

Promoting psychological safety in meetings: A Guide for Leaders

Psychological safety means creating an environment in which team members feel safe to express their opinions and ideas freely, without fear of criticism, rejection or negative consequences. This atmosphere not only fosters creativity and innovation, but also trust and collaboration. Below are eight key aspects for organising meetings with a high level of psychological safety - with appropriate do's, don'ts and concrete formulations.

1. Define a clear goal

A clear goal provides orientation and ensures that all participants can focus on the purpose of the meeting. This way, everyone feels involved and knows how they can contribute.

Do's:

- "The aim of our meeting is to clarify [the issue] and find a solution together."
- "We want to achieve [result] today. If anything is unclear, please speak up."
- "If anyone feels that we are moving away from the topic, let's address it openly."

Don'ts:

- Avoid vague announcements like: "We'll just talk about everything."
- Avoid statements like: "We can see where this is going."
- "I then decide in the end what is important."

2. Promote open communication

Open communication means that all opinions and perspectives are welcome. Such an attitude strengthens trust within the team.

Do's:

- "There are no wrong questions or ideas here - share anything that comes to mind."
- "Who has a different perspective on the topic?"
- "Let's collect ideas without evaluating them directly."

Don'ts:

- "This is not a discussion, this is what we do."
- "That's not a good idea, let's tick it off."
- "Anyone who disagrees must not have understood."

3. Active listening

Active listening shows appreciation and gives participants the feeling that their opinions count. Do's:

- "I understood you to say [summary]. Is that correct?"
- "Thank you, that was an important point. Does anyone have any additions?"
- "I hear that this is a subject close to your heart. Let's take a closer look."

Don'ts:

- "That's not important, we're moving on."
- "I heard you, but..."
- "Just wait and see, don't interrupt, even if you're impatient."

4. Normalise errors

Mistakes are learning opportunities. When managers deal openly with mistakes, they also encourage the team to be honest.

Do's:

- "Mistakes happen, and that's okay. The important thing is what we learn from them."
- "What can we take away from this situation and how can we improve it?"
- "Thank you for addressing this openly. That way we can work on it together."

Don'ts:

- "That shouldn't have happened."
- "How could this happen to you? This will have consequences for you!"
- "Something like this must never happen to us again."

5. Ensuring equal rights

All opinions are equally important. Managers should ensure that everyone is heard. Do's:

- "We haven't heard from [name] yet. Would you like to contribute something?"
- "I want to ensure that everyone can contribute their point of view."
- "Does anyone from the group who hasn't spoken much so far have any thoughts on this?"

Don'ts:

- "Only those who speak up get to speak."
- "We don't have time to listen to all opinions."
- Don't always favour the same people.

6. Use positive language

A positive and constructive choice of words promotes commitment and trust.

Do's:

- "That's a good approach. How could we develop it further?"
- "I see potential in this idea. How can we develop it?"
- "Thank you for your contribution, that was helpful."

Don'ts:

- "That doesn't get us anywhere now."
- "I don't know why you even suggested it."
- Ironic or cynical comments such as: "Well, that was to be expected."

7. Respect emotions

Emotions are a natural part of discussions. Recognising them shows empathy and strengthens trust.

Do's:

- "I can see that the topic moves you. Thank you for sharing it."
- "It's okay if it's emotional - that shows how important it is."
- "Thank you for your openness, it helps us to understand the situation better."

Don'ts:

- "That's not worth mentioning."
- "We have no room for emotions here."
- "That's not professional."

8. Make enquiries

Targeted enquiries show interest and promote understanding of different perspectives. Do's:

- "Can you explain that in more detail?"
- "What other alternatives do you see?"
- "What do you think is needed to realise this?"

Don'ts:

- "That's self-explanatory, we don't need to discuss it any further."
- "That's not a relevant question."
- No enquiries about silent participants - this signals a lack of interest.

Conclusion:

Organising a meeting with a high level of psychological safety requires targeted communication, empathy and a clear structure. By actively encouraging the expression of opinions, responding constructively to ideas and creating an open, respectful environment, you not only promote the quality of the discussions, but also the cohesion and motivation of your team.

NB: These tips complement your agenda in an applicable form.



www.pilotimpuls.ch
www.medLEAD360.ch

Would you like more, a keynote speech or training for your team on this topic? The Pilot Impuls team is here for you. You can find more exciting articles, the newsletter, podcast and video here:



LinkedIn



podcast



Youtube

