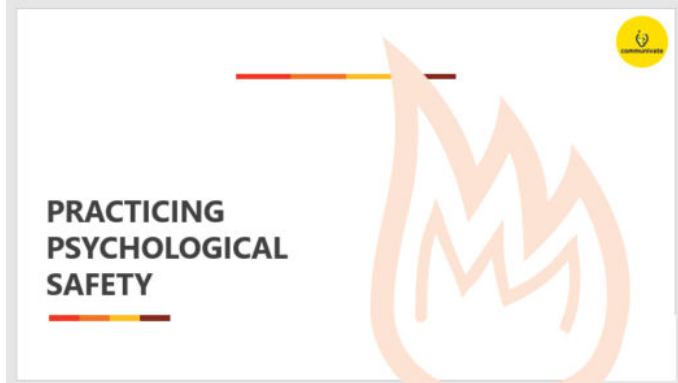
**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Practicing Psychological Safety



**Slide Goal:** Begin the section to discuss practicing psychological safety in your own teams

**Content Notes:** So far, talked about what it is, how we create, and we just talked about how we feel our team stacks up.

Based on that conversation, now Let's talk about getting our hands dirty and actually practicing it day-to-day so we can make real changes.

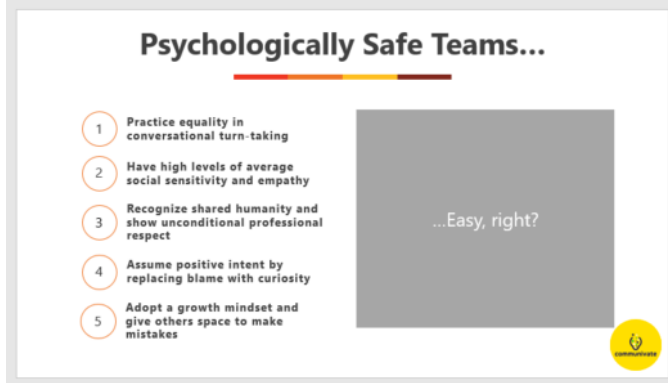
**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Psychologically Safe Teams...



**Slide Goal:** Reminder of the 5 practices and that we need to be intentional about practicing these behaviors

**Content Notes:**

Reminder of the 5 practices.

1. Practice equality in conversational turn-taking
2. Have high levels of social sensitivity and empathy
3. Recognize their shared humanity with EACH TEAM MEMBER and show unconditional professional respect
4. Assume positive intent by replacing blame with curiosity
5. Adopt a growth mindset and give others space to make mistakes

Easy, right?

It *is* relatively easy when we communicate with the utmost clarity, always agree, AND never feel our ego threatened... In other words, psych safety is only easy when we don't risk being vulnerable. But that's not real life, and it's certainly not the norm for High Performing Teams.

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Conversational Turn-Taking



**Slide Goal:** Discuss how to practice conversational turn-taking

**Content Notes:** We should encourage equal speaking time (don't monopolize the conversation AND speak up).

Actively listen more than you speak. Remind yourself to remain present and focused, to rephrase others' messages, and to practice reflecting others' feelings in conversations.

Ask for clarification when necessary to show you are attentive, curious, and understanding of others' messages.

Tie back into initial activity (one-word story creation).

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Social Sensitivity and Empathy



**Slide Goal:** Discuss how to practice social sensitivity and empathy. Share ideas.

**Content Notes:** This is how we make the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**





**Slide:** It's Okay to Disagree



**Slide Goal:** Discuss how to handle disagreements respectfully

**Content Notes:** Newsflash – you will not always agree with your team! Personally, politically, professionally, or even whether that dress was blue or gold. This is where the word “unconditional” becomes very important in showing respect. It’s okay to disagree... just as long as you remain *agreeable*. In other words, express your disagreement, but do so respectfully.

Paul Santagata, Head of Industry at Google, recommends starting out this process by reminding ourselves that, at our core, we’re all human. That means in addition to all the (very important) areas that we are different, there is an underlying element that unifies us as the same species. Our shared sense of humanity *requires* a level of professional respect that is unconditional.

The dress – what color?

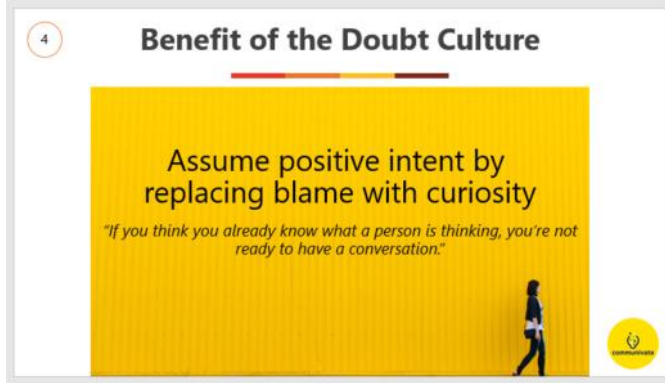
**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Benefit of the Doubt Culture



**Slide Goal:** Introduce and discuss strategies for creating a benefit of the doubt culture

**Content Notes:** From <https://hbr.org/2017/08/high-performing-teams-need-psychological-safety-heres-how-to-create-it>

Adopt a willingness to assume positive intent. Most people don't wake up in the morning saying "who can I treat poorly today?"

John Gottman's [research](#) at the University of Washington shows that blame and criticism reliably escalate conflict, leading to defensiveness and — eventually — to disengagement. The alternative to blame is curiosity. If you believe you already know what the other person is thinking, then you're not ready to have a conversation.

Instead, adopt a learning mindset, knowing you don't have all the facts.

Benefit of the doubt means you have some doubt about what happened – you choose to believe the best about a person or take their word for it.

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Growth vs. Fixed Mindset



**Slide Goal:** Introduce and discuss different mindsets.

**Content Notes:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mjv7TBoAYSY> – 3:30 min video with Dweck; Organizational culture focused

OR

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNHas97iE78> – 4 min video; growing individual capability focused.

**How having a growth orientation can benefit you and your team:**

- Motivated to learn and improve with mutual feedback
- Able to change and adapt skills, behaviors and attitudes faster
- Inspired by teammates' achievements
- Willing to share knowledge and help others succeed

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Verbal Cues contribute to Team Mindset

**5** **Verbal Cues → Team Mindset**

**Positivity and Growth:**

- "Joe, you did a good job on that project, but I think you should pay more attention to detail next time."
- "Joe, you did a good job on that project and next time, I'd like to see you focus more attention on detail. I think it will help you grow in this way..."

**Promoting Psychological Safety:**

- Unsafe: "Don't mess this up."
- Safe: "We don't want to make mistakes."
- Safe to Fail: "This is a great opportunity to challenge ourselves."

**Slide Goal:** Discuss how verbal cues contribute to our team's mindset

**Content Notes:**

- Verbal cues for positivity and growth mindset create the climate for people to feel comfortable
  - "and" vs. "but" is a powerful distinction
  - Positivity completely changes the dynamics of the team
- Specific language cues that may not seem very different on the surface have a big impact in teams

From Edmondson on how to increase psych safety, all touch on communications:

**1. Frame work as learning problems, as opposed to execution problems.**

"Make explicit that there is enormous uncertainty ahead and enormous interdependence," Edmondson says. In other words, be clear that there are areas that still require explanation and that each team member's input matters: "We've never been here before; we can't know what will happen; we've got to have everybody's brains and voices in the game."

**2. Acknowledge your own fallibility.**

Make simple statements that encourage peers and subordinates to speak up, such as, "I may miss something — I need to hear from you."

**3. Model curiosity by asking a lot of questions.**

"That actually creates a necessity for voice," Edmondson says, because team members need to generate answers.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/amy-edmondson-on-psychological-safety-2015-11>



**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Give Others Space to Make Mistakes



**Slide Goal:** Introduce the importance of allowing others to make mistakes and helping them to recover

**Content Notes:**

Successful people fail often and learn more from that failure than everyone else – Seth Godin

Psychological safety fosters the confidence to take interpersonal risks, allowing oneself and one's colleagues to learn and focus on collective goals and problem prevention rather than on self-protection - Edmondson

<http://positivechange guru.com/10-tips-growth-mindset-team/>

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Let's Talk About... Mistakes



**Slide Goal:** Learn from our own mistakes and discuss their importance

**Content Notes:**

[http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths\\_blog/2011/04/how-to-fai.html](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2011/04/how-to-fai.html)

<http://connectedprincipals.com/archives/3200>

Lead into big activity – [unsolvable task]

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Activity



**Slide Goal:** Introduce the activity

**Content Notes:**

<https://www.eventwise.co.uk/2016/07/7-challenging-team-building-exercises-staff/>

HOUSE OF CARDS

**What you'll need:**

1 pack of playing cards per team

2 pairs of scissors per team

**Set Up:**

Divide all of your team members into teams, with 2 to 5 people per team. Distribute a pack of cards and a couple of pairs of scissors to each team.

**Group Size:**

Ideally, his game is best played with 4 to 10 groups.

**The Activity:**

Give all of the teams a certain time limit to work with (18 minutes like Marshmallow challenge?), and tell them that they have to build the highest tower possible using ONLY the playing cards and the scissors. They can cut the cards however they want, but they cannot use tape to hold the cards together. They have to stack the cards in whatever way works best, and build it as many times as it takes to produce a tower that stands long enough to measure.





The team with the highest tower wins.

**Objective:**

The goal of the activity is to encourage unity and creative thinking. Each team is presented with an identical problem, but it's up to each team to figure out how to solve that problem in the most efficient way possible. The team members all have to work together to find the best way to stack the cards, as well as actually do the stacking—a task that takes a lot of patience. It's definitely going to bring your teams together once they figure out how to do it right!

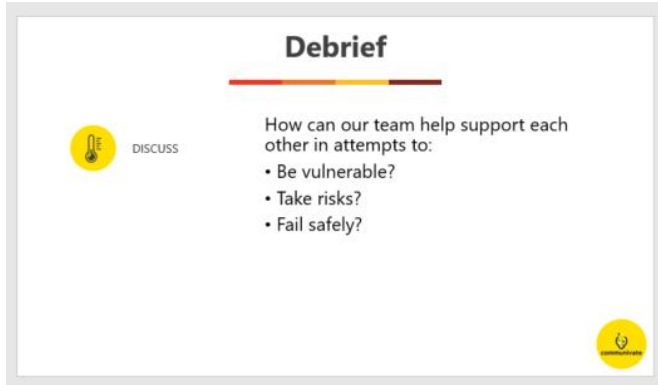
**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Debrief



**Slide Goal:** Debrief from the activity

**Content Notes:** **What did you learn?**

Did you feel safe during this activity?

Discuss:

- What makes you feel safe? What makes you less afraid of failure?
- What makes you feel safe talking about your ideas, risks, or failures?

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Fire Up



**Slide Goal:** Create individual and team commitments to action

**Content Notes:**

**Create individual and team commitments to action**

Plan: Write down three things you'd like to try before our next module and share with an accountability partner

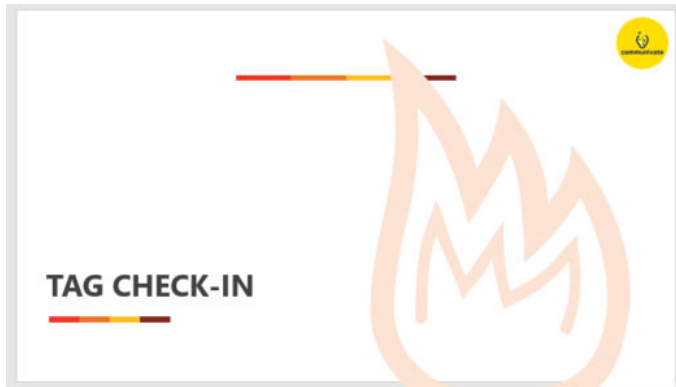
**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** TAG Check-In



**Slide Goal:** Check in on the team's TAG

**Content Notes:**

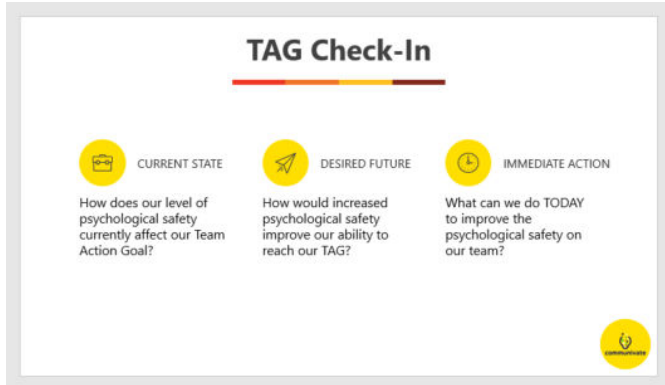
**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** TAG Check-In



**Slide Goal:** Discuss how psychological safety impacts the team TAG

**Content Notes:**

How does psychological safety currently affect our team action goal?

How would increased psychological safety improve our ability to reach our TAG?

What can we do TODAY to improve the psychological safety of our team?

Discuss:

- Who do you want to be? How do your teammates make you feel?
- What does your team want to achieve *together*? How do you want to treat one another?

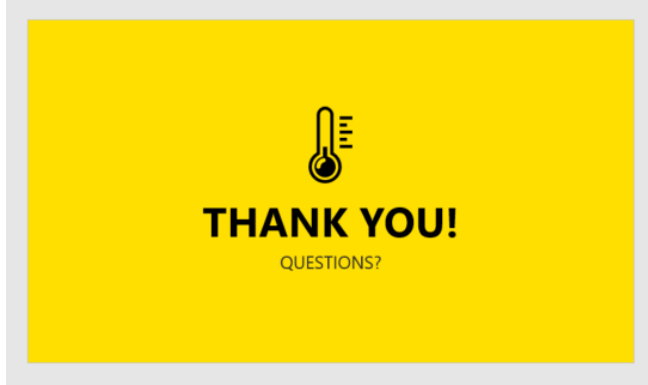
**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** End Slide



**Slide Goal:** Wrap up content, opportunity for questions or additional discussion

**Content Notes:** Let the team that the "Whole Self" module is the topic for the next session.

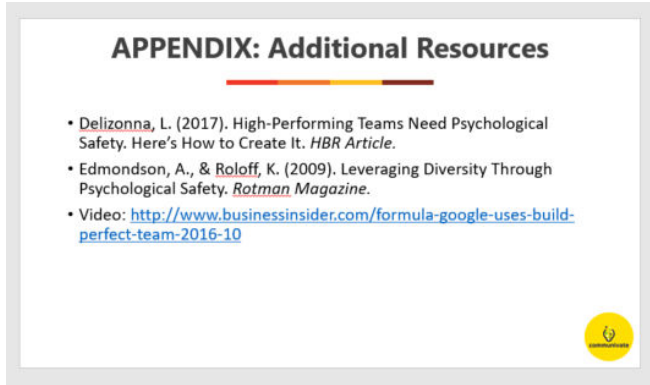
**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**



**Slide:** Additional Resources



**Slide Goal:** Options for additional resources on psychological safety

**Content Notes:**

**Adapting to Team's Needs:**

High	Medium	Low/Mixed

**Coach Notes:**

