Making it safe to Go SAFe

Psychological safety and implementing SAFe
Dr. Steve Mayner
SAFe Fellow and Principal Consultant
Scaled Agile, Inc
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Lean-Agile Leadership

Mindset & Principles

Fixed Mindset → Growth Mindset

Leading by Example
- Authenticity
- Emotional Intelligence
- Lifelong Learning
- Growing Others
- Decentralized Decision-Making

Leading Change
- Change Vision
- Change Leadership
- Coalition for Change
- Psychological Safety
- Training
Exercise: Safety Survey

Complete the survey provided during the presentation.

Pay close attention to the instructions – the numeric values are not the same for each possible answer!

Total the values for each answer to get your safety score, which will also be used for a concluding exercise at the end of the session.

When poll is active, respond at PollEv.com/stevemayner366

Text STEVEMAYNER366 to 22333 once to join
Agenda

- Introduction to psychological safety
- Psychological safety and implementing SAFe
- Techniques to create psychological safety
- Poll of survey results
- Q&A
Introduction to Psychological Safety
Why the buzz around psychological safety?
Project Aristotle: secrets of effective teams at Google

- 200+ interviews over two years
- 250 attributes of teams
- 180+ teams represented

**Psychological safety** was far and away the most important of the five dynamics we found -- it’s the underpinning of the other four.

https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/understanding-team-effectiveness/steps/introduction/
What is psychological safety?

- The belief that the work environment is safe for interpersonal risk taking
- The experience of feeling able to speak up with relevant ideas, questions or concerns
- Psychological safety is present when colleagues trust and respect each other and feel able – even obligated – to be candid
- Emerges as a property of a group or team

Psychological safety is…

- …a feature of the workplace that leaders can and must create
- …where people are more afraid of failing the customer than of looking bad in front of their colleagues
- …the opposite of fear… fear inhibits learning and cooperation
- …a belief that neither the formal nor informal consequences of interpersonal risks, like asking for help or admitting a failure, will be punitive
Psychological safety is NOT…

- …just about “being nice”
- …a personality factor
- …the same as trust
- …about lowering standards
### Psychological safety and standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Psychological Safety</th>
<th>Low Standards</th>
<th>High Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort Zone</td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning &amp; High Performance Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Psychological Safety</td>
<td>Apathy Zone</td>
<td>Anxiety Zone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Signs of an “unsafe” environment

- Lack of healthy disagreement and conflict (silence)
- Blame and finger-pointing when errors occur
- No one asks for feedback (retros die)
- Open unhealthy and personal criticism
- Escalations and passive-aggressive behavior
- Work slowdowns and loss of productivity
- People are disengaged and unenthusiastic
Psychological safety and implementing SAFe
SAFe = Change
Change is hard
Keys to successful organizational change and SAFe

- Employee engagement and contribution
- Open and positive communication
- Trust in the vision and direction of leaders
- Curious, blame-free learning environment
- Relentless improvement
- Commitment to each other
Do you see the problem?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of unsafe environments</th>
<th>Factors critical to SAFe implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People are disengaged and unenthusiastic</td>
<td>Employee engagement and contribution</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lack of healthy disagreement and conflict (silence)</td>
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Techniques to create psychological safety
Keys to creating psychological safety

- Freedom to fail
- Curiosity not blame
- Extreme candor
- Radical transparency
- Productive conflict
- Vulnerability and humility
- Invite participation
- Permission to care
- Value people

Leaders
Go
First.
Do you feel safe?

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>High psychological safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-21</td>
<td>Some areas of concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-18</td>
<td>Unsafe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources for further study

Seminal Research on Psychological Safety


Questions
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