Is your team practicing psychological safety?

To help your team gauge where they stand, here is a scannable 5-point checklist. You can have team members rate each statement on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

1. The Mistake Reaction

The Statement: When someone makes a mistake on this team, the focus is immediately placed on learning and fixing the system, rather than finding someone to blame.

What to look for: Look at what happens the moment something goes wrong. If the immediate reaction is to hide the error or find a scapegoat, safety is low. If the team openly discusses the mishap to ensure it doesn't happen again, safety is high.

2. Handling Friction and Dissent

The Statement: Members of this team are able to bring up problems, tough issues, and differing opinions without fear of retaliation or social exclusion.

What to look for: Pay attention to meetings. Do people actively challenge ideas, or does everyone just nod along to whatever the leader says? True safety means healthy, constructive conflict is welcomed, not suppressed.

3. The ‘Silly Question’ Comfort Level

The Statement: It is safe to ask for help, clarify expectations, or admit to not knowing something on this team.

What to look for: Watch how newer or junior team members interact. Are they comfortable saying "I don't understand how this works," or do they stay silent to avoid looking incompetent?

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4. Acceptance of Broad Skillsets and Diversity

The Statement: No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines or undervalues my unique skills, background, or contributions.

What to look for: Notice if certain team members' ideas are routinely ignored or talked over, or if everyone’s distinct perspective is treated as an asset to the collective goal.

5. Risk Taking and Innovation Support

The Statement: Taking calculated risks is encouraged on this team, and if an innovative idea fails, it is treated as a valuable experiment rather than a personal failure.

What to look for: A lack of new ideas is often a symptom of low safety. If people only stick to "the way we've always done it," it's usually because the personal cost of a failed new idea is too high.

A Note On Usage

If you run this as an anonymous survey, look closely at the spread of scores. A high average score can sometimes hide a couple of team members who feel completely unsafe, so keeping an eye out for any low outliers is crucial.