

Group Contract for Trust, Creativity & High Performance

Purpose: Psychologically safe teams are able to communicate freely, challenge the status quo, think big and take risks, and work through difficult situations in a productive and respectful way. While psychological safety is not a new term, it has certainly become more essential than ever, with the transformation of workplace dynamics and the heightened awareness of diversity in its various forms. The world's top organisations recognise the impact of psychological safety on its people's ability to be productive, collaborative, and effective.

Instructions:

1. **Overview** (2-3 minutes): Share with the group that each person's participation throughout the program is both valuable and essential. Briefly outline what psychological safety is, and its importance in being innovative, creatively solving problems, and establishing an inspiring group culture. Remind them that these are not ground rules to monitor each other's behavior, but rather agreements that they have decided on themselves, to bring about inclusion, integrity, and positive impact. Share that our goal here is to collectively decide on 6-10 agreements to enable this.
2. **Visualisation** (2-3 minutes): Invite everyone to take a few mindful breaths and envision themselves in this group at the end of the day or program. Ask them to visualise (without sharing): '*What have you achieved?*'; '*How energised and creative do you feel?*'; '*What connections have you created with others in this group?*'
3. **Discussion** (35-40 minutes):
 1. Ask the group: '*What is going to help us work well together?*' and capture only keywords on a flip chart/digitally. (2-3 minutes)
 2. Reinforce their contributions and remind them that our goal is to come up with a group contract of 6-10 agreements, through consensus.
 3. Go deeper into the discussion by asking key questions around their keywords and the elements of psychological safety (suggestions below). Choose questions/elements based on your understanding of the existing group culture and dynamics, and the time available. For example, ask: '*Creativity requires us to take risks - how do we share big ideas? How do we show others that their ideas are valued?*

4. Use clarifying questions and prompt the group to articulate the observable behaviour(s) that will show they are living up to that agreement.
 5. Ask for consensus before writing the agreement on a blank flip chart/slide/digital space. Repeat this until you have considered all topics and your list of agreements is complete. Questions could include:
 - *How does diversity show up in this group? How do we view and approach diversity effectively and respectfully?*
 - *What type of conflicts could occur? How might curiosity help us approach conflicts?*
 - *What does full participation look like? What can we do to encourage others to participate?*
 - *What does effective communication look like? What type of questions can we ask? What should our communication have more of? Less of?*
 - *How do we approach challenging conversations/issues/concerns/problems?*
 - *What would encourage you to best share your ideas and views openly? What do we need to keep in mind? How can we enable this for others?*
 - *What degree of confidentiality do we agree to maintain?*
 - *What else would enable our group to work well together?*
 6. When writing the agreements, paraphrase for conciseness but be sure to check with the group that they agree with the edits.
-
4. **Commitment** (2-5 minutes): After completing the list, invite each person in the group (including you!) to 'sign the contract' to symbolise their commitment to these agreements. Share with the group that, as the facilitator, you commit to using this contract as your guiding star, and will intervene when any of the agreements are in compromise.
 5. **Usage:** Refer back to the agreements at the beginning of every event-day, or as needed during sessions.

This method is useful in the following instances:

- Online or face-to-face
- At the beginning a group program
- For one-off or continuous sessions
- For established or new groups
- When full participation is essential