This resource guide includes a diverse range of reports, insights, tools, and strategies to help PG&E build emotional and psychological safety and a speak up culture. Research and literature reviews demonstrated that emotional safety and psychological safety are largely interchangeable concepts. For the purposes of this report, the focus has been placed on psychological safety.

In this guide, excerpts and descriptions of the resources selected are presented verbatim to highlight content value, in addition to live links to the supporting resources and documentation.

Originally coined by **Dr. Amy Edmonson**, a professor at Harvard Business School, the term **psychological safety** refers to a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking. Taking a risk around your team members may sound simple. But asking a basic question like "what's the goal of this project?" may make you sound like you're out of the loop. It might feel easier to continue without getting clarification in order to avoid being perceived as ignorant.

Dr. Edmondson offers three simple things individuals can do to foster team psychological safety:

● Frame the work as a learning problem, not an execution problem.
● Acknowledge your own fallibility.
● Model curiosity and ask lots of questions.

To learn more about the landmark thinking behind Dr. Edmonson's research, check out these resources, including the book The Fearless Organization which explores the cost of a lack of psychological safety in a number of case study organizations, including in the energy industry, that led to decision failure and significant costs in revenue and human capital loss.

Building a psychologically safe workplace, TED talk by Amy Edmondson

Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace, Podcast with Harvard Business School and Amy Edmondson If unable to access via the HBR link, try clicking here

The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth, by Amy C. Edmondson

Surviving the Disengaging Workplace

Psychological safety is about creating an environment where employees' feel empowered to express an idea or contribution fully, without fear of negative consequences to themselves, their status or their career. It includes being courageous enough to showcase their vulnerability, to own their mistakes and turn them into learning, and trust that their work environment and co-workers will not shame them for doing so.

However, before organizations can foster psychological safety and expect revolutionary contributions, there's a prerequisite: **Employees must be accepted for who they are and valued for what they can bring. This prerequisite is where diversity and inclusion become intertwined with psychological safety.**

These two insight papers from the Training Industry provide a solid contextual overview of the importance of psychological safety and the intersection with D&I, as well as a number of strategies and tips for leaders and their teams.

[Inclusive Leadership: The Role of Psychological Safety](#)

[5 Ways to Learn from Failure and Advance Your Development as a Leader](#)

The concept of psychological safety gained traction and national attention with a study initiated by Google in 2012. Observing over 180 Google teams across a two-year period, the study found that **the single biggest predictor of team success was psychological safety**. More than who was on the team, it was the way the team interacted that led to the biggest benefits. Employees in psychologically safe teams were less likely to want to leave Google, brought in more revenue, and were rated as effective twice as often by executives.

Read more about the Aristotle Project here:

[The New York Times: What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team](#)

[How to foster Psychological Safety on your teams: 28 tips from Google to help create team environments where everyone can contribute](#)

[High-Performing Teams Need Psychological Safety. Here's How to Create It](#)

The Google research was interesting as much for what they found didn't matter, at least when working at Google: things like colocation (working in the same place), team size, individual performance, and extroversion levels - none of those factors had a significant impact. So what were the factors they found to be most significant for effective teams? Importantly, psychological safety isn't 'soft' - it isn't about avoiding disagreements or withholding corrective feedback - it's not about bubble wrapping the environment so people can't hurt themselves.

Rather, an environment with psychological safety is supportive but stretching. Once people are free to try things and make mistakes, we are better able to set high standards and hold people to account. A workplace with psychological safety isn't about comfort - in fact, it can feel quite uncomfortable as you're being stretched into new areas. However, you feel supported. You are still responsible for the consequences of your actions, but your fellow team members want you to succeed and have got your back. It's better to think of psychological safety as something that makes people confident, not comfortable.

Check out this podcast by Leadership Today for more information and insight.

[Psychological Safety - The Hard Edge to Feeling Safe at Work](#)

In promoting the results of Google's research internally, the company's research team has been running workshops using anonymized scenarios to illustrate behaviors that can support and harm psychological safety. The scenarios are role-played and then the group debriefs.

Here's a link to a sample workshop scenario.

[Psychological Safety Scenario | Ideas & Innovation](#)

Diverse workgroups may have to work harder than homogenous groups to foster a speak-up culture. While diversity offers potential benefits, diversity also enhances the potential for language and other communication barriers. It heightens the risk of ambiguity, value conflicts, reasoning and decision-making differences, and stereotypes and bias threaten rapport and stifle the exchange of information and ideas.

In diverse work settings, minority group members experience higher levels of workplace anxiety linked to exclusion, discrimination, harassment, and incivility as well as lowered access to resources required for job performance, fewer role models, lack of access to networks, pay inequality, and fewer opportunities for career progression. Research has also found that women experience lower levels of psychological safety compared with men.

Leader behaviors are critical for fostering psychological safety. A single instance of a team leader critiquing, talking over, or otherwise dismissing a concern raised by a junior team member can damage perceptions of psychological safety for the whole team. This is why perceptions of psychological safety can vary markedly across departments or workgroups. However, because psychological safety is a group-level phenomenon, what matters is not only the behaviors of leaders but also the behaviors of all group members. Leaders must pay attention to the responses of others as well as their own responses.

A few fundamental shifts in attitude towards a more win-win way of engaging with each other, structuring conversations in language that is more collaborative and less adversarial, replacing blame with curiosity and leaders embracing their vulnerability are a few other steps through which teams can go on to become "safe" for everyone.

This report by Include-Empower provides a good overview of the link between psychological safety and D&I (including statistics that can help an organization demonstrate the business case), and tips for leaders to build psychological safety and a speak-up culture.

[How to Develop Psychological Safety and a Speak-up Culture](#)

If psychological safety is key to high performing teams, how do you improve it? Where do you start? What are the key actions you can take to increase the level of psychological safety in your environment?

The Leadership Factor offers a free guidebook on the topic (and access to a free survey) to help organizations assess and build psychological safety on teams. In particular, check out Stage 3: Contributor Safety which provides tips and strategies to make team members feel safe enough to contribute and make a difference.

Dr. Timothy Clark, founder of Leader Factor, also developed this podcast for building psychological safety on teams.

[The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety](#)

[Super Humans at Work podcast](#)

Research tells us that cognitive diversity makes a group smarter. Two heads are, indeed, better than one, and many heads are even better, especially when everyone is willing to share their expertise and opinions. While diverse thinking and disagreements can be uncomfortable, they are more likely to lead partners or a team to make progress, innovate and come up with breakthrough solutions than consensus and "nice" conversations in which people hold back what they think.

But how do you have a productive debate? By reminding your group to follow four general rules: Remember we're all on the same team. Keep it about facts, logic, and the topic at hand. Don't make it personal. Be intellectually humble.

This article by Harvard Business Review provides insight and suggestions for tackling difficult conversations and debating ideas productively at work.

[How to Debate Ideas Productively at Work](#)

Organizations that leverage talent optimization succeed in reaching their business goals largely because their employees work together efficiently. People managers play a key role in this by motivating teams and providing a positive employee experience.

In 2019, The Predictive Index conducted a survey to ask employees from 13 industries about their managers. Their answers reveal the subtle ways managers sabotage their teams—and what sets world-class managers apart from the rest. The report includes survey results and provides a good framework for the kinds of questions organizations can ask employees to assess their psychological safety.

Read this report to learn what your managers are doing well, and what they could be doing better.

[The 2019 People Management Report](#)

Medium compiled this list of more than 50 strategies and behaviors managers can adopt to advance psychological safety in their teams.

[Of Course Psychological Safety… But How?](#)

This **case study** by Medium closely examines how Elsevier, a global business with nearly 8000 employees, increased the level of psychological safety in a large distributed organization. It provides a step-by-step process for implementing the concept in your organization.

[Building Psychological Safety: A Build-Measure-Learn Approach, Focused on Teams](#)

Times of crisis are uncomfortable and disruptive. This is true whether the crisis is a shared adversity (e.g., global pandemic, economic recession, natural disasters) or an individual struggle (e.g., medical emergency, financial hardship, domestic abuse). During any disruption, talking openly about challenges can be uncomfortable and daunting for several reasons, and employees may hold back due to the risk of negative judgment, ridicule, rejection, or potentially retributive behavior.

But disruptions make it all the more important for individuals and leaders to have relevant and accurate information. Employees and managers need to feel comfortable both giving and receiving feedback and information in two-way dialogue.

Berkeley Labs has developed a number of resources to foster psychological safety: a leader discussion guide; toolkit for supervisors; a briefing guide for leaders, and a survey instrument to assess psychological safety on your teams.

[IDEA Leader discussion guide on psychological safety](#)

[Supervisor Toolkit: Fostering Psychological Safety During Times of Crisis](#)

[Psychological Safety & Collaborative Leadership: Igniting Collaborative Innovation](#)

[Psychological Safety Team Survey](#)

Fun Retrospectives offers organizations a number of tips and simple exercises to assess psychological safety on their teams.

[Safety Check Exercise](#)
[Creating Safety Exercise](#)

When we talk about diversity in the workplace, we usually think in terms of age and gender. But what about the important differences in personalities, communication styles and approaches? All too often, people don't speak up at work because it doesn't feel safe – and the consequences can be far reaching. In this podcast we look at the idea of 'psychological safety', and how we can create a framework that really honors the differences people bring to a team.

[The People Leaders Podcast episode on Psychological Safety podcast](#)

At some point we all experience the fear of judgement. Chris Strouthopoulos is a Professor of Student Success at San Juan University where he focuses on individual empowerment and leadership. This TED Talk explores the many ways fear causes us to hold back, how this impacts group performance, and specific strategies to build trust and create open, collaborative, and high performing teams.

[Psychological Safety: How to Build Trust and Create Open, Successful Teams - TED Talk](#)

A simple but great conversation starter for any team is an advertisement developed by Denmark television. The strategy, All That We Share, is about focusing on the things that unite us in dividing times. As TV2's video opens, Danes file quietly onto a soundstage, stepping into outlined areas on the floor — areas meant to define them. "The High Earners" versus "Those Just Getting By." "Those We Trust" versus "Those We Try to Avoid." Lifelong Danes, versus those new to Denmark. Divisions you will find not just in Denmark, but in any country on Earth. Quickly, the "Us versus Them" narrative falls apart. People begin to step out of their so-called defining boxes.

The film is compelling and powerful and reminds us of all that we have in common.

[All That We Share](#)

Another great conversation starter is Heineken's #OpenYourWorld campaign. The campaign addresses bias and differences and showcases an experiment that helps people with strong opposing views form unexpected connections.

[#OpenYourWorld](#)