

# How to increase psychological safety within a team?

A *Boostalab* guide



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You want to improve your team's performance? Some elements are recognized as important contributors, namely having clear goals and creating an atmosphere where team members know they can rely on one another. However, studies have shown that one factor is even more crucial for successful teams: psychological safety.

Psychological safety helps create a climate where team members feel like they can express their ideas, have the right to make mistakes, and feel free to be themselves, even in moments of vulnerability! They are therefore more creative and resilient, collaborate better with one another, and are better able to solve complex issues. Yes, all of this!

When the feeling of psychological safety is low, impacts are quick to manifest themselves: people feel threatened and become more resistant. They momentarily lose their reasoning skills, let emotion dictate their actions, are less able to find solutions and may eventually feel powerless and unmotivated.

What conditions could be put in place to foster psychological safety within your team? With this guide, you can quickly assess the behaviours that increase the feeling of safety, be it in an individual or group setting. This process is just as valuable to managers as it is for all team members who wish to better work together!

## When to use this guide?

- You want to increase trust, collaboration and performance within your team..
- You want to have an authentic look at yourself to assess behaviours that foster a feeling of psychological safety.

## How to use it?



- Start by completing the self-assessment.
- You can also ask each of your team members to complete their own self-assessment, and have a group discussion about it afterwards. Are you allowed to make mistakes together?

## To learn more

- [Project Aristotle by Google](#)
- [Transforming criticism into wishes](#)

## 1. Complete the self-assessment

Each statement below represents a component of the main factors that foster psychological safety. For each statement, by referring to real-life situations, select if it corresponds to the practices you're already doing well, or if it's something you could be doing better.

Sensitivity to others		
1. I speak with sensitivity: I understand that the other person comes with their own perspectives, their beliefs, their feelings and vulnerabilities.		
2. I speak with sensitivity: I understand that the other person comes with their own perspectives, their beliefs, their feelings and vulnerabilities.		
3. I try to put myself in the other person's shoes, I am empathetic and try to understand their needs.		
4. If I must address a sensitive topic, I prepare and try to anticipate the other's response to better understand their potential reactions.		
5. I am aware of others' nonverbal cues, of what they express despite themselves, without words (tiredness, preoccupations, irritation, etc.)		
Fairness and diversity		
6. In a group meeting, I make sure everyone has their turn to speak equally.		
7. I ask for opinions and ideas from all of my colleagues, without excluding anyone.		
8. I pay attention to and look at others when they express their opinions and ideas.		
9. If conflict arises, I encourage my colleagues to think as collaborators (instead of adversaries) to find a solution that will be acceptable to everyone.		
10. I accept that any situation can generate different perspectives, and that each is as valuable as the others.		
11. If I disagree with an idea, I respectfully listen and wait for the other person to finish talking before expressing my own opinion.		
Right to make mistakes		
12. Instead of criticizing or blaming, I express how I feel and what I want (e.g., "This document isn't good," vs "This document is very important for me. Can we work together to improve it?")		
13. I can laugh at myself.		
14. I am capable of showing others that I can be vulnerable, that I don't necessarily have all the answers, and that I may need help.		
15. If I make a mistake, I own up to it, even when it's difficult.		
16. If someone makes a mistake, I try to understand the reasons behind it instead of resorting to blame.		

## 2. Draw some lessons

Each of the elements above represents a behaviour that reinforces or fragilizes psychological safety among team members. Identify the behaviours you're doing well, those you could do better or more often, and those you don't master as well but could start to implement.

- What I can congratulate myself for doing well!

- What I should amplify, do more often

- What I should implement

## 3. Have a group discussion

In a team, psychological safety is only as strong as its weakest link. If a single person has a negative impact on trust within the team, psychological safety is weakened. Since it's a team affair, start the discussion by asking each team member to complete the self-assessment. Then discuss as a group and commit to the following:

- One thing we we can congratulate ourselves for doing well!

- One thing we should do more, do better

- One thing we should implement

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## List of available soft skills

### Team leadership

- Aligning and empowering
- Constructive feedback
- Delegating
- Engagement
- Excelling as a team
- Psychological proximity
- Psychological safety
- Recognition
- Team standards
- Team synergy

### Organizational leadership

- Change management
- Civility
- Coaching
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Impact and influence
- Kindness
- Managerial transition
- Transition to hybrid mode

### Intentional leadership

- Autonomy
- Digital agility
- Learning
- Managing time and priorities
- Proactivity
- Stress management
- Unconscious biases

See the full list [here](#).



## Did you know?

According to [research](#), those who participated in a leadership development program saw a 20% improvement in job performance and a 25% improvement in organizational results.

A [Gallup](#) study highlights that 1 in 2 employees have left their organization in their career to escape a bad manager.

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Forget traditional training and opt for an approach that will transform your organization and anchor learning in a sustainable and practical way.



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We only offer what is innovative, tangible and relevant.



## Team challenges

Participants build authentic connections by focusing on their challenges.



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They implement the practices quickly, so that the magic happens.



## Autonomy and empowerment

They become masters of their own development!



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The practical tools offered online allow for immediate implementation within teams and for managers to **see the positive changes**.

**Oxfam Québec**

The solution completely met our needs! Our managers were not used to working together. The fact that we also had a challenge to achieve led to **great achievements** that were reflected in the teams.

**Humanware**

Our managers challenged themselves to increase the impact of their feedback practices. The platform allowed them to set development priorities, work as a team and encourage each other to take up the challenge and thus succeed in **changing their practices, in action and in a sustainable way**.

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