

# The Psychological Safety Index

A DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENT SCORED ON A SEVEN-POINT SCALE

---

## 01 Why Psychological Safety Matters

In today's complex, fast-changing organisations, success depends on the ability of people to [think, speak, and learn](#) together. Psychological safety – a concept pioneered by [Professor Amy Edmondson of Harvard Business School](#) – describes a shared belief among team members that it is safe to take interpersonal risks. When people feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to share ideas, admit mistakes, ask questions, and challenge assumptions without fear of embarrassment or retribution. High-performing individuals and teams thrive in environments of psychological safety.

Google's [Project Aristotle](#) reinforced this insight by studying more than 180 teams to uncover what makes the most effective ones thrive. The top predictor of high-performing teams wasn't talent, seniority, or resources – it was psychological safety. Teams that felt safe to speak up were consistently more innovative, engaged, and resilient in the face of uncertainty.

---

## 02 Why Organisations Must Assess It

Despite its proven impact, psychological safety is often [assumed rather than measured](#). Many organisations unknowingly reward short-term performance while overlooking the behavioural and cultural enablers that sustain high performance over time. Without data, leaders can miss early warning signs – like silence, disengagement, or “toxic high performers” – that signal deeper cultural risks.

Evaluating psychological safety helps organisations to:

- **Diagnose cultural health** and detect barriers to openness, trust, and learning.
- **Target leadership development** where inclusion, fairness, or communication needs strengthening.
- **Correlate culture with performance**, innovation, and retention outcomes.
- **Create accountability** for not just what results are achieved, but how they are achieved.

### 03 The Purpose of This Assessment

This diagnostic survey is designed to help organisations and teams **measure and understand the enablers that create psychological safety**, as well as **the overall level of safety experienced by employees**, (colours depict Questions below) In an organisational context, **psychological safety** – the shared belief that it's safe to take interpersonal risks – is shaped by a set of key **enablers** that foster trust, openness, and learning. Research by Amy Edmondson, Google's Project Aristotle, and other organisational behaviour studies highlight the following **top 10 enablers**:



## What Creates Psychological Safety

### 1 Inclusive Leadership

Leaders who actively invite input, listen without judgement, and show humility about their own fallibility create an environment where employees feel safe to speak up. Inclusion signals that every voice matters.

### 2 Trust and Respect

Mutual respect and consistent behaviour build trust over time. When people trust that their peers and leaders won't ridicule or punish them for honest mistakes, they are more likely to share ideas and concerns.

### 3 Clear and Shared Purpose

Teams with a clear, shared sense of purpose understand that speaking up serves the collective goal. This reduces fear of interpersonal risk by framing contributions as mission-driven rather than personal.

### 4 Open Communication Norms

Cultural norms that encourage candour, curiosity, and active listening are critical. Teams that model "learning conversations" rather than blame-based exchanges promote psychological safety.

### 5 Support for Learning and Experimentation

Organisations that treat failure as part of learning – through experimentation, reflection, and feedback loops – normalise risk-taking. This encourages innovation and continuous improvement.

### 6 Accountability with Compassion

Balancing accountability with empathy creates safety. Teams that hold members to high standards while offering support for mistakes enable both performance and trust.

### 7 Role Modelling by Leaders

Leaders who admit their own mistakes, ask for feedback, and model vulnerability set a powerful tone. Psychological safety often cascades from the top.

### 8 Fairness and Equity

Perceived fairness in decision-making, recognition, and workload distribution fosters a sense of justice and belonging. Inequity or favouritism erodes safety quickly.

### 9 Team Cohesion and Peer Support

Strong interpersonal relationships buffer the risks of speaking up. Cohesive teams with social support and empathy are more resilient to conflict and open dialogue.

### 10 Safe Structures and Processes

Formal mechanisms – such as anonymous feedback channels, regular retrospectives, or "fail-safe" meetings – institutionalise safety and ensure it doesn't depend solely on personality or luck.

## PART 1

## The 10 Enablers

Answer the following questions across the 10 enabler paired questions on a scale of 1–7 and average the score per enabler.

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT<br>DISAGREE | NEUTRAL | SOMEWHAT<br>AGREE | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |

### 1 Inclusive Leadership

1. My team leader actively invites input and perspectives from everyone, regardless of role or seniority.

2. When I share an idea or concern, my leader listens without defensiveness or dismissal.



TOTAL

AVERAGE

### 2 Trust and respect

1. I trust that my teammates will not embarrass or punish me for making a mistake.

2. People on this team respect one another, even when they disagree.



TOTAL

AVERAGE

### 3 Clear and Shared Purpose

1. Our team has a clear understanding of what success looks like for us.

2. I see how my work directly contributes to the team's purpose and goals.



TOTAL

AVERAGE

### 4 Open Communication Norms

1. Team discussions allow for honest and direct feedback without fear of backlash

2. Difficult topics are discussed openly rather than avoided or ignored.



TOTAL

AVERAGE

### 5 Support for learning and Experimentation

1. Trying new ideas, even if they fail, is valued on this team.

2. When mistakes happen, we treat them as learning opportunities rather than sources of blame.



TOTAL

AVERAGE

## PART 1

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT<br>DISAGREE | NEUTRAL | SOMEWHAT<br>AGREE | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |

**6** Accountability with Compassion

|                                                                                    |              |                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. People are held accountable for results in a way that is fair and constructive. |              |                |
| 2. When someone struggles, teammates and leaders offer help rather than criticism. |              |                |
|                                                                                    | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>AVERAGE</b> |

**7** Role modelling by leaders

|                                                                               |              |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. My leader openly admits their own mistakes or uncertainties.               |              |                |
| 2. Leaders in this organisation model the behaviours they expect from others. |              |                |
|                                                                               | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>AVERAGE</b> |

**8** Fairness and Equity

|                                                                                                 |              |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Decisions about recognition, opportunities, and rewards are made fairly and transparently.   |              |                |
| 2. Everyone on the team feels they are treated equitably, regardless of background or position. |              |                |
|                                                                                                 | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>AVERAGE</b> |

**9** Team Cohesion and Peer Support

|                                                                                           |              |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Members of this team genuinely care about one another's well-being.                    |              |                |
| 2. When challenges arise, teammates pull together rather than compete against each other. |              |                |
|                                                                                           | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>AVERAGE</b> |

**10** Safe Structures and Processes

|                                                                                                                     |              |                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. There are established channels (e.g., retrospectives, feedback sessions) where people can safely voice concerns. |              |                |
| 2. I know where to go if I have a problem that might affect our team climate or safety.                             |              |                |
|                                                                                                                     | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>AVERAGE</b> |

## PART 1 ENABLERS · SCORING

- Answer the 10 questions, scoring between 1 and 7.
- Take the Average of each enabling pairing of 2 questions.
- Sum the 10 averages and divide by 10 to get an average score of PART 1

Sum of the 10 Averages

Divide above 10

## PART 2

## The Global Items

Amy Edmondson's 7-item scale measures psychological safety in a team by assessing individuals' perceptions of whether it is safe to speak up, take interpersonal risks, and learn from mistakes without fear of negative consequences. The scale consists of seven statements, such as "I can report patient safety mistakes without fear of punishment" and "People on this team sometimes accept others for being different," rated on a Likert scale (1 to 7) to indicate the level of safety within the team.

## Purpose of the Scale

- **Measure psychological safety:** The primary goal is to gauge how safe team members feel to contribute, ask questions, voice concerns, and admit errors without fear of retribution.
- **Facilitate reflection and improvement:** The survey is a tool for teams to reflect on their experiences and identify areas for potential improvement, fostering a more open and productive environment.

Using the same scale, and adapted from Amy Edmondson's 7-item Psychological Safety scale, please answer the following questions:

| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE | DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT<br>DISAGREE | NEUTRAL | SOMEWHAT<br>AGREE | AGREE | STRONGLY<br>AGREE |

1. **Reporting mistakes:** Can I admit to making a mistake without being punished

2. **Raising Issues:** Can I bring up problems and tough issues?

3. **Accepting difference:** Are people in the team accepted for being different?

4. **Taking Risks:** Is it safe to take risks within the team?

5. **Asking for Help:** Is it easy to ask others for help?

6. **No deliberate undermining:** Will no one act in a way that undermines my efforts?

7. **Valuing unique skills:** Are my unique skills and talents valued and utilised?

## PART 2 GLOBAL ITEMS · SCORING

- Answer each question and score between 1 and 7.
- Calculate the average of 7 questions.

Total of 7 Questions

Average of 7 questions

YOUR RESULT

Overall Psychological Safety Index

Mean of all enabler scores + global items

|                                                                                 |                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Average score Part 1                                   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Average score Part 2                                   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Combine Part 1 and Part 2 · Average of above 2 results |  |

Mean Score Interpretation

|         |           |                                              |
|---------|-----------|----------------------------------------------|
| 6.0–7.0 | Excellent | Strong psychological safety climate          |
| 5.0–5.9 | Healthy   | Generally safe, with minor improvement areas |
| 4.0–4.9 | Moderate  | Some trust issues or unclear norms present   |
| 3.0–3.9 | Fragile   | Team avoids risks on difficult conversations |
| < 3.0   | Unsafe    | Fear and silence likely inhibit performance  |

Going Further

We divided the two areas above into Part 1 and Part 2 to understand the enablers of psychological safety, allowing us to discuss and address them. Other 3Qetc tools that may complement the process of improving psychological safety and exploring one's own self-awareness are available on <https://www.3qetc.com/resources>.

|                                                     |                                                              |                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder map | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People / leader feedback | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership hygiene |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Growth Mindset  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emotional intelligence   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Listening test     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strengths       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flourishing wheel        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Burn-out           |