Psychological Safety Workshop

Building psychological safety in treatment teams

Psychological Safety

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Part 1 · Introduction

What is Psychological Safety?

Psychological safety is the shared belief that your team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. It's about feeling confident that you can speak up, make mistakes, ask questions, and voice dissenting opinions without fear of judgment.

- Open communication about patient care concerns
- Learning from mistakes without fear of shame
- Collaborative problem-solving for complex cases
- Innovation in treatment approaches
- Team wellbeing and burnout prevention

How to Use This Workshop

- Take your time - this is designed for deep reflection
- Be honest in your self-assessment - there are no "right" answers
- Consider completing this with your team for shared learning
- Your responses are automatically saved as you progress

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Part 2 · 7 Dimensions

1. Safe Communication Environment

Creating spaces where team members feel safe to express concerns, ideas, and questions without fear of judgment.

Key Practices:

- Active listening without interrupting
- Responding with curiosity rather than criticism
- Creating structured opportunities for all voices
- Maintaining confidentiality when appropriate

2. Perspective-Taking & Empathy

Understanding and appreciating diverse viewpoints and experiences within the team.

Key Practices:

- Seeking to understand before being understood
- Acknowledging different professional backgrounds
- Celebrating diversity of thought and approach
- Finding common ground despite differences

3. Constructive Feedback Culture

Normalizing giving and receiving feedback as part of continuous learning and improvement.

Key Practices:

- Framing feedback as growth opportunities
- Being specific and behavior-focused
- Balancing affirmation with areas for growth
- Modeling receptivity to feedback

4. Inclusive Participation

Ensuring all team members feel heard, valued, and able to contribute meaningfully.

Key Practices:

- Drawing out quieter voices
- Managing dominant speakers respectfully
- Addressing power dynamics openly
- Creating multiple participation channels

5. Mistake-Friendly Learning

Treating mistakes and errors as learning opportunities rather than failures to hide.

Key Practices:

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- Sharing your own mistakes openly
- Focusing on system improvements
- Celebrating learning from failures
- Creating blame-free problem solving

6. Appropriate Vulnerability

Balancing professional competence with authentic sharing of uncertainties and limitations.

Key Practices:

- Admitting when you don't know something
- Asking for help when needed
- Sharing appropriate personal challenges
- Maintaining professional boundaries

7. Safety Leadership

Modeling psychological safety behaviors regardless of formal position or authority.

Key Practices:

- Leading by example in all dimensions
- Supporting others' risk-taking
- Advocating for team safety
- Inspiring safety culture development

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Part 3 · Self-Assessment

Instructions: For each statement, choose the option that best describes your experience:
1 = Never · 2 = Rarely · 3 = Sometimes · 4 = Often · 5 = Always

Awareness Questions 1-5

1. I recognize when team environments feel safe for open communication versus when they feel judgmental or risky.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice how my own communication style contributes to versus detracts from team psychological safety.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand the difference between supportive challenge and threatening criticism in team interactions.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I see patterns in what creates versus undermines psychological safety during team meetings and discussions.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

5. I acknowledge both safety-enhancing and safety-reducing aspects of my communication approach.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Awareness Questions 6-10

6. I recognize opportunities to understand and appreciate diverse viewpoints within my treatment team.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I notice when I am demonstrating versus lacking empathy for colleagues' perspectives and challenges.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I understand how different professional backgrounds and experiences affect team member viewpoints.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

9. I see patterns in when perspective-taking enhances versus when lack of understanding undermines team collaboration.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

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10. I acknowledge both empathetic and dismissive aspects of my approach to colleague differences.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Awareness Questions 11-15

11. I recognize when feedback exchanges feel safe and productive versus threatening or unhelpful.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

12. I notice my comfort level with both giving and receiving constructive feedback from team members.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

13. I understand how feedback delivery and reception affects psychological safety and learning.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

14. I see patterns in what supports versus interferes with constructive feedback culture development.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

15. I acknowledge both growth-oriented and defensive aspects of my feedback participation.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Awareness Questions 16-20

16. I recognize when all team members feel heard and valued versus when some voices are marginalized.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

17. I notice my role in either encouraging or discouraging participation from quieter team members.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

18. I understand how power dynamics and professional hierarchies affect team member willingness to speak up.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

19. I see patterns in what promotes versus inhibits inclusive participation during team activities.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

20. I acknowledge both inclusive and exclusive aspects of my team participation approach.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Awareness Questions 21-25

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21. I recognize when mistakes are treated as learning opportunities versus shameful failures to hide.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

22. I notice my own reactions to both my mistakes and colleagues' errors or limitations.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

23. I understand how mistake response affects team willingness to take risks and admit uncertainties.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

24. I see patterns in what creates learning-oriented versus punishment-oriented responses to errors.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

25. I acknowledge both growth-promoting and shame-inducing aspects of my mistake responses.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Awareness Questions 26-30

26. I recognize when professional vulnerability enhances versus threatens team relationships and effectiveness.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

27. I notice my comfort level with admitting uncertainties, limitations, or knowledge gaps to colleagues.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

28. I understand the balance between authentic sharing and appropriate professional boundaries.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

29. I see patterns in when vulnerability builds versus when it undermines professional credibility and team trust.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

30. I acknowledge both authentic and defensive aspects of my professional self-presentation.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Awareness Questions 31-35

31. I recognize my role in modeling psychological safety behaviors regardless of my formal position.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

32. I notice when my actions support versus undermine team psychological safety development.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

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33. I understand how leadership behaviors affect team willingness to engage openly and authentically.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

34. I see patterns in what leadership approaches enhance versus diminish team psychological safety.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

35. I acknowledge both safety-promoting and safety-reducing aspects of my leadership and influence.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Development Questions 36-40

36. I actively work to create communication environments that feel safe for diverse perspectives and concerns.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

37. I develop skills for encouraging open dialogue while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

38. I build capacity for responding to difficult topics or controversial issues in ways that preserve psychological safety.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

39. I create meeting and discussion structures that support rather than inhibit honest communication.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

40. I practice active listening and empathetic responding that demonstrates genuine interest in colleague perspectives.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Development Questions 41-45

41. I actively engage in perspective-taking exercises that help me understand diverse colleague viewpoints.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

42. I develop appreciation for how different professional backgrounds and experiences shape team member approaches.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

43. I build capacity for finding common ground and shared values despite professional or personal differences.

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Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

44. I create opportunities for team members to share their unique perspectives and experiences.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

45. I practice celebrating and leveraging diversity rather than trying to eliminate or minimize differences.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Development Questions 46-50

46. I actively work to normalize giving and receiving constructive feedback as part of team learning culture.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

47. I develop skills for delivering feedback in ways that feel supportive rather than threatening.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

48. I build capacity for receiving feedback openly without becoming defensive or dismissive.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

49. I create feedback structures and processes that support rather than inhibit team growth and learning.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

50. I practice modeling feedback receptivity and learning orientation for colleagues.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Development Questions 51-55

51. I actively work to ensure all team members feel heard, valued, and able to contribute meaningfully.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

52. I develop skills for drawing out quieter voices and managing dominant speakers during team discussions.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

53. I build capacity for recognizing and addressing power dynamics that may inhibit participation.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

54. I create participation structures that accommodate different communication styles and comfort levels.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

55. I practice advocating for marginalized voices and perspectives during team decision-making processes.

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Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

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Part 4 · Exercises

Instructions: Read each scenario and reflect on how you would respond.

Scenario: The Defensive Colleague

During a team meeting, you suggest a new approach to group therapy. A colleague immediately responds defensively, saying "We've always done it this way, and it works fine."

How would you respond to maintain psychological safety while addressing the concern?

Describe your approach...

Tips for This Scenario

- Acknowledge their experience and expertise
- Express curiosity about their perspective
- Reframe as collaborative exploration
- Avoid becoming defensive yourself

Scenario: The Silent Team Member

You notice that one team member rarely speaks up in meetings. When directly asked for input, she often says "I don't have anything to add."

What strategies would you use to create a safer space for contribution?

Describe your approach...

Tips for This Scenario

- Consider one-on-one check-ins
- Use written brainstorming before verbal sharing
- Explicitly invite diverse perspectives
- Model vulnerability by sharing your own uncertainties

Scenario: The Mistake Cover-Up

You discover a colleague made an error but didn't report it. They beg you not to say anything, saying "I'll lose my job."

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How do you balance psychological safety with ethical obligations?

Describe your approach...

Tips for This Scenario

- Focus on system improvement, not blame
- Emphasize learning opportunities
- Discuss together how to report it constructively
- Support them through the reporting process

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Part 5 · Action Planning

Purpose: Transform insights into action. Create a concrete plan for enhancing psychological safety over the next 90 days.

Select Your Focus Areas

☐ Safe Communication Environment

Creating spaces where team members feel safe to express concerns, ideas, and questions without fear of judgment.

☐ Perspective-Taking & Empathy

Understanding and appreciating diverse viewpoints and experiences within the team.

☐ Constructive Feedback Culture

Normalizing giving and receiving feedback as part of continuous learning and improvement.

☐ Inclusive Participation

Ensuring all team members feel heard, valued, and able to contribute meaningfully.

☐ Mistake-Friendly Learning

Treating mistakes and errors as learning opportunities rather than failures to hide.

☐ Appropriate Vulnerability

Balancing professional competence with authentic sharing of uncertainties and limitations.

☐ Safety Leadership

Modeling psychological safety behaviors regardless of formal position or authority.

30-Day Action Plan

Week 1-2: Observation & Awareness

What will you observe?

Week 3-4: Small Experiments

What small changes will you try?

Your Commitment Statement

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I commit to enhancing psychological safety in our team by...

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Part 6 · Resources

Recommended Readings

- The Fearless Organization

by Amy Edmondson

- Dare to Lead

by Brené Brown

- Crucial Conversations

by Kerry Patterson et al.

Daily Practices

Morning Intention

Set one safety-building goal for the day

Curiosity Questions

Ask "Tell me more" instead of giving advice

Appreciation Practice

Thank someone for their perspective daily

Vulnerability Moment

Share one uncertainty or learning edge

"Psychological safety is not about being nice. It's about giving candid feedback, openly admitting mistakes, and learning from each other."

- Amy Edmondson

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