



Ukhozi Regional Tripartite Forum

Psychological Safety

13 September 2024







Psychological Safety and Safety Communication

*“Psychological safety means **feeling safe** to take interpersonal risks, to speak up, to disagree openly, to surface concerns without **fear** of negative repercussions or pressure to hide bad news.”*


Psychological Safety IS Being Able to



Give and receive feedback



Ask difficult questions




Raise issues and concerns



Ask for help



Disagree



Offer solutions to problems



Ask for clarification

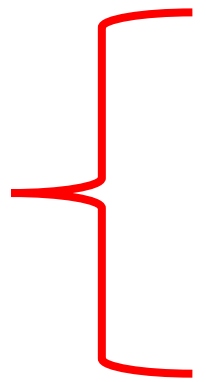


Admit errors



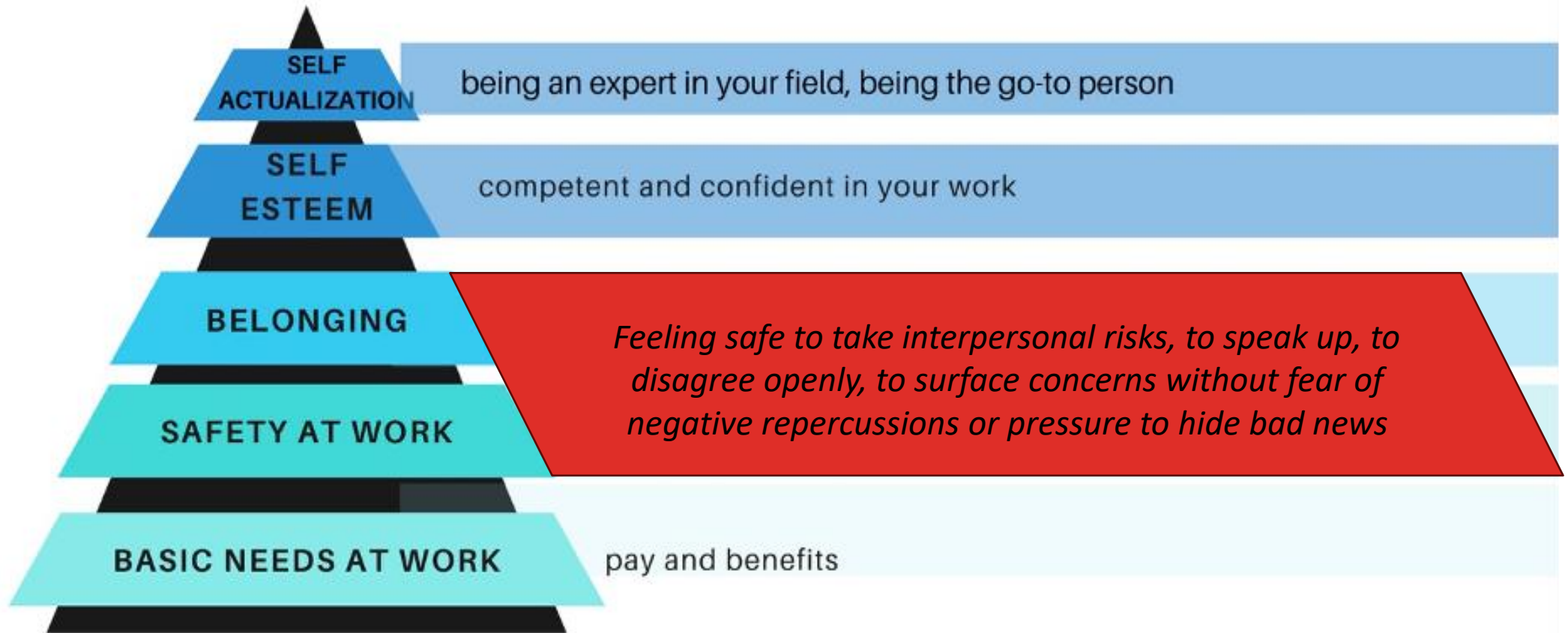


Psychological Safety



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

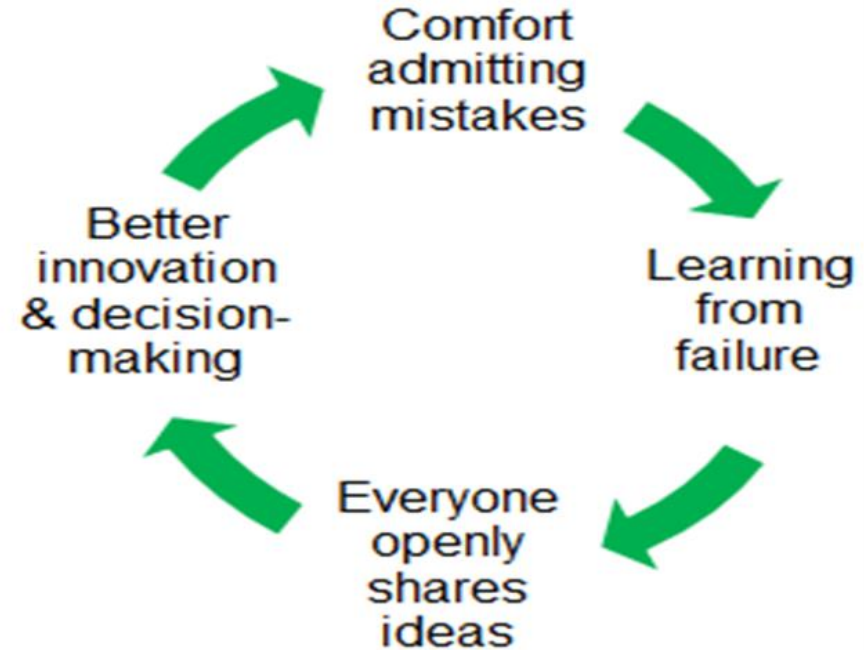
Maslow's Needs at Work



Psychological Danger

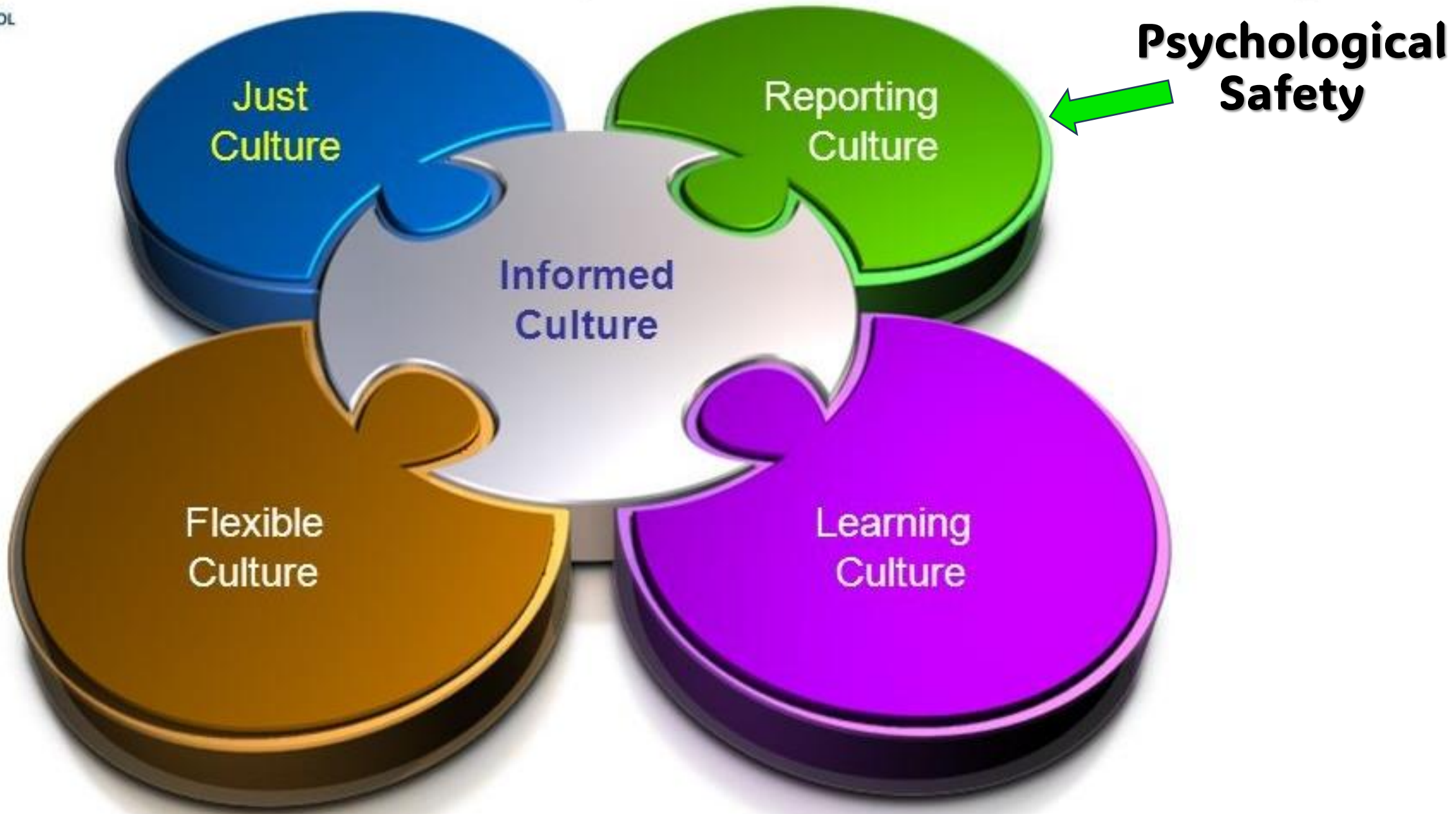


Psychological Safety



*“A safety culture is an **informed** culture in which those who manage and operate the system have current **knowledge** about the human, technical, organizational, and environmental factors that determine the safety of the system as a whole.”*

*- **Prof James Reason***



2

recent examples

1. Dozer skid over bench crest
2. Supervisor sabotage disciplinary hearing



Dozer skid over bench crest

A Junior Supervisor, SHE Representative and Dozer Operator were **concerned** about the safety of the work area but were overruled by their experienced Superintendent who was **instructed** by the client to perform the job within a time limit!





2 drivers of fear?

1. Superintendent's experience & seniority
2. Client's demands & instructions



Supervisor sabotage disciplinary hearing

- *After a near-miss incident, the involved person were suspected to be under the influence of alcohol and taken to the Security Department for breathalyzer and other sobriety tests, including testing the BAC in his blood.*
- *His supervisor were asked to conduct a disciplinary hearing but kept on postponing the hearing.*
- *When ultimately challenged by his manager, he alleged that he never received the test results from the Security Department. This was of course not true, since he signed for receiving it.*
- *It was discovered that he deliberately destroyed the evidence since the accused live in his village and threatened him if he pursue with the hearing.*

Recent assessment at this client

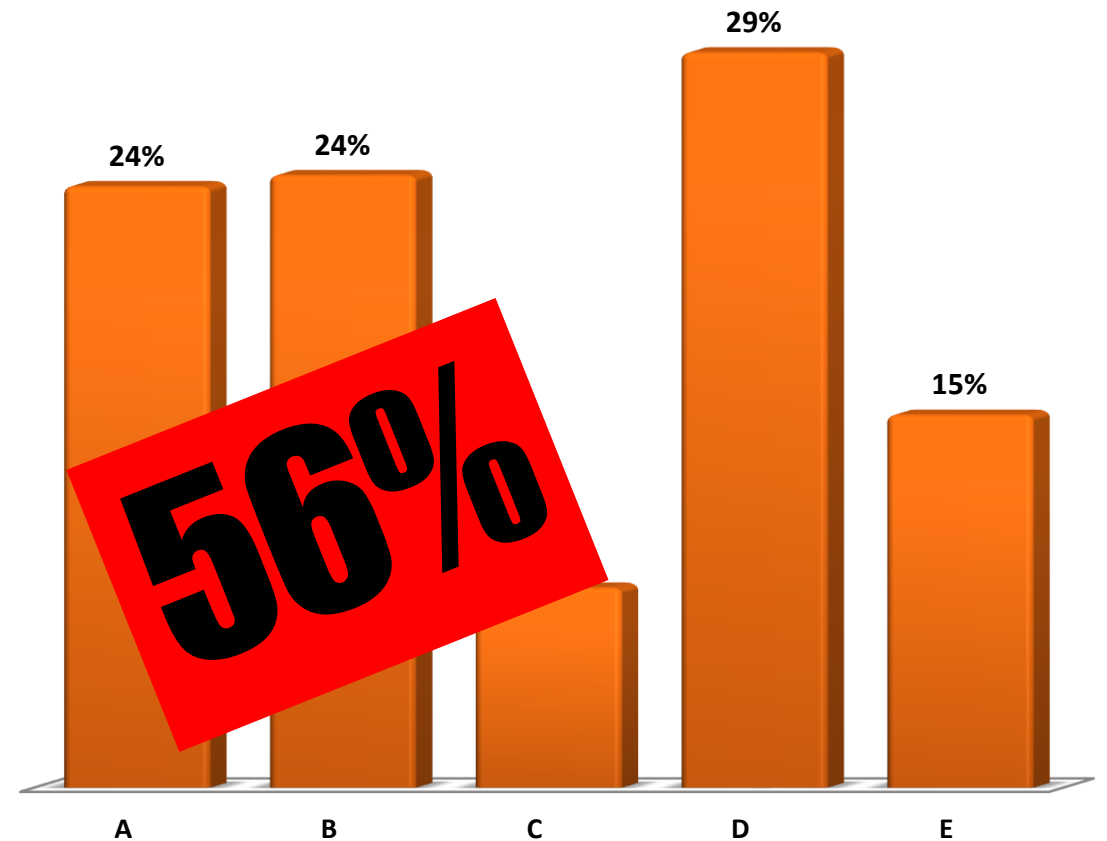
The **objective** was to assess and analyse the current safety processes and leader behaviour against the principles and concepts of **High Reliability Organising (HRO)** and **neuro-based** leadership.

The **scope** of the analysis included all employees and contractors employed in the operational areas at the Client



Employees are not afraid to exercise their right to leave a dangerous working place or refuse to do dangerous work

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Neutral
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree



Interview Highlights



The interviews were conducted following a semi-structured interview process, and the following recurring points emerged:

- VFLs induce fear and are seen as fault-finding inspections. People often hide when managers and HSEC Officers approach.
- Only between 5-20% of workplace incidents are reported due to fear of punishment and fear of losing safety bonuses.
- Feedback is often not given on reported incidents and concerns raised.
- Consequence management is not applied correctly, leading to a lack of discipline and repeated unsafe behaviour.
- Investigations focus on finding who is to blame and not identifying the root cause.
- Some supervisors' trade union affiliation has a negative impact on their management roles and effectiveness.
- Geo-Social factors and entitlement of some locally-based employees has a negative impact on employees' safety-related behaviour.

Five Key Findings

Feedback on reported incidents, concerns raised, and investigations is not given to employees or not given in time.



Many supervisors are not embracing their management roles. Symptoms of this include a lack of discipline and ineffective consequence management.



Geo-Social factors have a negative impact on employees' safety-related behaviour and the establishment of a robust safety culture.



VFLs induce fear and are seen as fault-finding inspections. Fear of 'unfair' punishment is leading to low incident reporting.

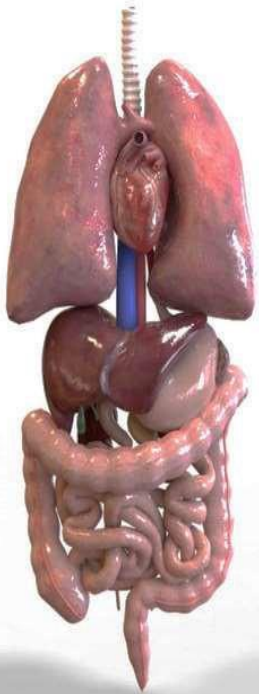


Over-complicated safety management system with too many procedures that are difficult to understand, self-duplicating, and takes too much time to manage.

the Question is

**...why are people afraid to speak
up or exercise their rights in
terms of Section 23?**

...what is the purpose of the human brain?



SURVIVAL



Where does *Psychological Safety* come from?

“In the “*caveman*” era of humans, you need to belong to your tribe, your group, because they were the ones that helped protect and feed you, so if you got kicked out of the group, you were dead. And that is what gets triggered in the human brain when there’s **a fear of isolation or exclusion**”

Fear of rejection is a powerful force in the human mind because it stems from hardwired, *primal instincts* like the need for food and shelter.

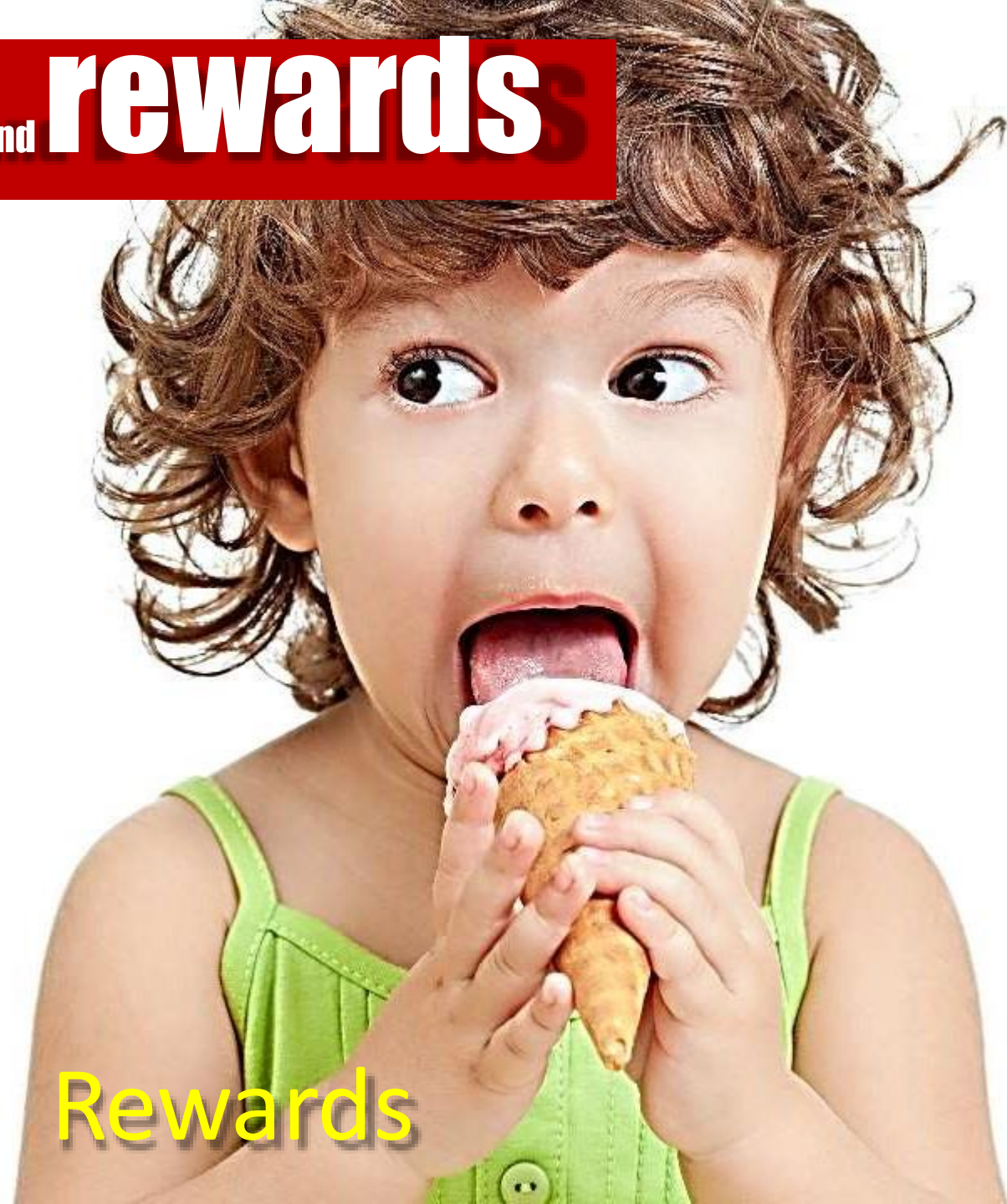
Psychological Safety does not happen automatically – our default mode (primitive mind) is to **presume some level of threat** that leads to fight/flight/freeze



... threats and rewards



Threats



Rewards



... **physical**
threat or fear

- Solve problems.
- Make decisions.
- Think creatively.
- Focus your attention.
- Discern between right & wrong.
- Memorize information.
- Recall information.
- Communicate effectively.
- Collaborate with others.
- Understand consequences.
- Cope with adversity.
- Correctly interpret other people's behaviour.
- Inhibit impulses.

IMPAIRED ABILITY



... the brain is also a

... social organ



...social

threat or fear

IMPAIRED ABILITY

- ✗ Focus
- ✗ Solve problems
- ✗ Make decisions
- ✗ Think creatively
- ✗ Memorize information
- ✗ Recall information
- ✗ Understand consequences
- ✗ Communicate effectively
- ✗ Collaborate with others
- ✗ Cope with adversity and challenges
- ✗ Correctly interpret people's behaviour
- ✗ Inhibit impulses
- ✗ Discern between right & wrong



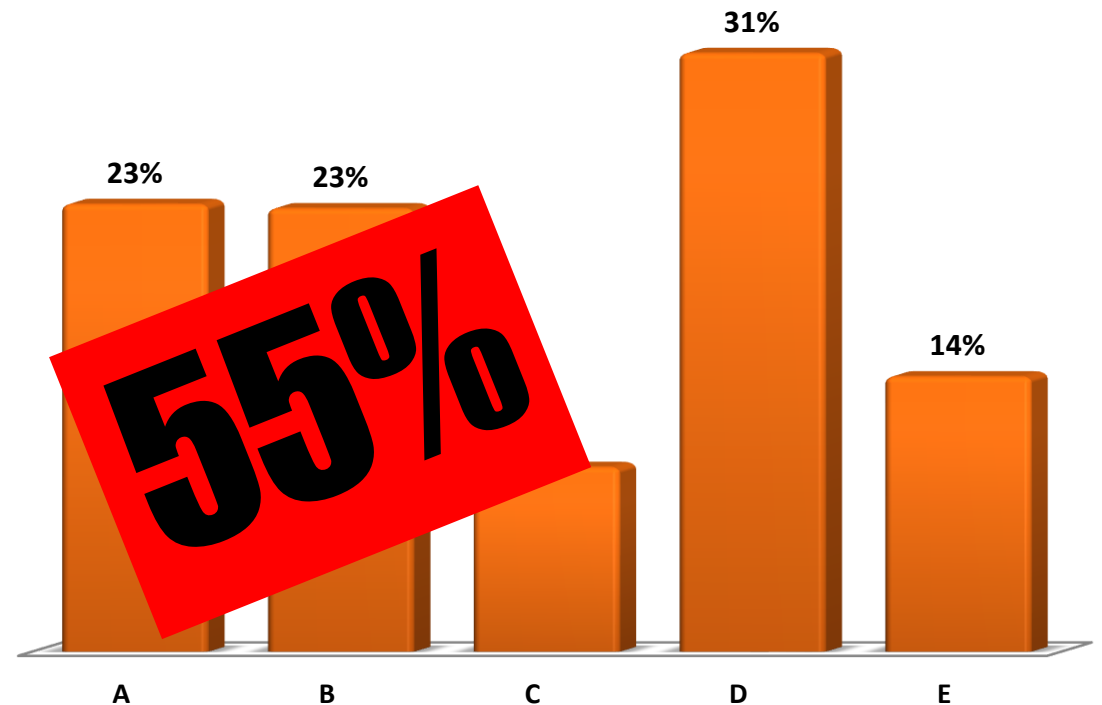
Obstacles to Psychological Safety

- ✓ *Fear of retaliation* or humiliation from previous experience
- ✓ Leadership *vulnerability* and immaturity, *fear* for corporate and DMRE
- ✓ *Blind spots* such as leadership disconnect, or risk secrecy created by internal *conflict, mistrust or bullying*
- ✓ *Too many systems that are numbers driven*
- ✓ The perception that my *concerns will not be addressed* (*feedback*)



Our supervisor listens to our safety concerns and provide feedback afterwards

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Neutral
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree



Building Psychological Safety

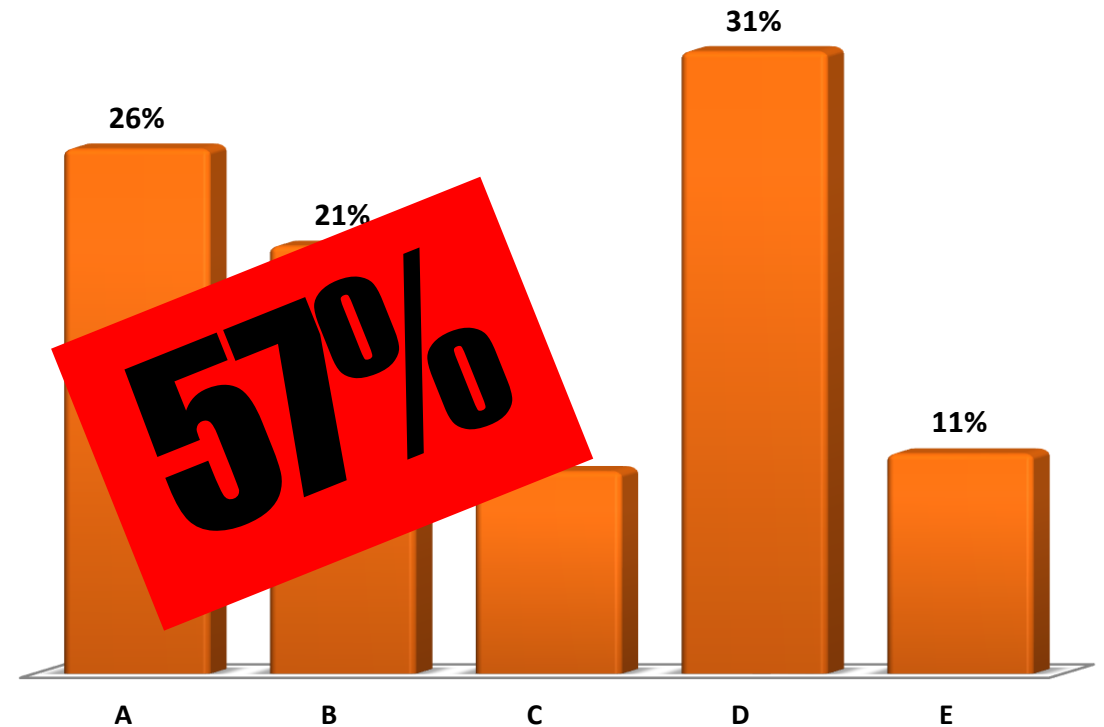
1) Leadership that Look, Listen, and Learn with Integrity

- ✓ The first step is *good listening*. Go out and commit yourself to learning as much as you can from colleagues/workers” (VFL, BBS, Meetings).
- ✓ What concerns, observations and ideas do they have? When you start *asking questions* of people in an honest, curious and learning-oriented way, they will start speaking up.
- ✓ By inviting their voices, you make it safe for them to offer their voices. *Do not just give advice or instruct*, be humble, listen and learn.
- ✓ Provide *honest feedback* to the person or group that reported the unsafe situation or behaviour



Management often ask for our opinions and suggestions about safety issues

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Neutral
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree



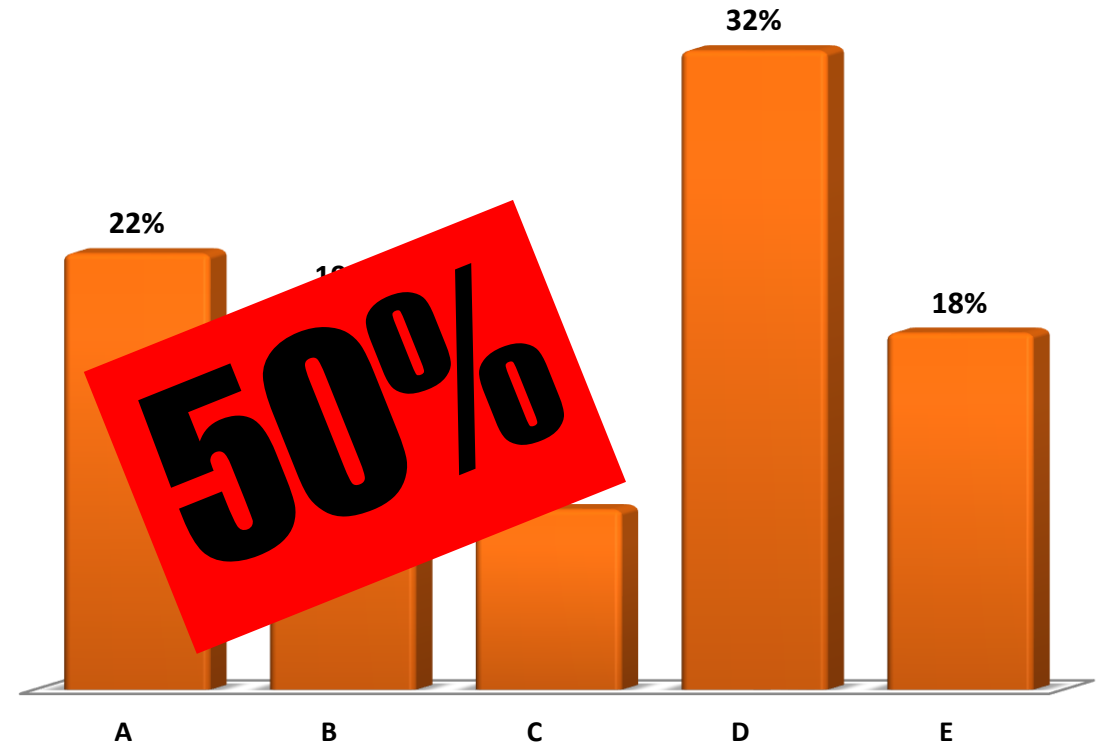
2) Build Relationships and Value Different Perspectives

- ✓ Remember to ask about people's life outside of work, too. "Psychological safety is about creating a sense of belonging, and when you ask questions about someone's family, etc., you're building a *relationship*, which is *belonging*."
- ✓ Psychological safety is built on the notion that everyone has something to offer the group. Every worker applies their *own filter of knowledge* and experiences to a situation. ***Solution for "Groupthink"***.
- ✓ Engagement and belonging are grounded in *inclusion*, being valued, respected, trusted, or cared for.

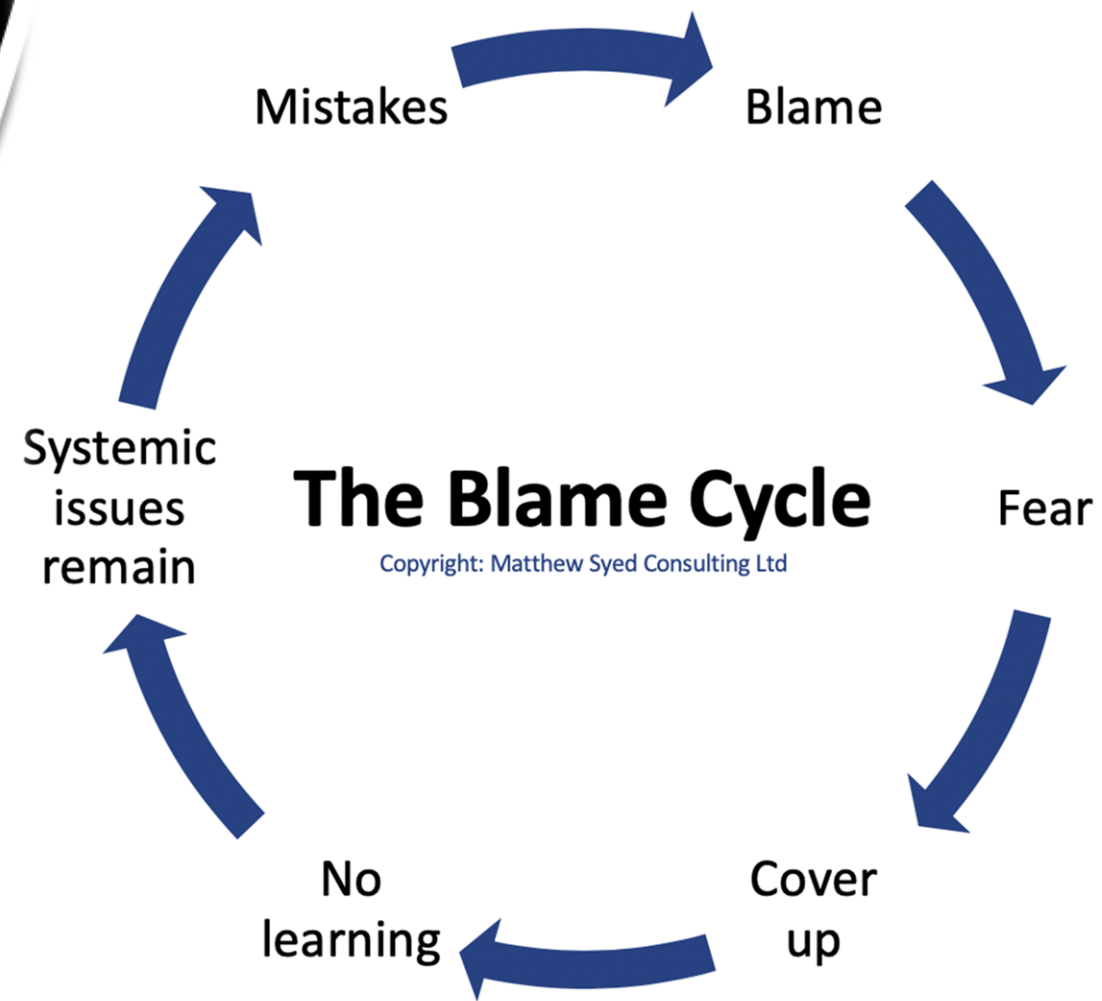


We trust each other and show our respect for one another

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Neutral
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree



3) Accept Responsibility and Stop Blaming Others

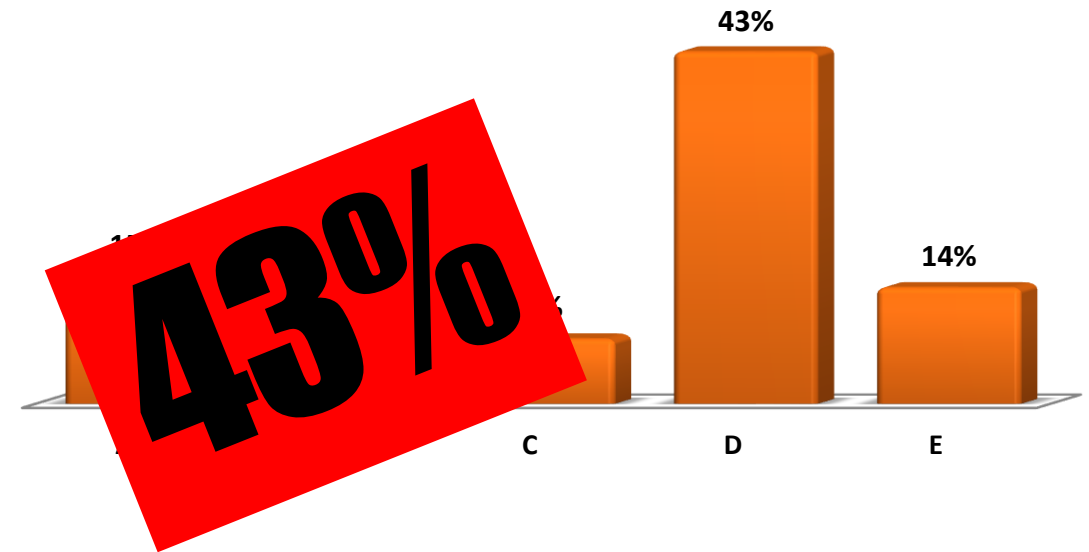


- ✓ Objective non-blaming incident *investigations*
- ✓ Involve employees in *inspections*
- ✓ Effective hazard *reporting*, corrective actions, and feedback
- ✓ Open, honest safety *conversations*
- ✓ *Stop passing the buck*
- ✓ *Empower workers and 1st line managers to manage safety in their workplaces*



35. Most employees will normally take responsibility and “ownership” of a problem until it has been resolved

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Neutral
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree



TRANSFORMATIONAL SAFETY



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY PERSONAL AWARENESS INSTRUMENT Individual Format



Thank you for taking the time to complete the Psychological Safety Personal Awareness Instrument.

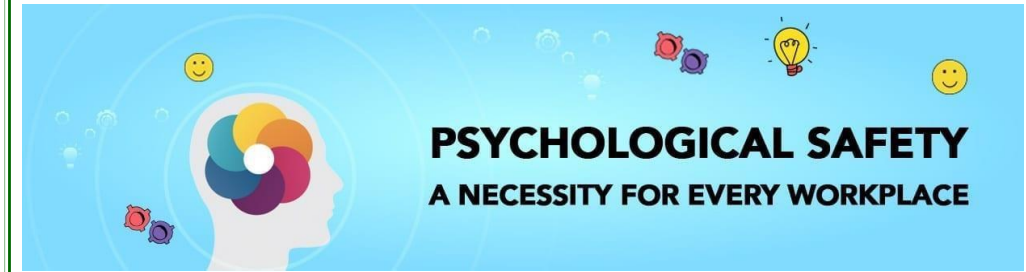
This tool shall enable you to gain a basic understanding of where you see yourself, and your surroundings, placed against three (3) elements of Psychological Safety.

Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree



INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY:	1	2	3	4	5
1. It is easy to raise my concerns and problems around safety at my workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I won't get into trouble or be criticized if I own up to an error or mistake.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I do not mind asking someone else for help when I need it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I am not afraid to talk to my supervisor about new or different ways of doing something.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SAFETY & RESPECT:	1	2	3	4	5
1. Where I work, it's okay to be different, people are accepted for who they are.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The people I work with welcome my ideas and make me feel valued.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I personally feel respected by the people I work with.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. My co-workers value each other's contributions towards safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SAFETY AND A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:	1	2	3	4	5
1. We are comfortable admitting our own errors and work as a team to try and make sure they don't happen again.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. We take as much time as needed to find new and better ways to do our tasks more safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Where I work, people are quite open to express their opinions when they think things might go wrong.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We spend enough time trying to challenge our "assumptions" and work out strategies to make sure they don't get in the way of safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Individual Scoring

Add up your scores for each of the Sections and write the results in the boxes provided.

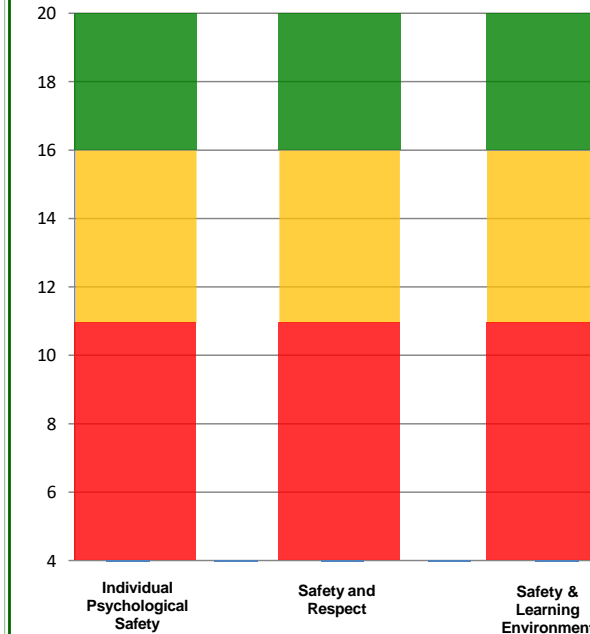
Section One (Individual Psychological Safety): =

Section Two (Safety and Respect): =

Section Three (Safety & Learning Environment): =

You now plot your raw scores on the Psychological Safety Grid.

The optimal Psychological Safety descriptors consistently demonstrate thoughts and practices in the green (best practice) zones. Amber zones are acceptable (good practice); although you should always be striving for green. Red zones are danger zones. You would prefer not to be here!



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Will **OTHERS** give you the benefit of the doubt when you take a risk?



"My team expects me to speak up. It's how we do things."