

# What is psychological safety and why is it the key to great teamwork?

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Get get you started, we've put together 5 tips for fostering psychological safety in your workplace:

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## 1. Lead by example

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- Anyone in a position of responsibility should set the example for the rest of the company. This is applicable from senior management, down to team leads and managers. If done properly, the set of behaviours should become a norm across the company.
- Ask for upward feedback
- Acknowledge your mistakes
- Be open to opinions that differ from your own
- Be approachable and encourage reports to ask questions

## 2. Encourage active listening

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This is an important part of ensuring people feel valued and that they can contribute to the team. Ideas to improve listening include:

- Leave phones at the door during meetings
- Show understanding by repeating what was said
- Encourage people to share more by asking questions
- If certain individuals rarely speak during meetings, actively ask them for their opinion

## 3. Create a safe environment

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One of the keys of psychological safety is that people feel comfortable voicing their opinions and do not fear being judged. Help teams develop a safe environment, by creating a few ground rules on how they interact with one another. These could be for example:

- Do not interrupt each other
- All ideas are accepted equally and never judged
- Never place blame
- Out of the box suggestions are encouraged and listened to

## 4. Develop an open mindset

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In order to break free of judgment and strengthen the relationship between team members, it's important to have an open mindset. Often we look at things from our own lens, but approaching them from a different angle can help bring perspective. In order to develop an open mindset at the workplace:

- Encourage teams to share feedback with one another
- Help them learn how to respond to input from others
- Rather than criticism, encourage teams and individuals to see feedback as a way to strengthen and build upon their ideas and processes.

When it comes to company culture, people often talk about three key ingredients to ensure it's healthy: strong mission and vision that help drive clarity for people in their roles; individual values align with company values; and the prospect of professional growth. However psychological safety is also key to ensuring you have a healthy company culture where people feel able to contribute their ideas and be themselves, as demonstrated by Google's study.

Do you want to help your managers strengthen their teams? Download our [\*Manager's Guide to Using Feedback to Motivate, Engage and Develop Teams\*](#) below.