



When we think of what it takes to create a safe workplace, we are typically quick to think about what we can do to make our physical space safe. Adequate lighting, locking cabinets to secure physical files, cameras monitoring entrances all may have been items you initially considered. However, our focus in this newsletter is outside of all these methods: our focus is on psychological safety.

As a manager, your leadership makes or breaks the psychological safety that others feel within the dynamics of the team and within the physical workspace. If there are employees who feel that that cannot speak openly on ideas toward different projects or that staff cannot admit to mistakes without punishment or retaliation, you have to ask what your role has been in potentially reasserting those beliefs. The good news is that it's never too late to turn the direction of your team around. By implementing some of the concepts from this newsletter, you can help to foster a psychologically safe environment for your staff.

Until next month! Let us know what you think about the newsletter and what you'd like to see in the future!

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[Feedback Form](#)

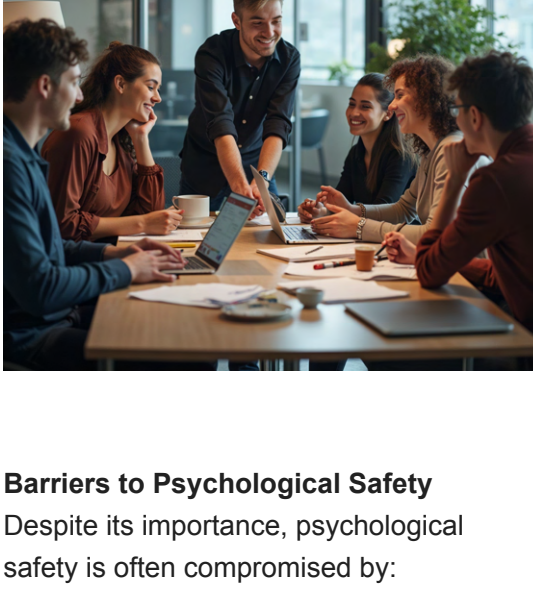
Psychological Safety

“Psychological safety is not about being nice or lowering performance standards, it's about giving candid feedback, openly admitting mistakes, and learning from them.”
—Amy C. Edmondson

What is Psychological Safety? Psychological safety refers to the belief that individuals can speak up, share ideas, ask questions, admit mistakes, and express concerns without facing ridicule, punishment, or rejection. Introduced by Harvard professor Amy Edmondson, the concept emphasizes creating an environment where employees feel comfortable being vulnerable in front of their colleagues and superiors.

Why Does Psychological Safety Matter? Psychological safety impacts the overall health of the workplace, fostering a climate where individuals can thrive. Here are some of the key benefits:

- Encourages innovation and creativity
- Improves team collaboration
- Fosters learning and growth
- Enhances employee well-being



Barriers to Psychological Safety
Despite its importance, psychological safety is often compromised by:

- Fear of judgment or rejection
- Authoritarian leadership style
- Cultural differences
- Bias and discrimination
- Lack of feedback mechanisms

How Managers Can Foster Psychological Safety
Creating a psychologically safe workplace requires intentional efforts from leadership. Here are some strategies to foster it:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Be Inclusive and Fair
Make sure all team members, regardless of background, feel valued and heard. Avoid favoritism and address any signs of exclusion.</p> | <p>Encourage Open Dialogue
Create spaces where employees feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. This includes team meetings, one-on-one check-ins, etc.</p> |
| <p>Give Constructive Feedback
Frame feedback as an opportunity for growth rather than criticism. Focus on actions rather than personal traits.</p> | <p>Recognize and Celebrate Efforts
Acknowledge employees' ideas and efforts, even if the outcomes aren't always successful.</p> |
| <p>Model Vulnerability
Leaders should admit their mistakes and uncertainties to show that it's okay to be imperfect.</p> | <p>Establish Clear Expectations
Make it clear that mistakes are part of the process and that honest communication is expected and appreciated.</p> |

Psychological safety is a vital ingredient for high-performing teams. When employees feel safe to share their thoughts and be their authentic selves, they are more engaged, innovative, and resilient. Leaders play a crucial role in fostering this environment by modeling openness, encouraging dialogue, and recognizing every contribution. Ultimately, investing in psychological safety promotes not only individual well-being but also long-term organizational success. By prioritizing psychological safety, organizations can create workplaces where **people flourish**—and in turn, achieve their full potential.

Additional Resources for Psychological Safety

Articles
[Developing Psychological Safety in Your Workplace](#)
Indeed

"Psychological safety at work is a climate that makes all team members feel secure to take risks. Employees feel they can speak up and share their ideas and concerns without being mocked or humiliated. They can ask questions or admit their mistakes and not be punished or experience retaliation. Dr. Amy Edmondson identified and defined the concept while conducting studies with clinical teams, but it can apply in any workplace situation."

[Can Workplaces Have Too Much Psychological Safety?](#)
HBR

"A practical problem for employers that is hard to duck is that supervisors at all levels are constantly being pressed by their leaders to be tougher about job-performance problems and to hold employees accountable for them. Pressing them at the same time to create psychologically safe environments where employees feel mistakes will not be held against them is very hard to pull off. Pushing them to drive psychological safety ever higher — past an average level — pulls them in two difficult directions."

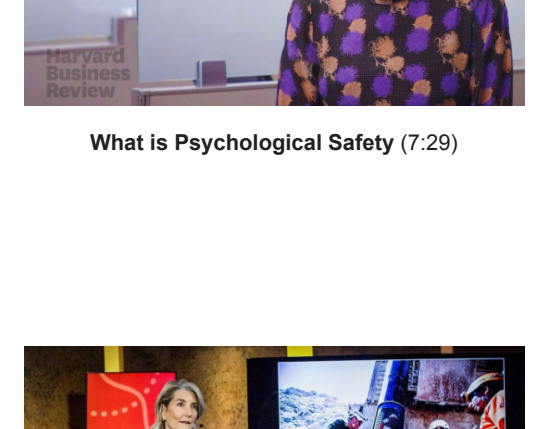
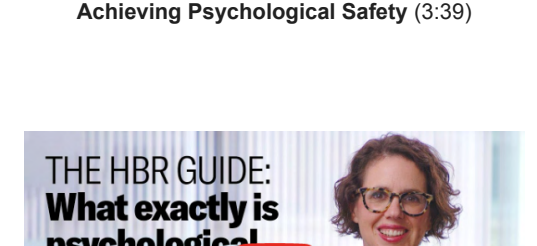
[Why The Most Successful Leaders Create a Psychologically Safe Workplace](#)
Forbes

"The reality is that many leaders do not realize the impact their statements have on people's willingness to speak up or put forth ideas for fear of rejection or humiliation. Leaders must recognize whether their organization encourages all employees to feel comfortable and confident to share their ideas. As Dr. Edmondson says in her book *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth*, "people must be allowed to voice half-finished thoughts, ask questions out of left field, and brainstorm out loud" to create a culture that truly innovates."

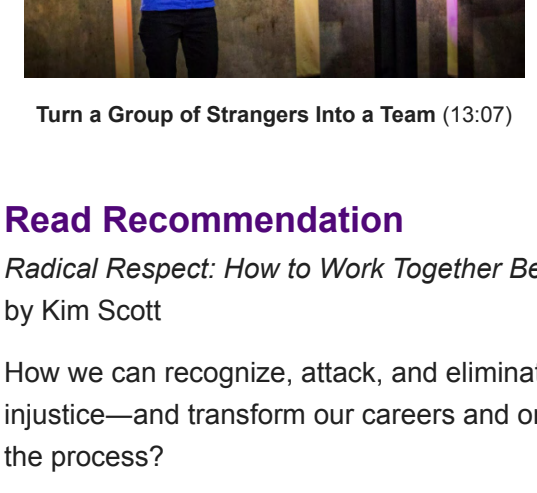
[Feelings of Psychological Safety Differ Among Onsite, Remote, and Hybrid Workers](#)
SHRM

"There are business implications to psychological safety—or its lack. Harvard Business Review noted such feelings have been "well established as a critical driver of relationships, greater innovation and more effective execution in organizations." It also appears psychological safety is tied to resiliency—the ability to adapt to stress, change and disruption, and to reduce risks such as employee burnout and turnover, according to meQuilibrium. For example, among employees considered most resilient, 89 percent said team members valued and respected each other's contributions."

Videos
The leadership environment in which we work can drastically change the feelings of safety within a team. In this video, Simon describes what it looks like to create an environment where people love their job. **Spoiler alert:** it's managers who care and ask their employees what they need to do their job successfully and where they can be themselves at work.



It's a term that's used a lot but is often misunderstood. Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson, who coined the phrase "team psychological safety", says it's the shared belief that it's OK to take risks, express ideas and concerns, speak up with questions, and admit mistakes without fear of negative consequences. If your team doesn't have it, that's going to negatively impact performance.



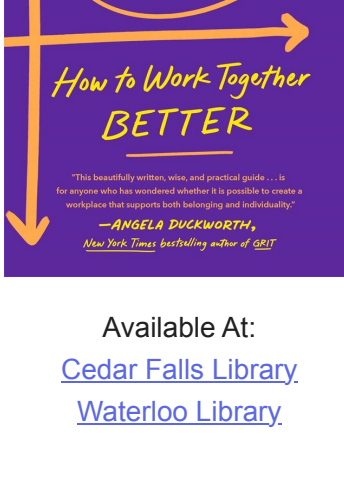
Business school professor Amy Edmondson studies "teaming," where people come together quickly (and often temporarily) to solve new, urgent or unusual problems. Recalling stories of teamwork on the fly, Edmondson shares the elements needed to turn a group of strangers into a quick-thinking team that can nimbly respond to challenges.

Read Recommendation
Radical Respect: How to Work Together Better
by Kim Scott

How we can recognize, attack, and eliminate workplace injustice—and transform our careers and organizations in the process?

We—all of us—consistently exclude, underestimate, and underutilize huge numbers of people in the workforce even as we include, overestimate, and promote others, often beyond their level of competence. Not only is this immoral and unjust, it's bad for business. Radical Respect is the solution.

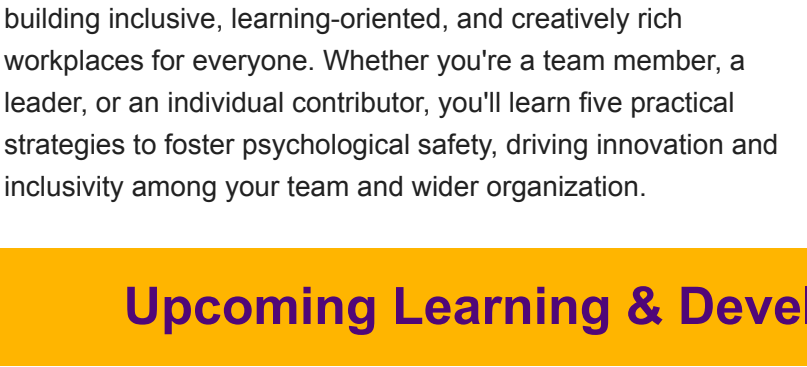
Radical Respect is Kim Scott's new book, revealing a practical framework for both respecting everyone's individuality and collaborating effectively. This is the essential guide leaders and their employees need to create more just workplaces and establish new norms of collaboration and respect.



Available At:
[Cedar Falls Library](#)
[Waterloo Library](#)

Notable Quotable: "We can change bad patterns and replace them with better ones. But only if we learn to recognize the bad patterns—our own biases."

LinkedIn Learning: Class Highlight
Collaborating with Colleagues to Build Psychological Safety
Erin Shrimpton



LinkedIn Learning

To access this class and other content from LinkedIn Learning, click on the blue button above and enter your UNI email address when prompted. If your personal email address populates, please ensure you click on the "change" link first to update your email address. Once entered, click on "Continue to the University of Northern Iowa LinkedIn Learning account" to access content.

Upcoming Learning & Development

Building Community on Your Team // Employee Engagement Series
November 13 / 1:00-2:00pm / Zoom
November 14 / 11:00am-12:00pm / Gilchrist Hall 009

At its core, a team is a system of human relationships. In the process of building a team, it's critical to not only understand the individual needs of others but also how best to collaborate with one another. This session will share some strategies on how to cultivate stronger interpersonal relationships and help your team become a more cohesive unit. Even if you're not a manager, you can make a big difference on the dynamics of your team!

- [Virtual Registration](#)
- [In Person Registration](#)

PechaKucha Showcase // Employee Engagement Series
December 4 / 12:00-1:00pm / University Room, Maucker Union

PechaKucha (a Japanese term for *chit-chat*) is a storytelling format in which a presenter shows 20 slides for 20 seconds of commentary. This fast-paced presentation is a great way to share your story and provide the audience with new insights. Bring your lunch and learn from leaders and peers from around the university as they share their story. Here are two examples:
[Michael Goodman - Honoring Parentless Students](#)
[Bailey Parnell - Dark Side of Social Media](#)

Interested in presenting? Reach out to [Jesse Heath!](#)

[Register Here](#)

FMLA & ADA Manger Responsibilities // Online Learning
This session provides managers with high-level information about how to identify a potential leave or accommodation request from an employee and clarifies a manager's role in complying with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This training takes approximately 45-minutes and will save your act (ADA). If you are unable to finish in one sitting.

[Access Here](#)

Our Vision All employees will be positively engaged in achieving their greatest potential while contributing to the success of the university.

Our Mission Human Resource Services fosters an environment of integrity and collaboration through innovative solutions and communications contributing to the successful recruitment, development, and retention of university employees.