

Intro to Team Dynamics & Psychological Safety

Functional Group—people who carry out functions/tasks in the context of a group

Team—a group of people who share a high degree of interdependence and commitment to accomplish common efforts, often sharing most/all of these qualities:

1. They have a clear mission, vision, goals, and purpose.
2. They achieve a high level of shared understanding and communication.
3. They are limited in size (3-10 people).
4. They share high levels of trust.
5. They understand clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
6. They are willing to hold themselves and each other accountable.
7. They benefit from high levels of psychological & social safety and a culture of constructive conflict and ongoing learning.

Self-Directed Work Teams

1. They have the autonomy to direct themselves.
2. They share incentives, rewards, successes, and setbacks.
3. The primary roles of the manager/leader are those of a facilitator or coach.
4. They overcome segmentalism by continually broadening their perspectives through active information-seeking *and* sharing.
5. Benefits include continuous improvement in methods/procedures, enjoyable participation, work flexibility, high-quality service/products, high-quality decision-making, and reduced need for supervision.

Adapted from Harris & Sherblom (2020), Lencioni (2006) and Edmondson (2012, 2019)

What is Psychological Safety?

- It's not about being nice.
- It's not a personality factor.
- It's not just another word for trust.
- It's not about lowering performance standards.

Psychological safety is the belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes and that members of a team are safe for interpersonal risk-taking.

—Amy C. Edmondson, *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth* (2019)



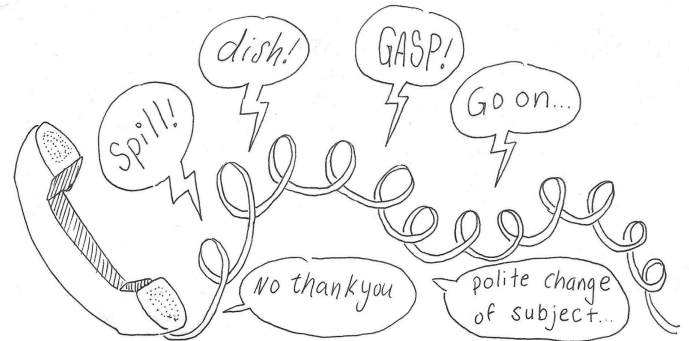
When You Have Psychological Safety	When You Don't
See mistakes as opportunities to learn	See mistakes as threats to your career
Willing to take risks and fail	Unwilling to rock the boat
Speaking your mind in groups	Keeping your thoughts/ideas to yourself
Openly sharing your struggles	Only touting your strengths
Trust in your teammates and supervisors	Fear of your teammates and supervisors
Sticking your neck out	Having your head chopped off

Adapted from *Think Again*, by Adam Grant (2021)

Gossip @ Work

A Few Definitions

- rumor or unsubstantiated information of a personal nature (Miriam Webster)
- casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true (Oxford Dictionary)
- any talk about someone who isn't present; usually about something we can make a moral judgment about; and usually entertaining or enjoyable to communicate about (Frank T. McAndrew, Professor of Psychology at Knox College)



Prosocial Aspects of Gossip

- Sharing information about other people's antisocial behavior may help or warn others
- Deep relational bonds form in the process of exchanging gossip
- Sharing information may help the subject of the gossip ("I'm worried about Rebecca...")
- Venting to someone else first could save you from blowing up unnecessarily at the target of your frustration
- Humankind's ability to form and benefit from group interactions is likely because of our unique ability to gossip (see Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens*)
- Pretty much NOBODY likes to be gossiped about, so it can be a deterrent for other people's antisocial behavior

Antisocial Aspects of Gossip

- Gossip can be like a sugar high of interpersonal communication, but it's rarely "good for you," personally or professionally
- People who engage in gossip develop a reputation for being untrustworthy
- Instead of talking TO the person or offering constructive feedback, talking ABOUT them does little for personal/relational improvement
- It is associated with rumor-spreading, tattling, libel, and slander (the last two of which are illegal)
- We are susceptible to distorting information or misunderstanding each other; spreading information based on misinformation/misunderstanding is socially destructive
- Lies or half-baked information tend to spread faster than truths and nuanced information
- Gossiping for personal gain/power-grabbing is pretty unethical
- Gossiping can be a sign of personal insecurity, immaturity, envy, and jealousy
- Gossiping keeps certain subjects/taboo topics relegated to hushed or whispered tones instead of helpful daylight
- Pretty much NOBODY likes to be gossiped about, so those who engage in it are less likely to be liked/trusted

Notes: _____