

# Understanding Psychological Safety and Wellness in the Workplace

Champions of Change Coalition Architecture Group 2023





The Champions of Change Architecture Group  
acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the many  
Countries on which we live and work and recognise their  
continuing connection to lands, waters and communities.  
We recognise that these lands were never ceded. We  
pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
peoples and cultures and to Elders past and present.

We gladly accept the invitation extended in the Uluru  
Statement from the Heart to walk together in a movement  
of the Australian people for a better future.

# We recognise women in all their diversity

---

We recognise that efforts to advance gender equality have not lifted all women equally. By highlighting the specific demographics of people who experience exclusion, we increase the issue's visibility and boost understanding of how exclusion is experienced within organisations and in society more generally.

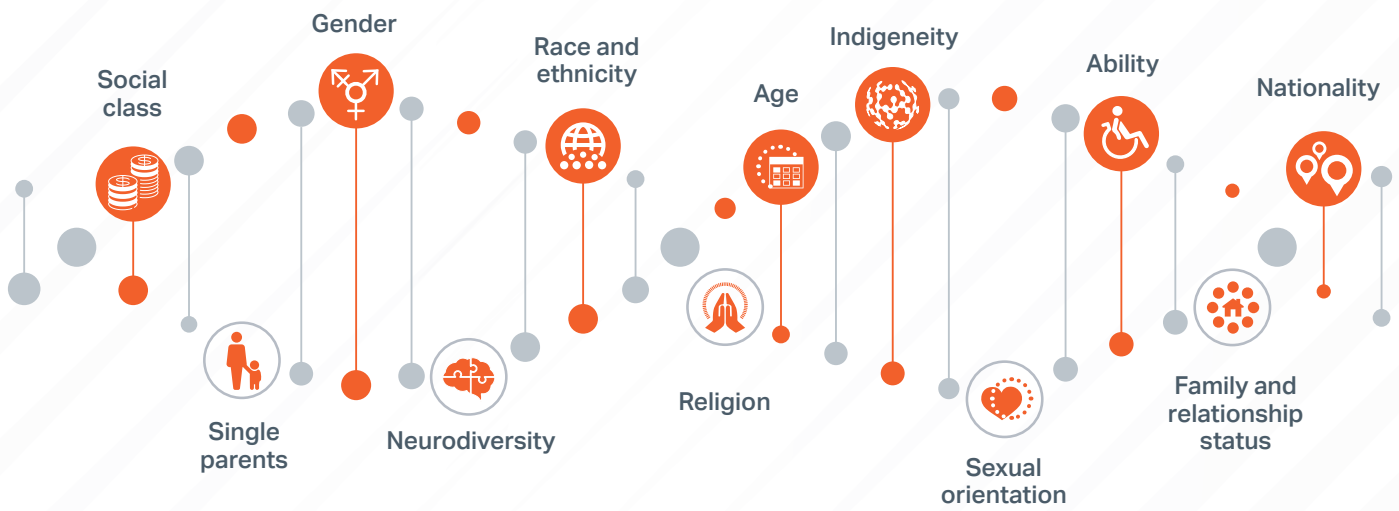
Throughout this document, the terms **women, women in all their diversity, women experiencing intersecting inequalities and diverse people** are used to improve readability. Women includes both cis and trans women.

When referring to **women experiencing intersecting inequalities**, means the structural inequalities and multiple, intersecting and compounding barriers to inclusion and progression faced by:

- **women from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds**
- **single parents**
- **First Nations women**
- **women with disability**
- **ethnically and/or racially marginalised women**
- **neurodivergent women**
- **LGBTIQ+ women.**

When referring to **diverse people**, this means the wealth and variety of people who broadly reflect the diversity of our population.

**Inclusive gender equality** recognises that diversity, equity and inclusion strategies must consider and engage all genders in global efforts to achieve gender equality, with a particular focus on elevating and advancing currently under-represented and marginalised groups. At its core, the intent is to create respectful, safe and inclusive cultures of belonging for all.



# Contents

---

	Introduction	7
<b>1.0 DEFINING NEEDS</b>	Objectives	9
	Definitions & Understanding	10
<b>2.0 HOW TO LEARN</b>	Developing a Studio Perspective	13
	Understand How & Why	14
	Benefits of Focus Groups	15
<b>3.0 LISTENING &amp; LEARNING</b>	Establishing Listening & Learning Sessions	17
	Discussion & Data Collection: Starting the Session	18
	Discussion & Data Collection: Definitions and Considerations	19
	Discussion & Data Collection: Survey Questions	20
<b>4.0 THEMES &amp; STRATEGIES</b>	Developing Insights: Themes	22
	Session Outcomes	24
	Applying Insights: Strategies	25
	Building Psychological Safety	26
<b>5.0 RESOURCES</b>	Appendices	28
	Suggested Reading	32
	References	34
	Acknowledgement of Contributors	35

# Introduction

---

As the construction and architecture industry becomes more complex, diverse, and demanding, the importance of psychological safety in the workplace cannot be overstated.

Psychological safety refers to an environment where people feel safe to speak up, express concerns, and take risks without fear of retribution, ridicule or ostracism. In other words, psychological safety is the foundation of a healthy and productive workplace where team members can collaborate, innovate, and thrive (Dr. Amy Edmondson, The Fearless Organisation).

All companies have a duty of care to provide a safe and healthy work environment for employees. This includes emotional safety as well as physical safety. Promoting psychological safety is both a moral imperative and a legal obligation.

This toolkit will explore the importance of psychological safety in the construction and architecture industry, the benefits of promoting psychological safety, and how to cultivate a culture of trust and respect in the workplace. Implementing the suggested strategies and tools can improve team morale, productivity, and overall performance.

# 1.0 DEFINING NEEDS

Understanding the terms relating to psychological safety is essential to fostering a healthy and thriving workplace.

Psychological safety encompasses various principles that create an environment where individuals feel safe, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives.

Key definitions associated with psychological safety include belonging, trust, diversity, equity, and inclusion.



## Mission & Objectives

The aim of this toolkit is to bring awareness to psychological safety and belonging in the workplace, and communicate the benefit of these to both employees and employers. In order to have working environments that are diverse, inclusive, equitable and safe for all people within an organisation, it is important to develop strategies and frameworks that support communication, training and development. This toolkit will assist and encourage workplaces to pursue a significant cultural shift.

- To create a more gender-balanced, safe and caring workplace where employees feel comfortable expressing their own perspectives and individuality.
- To create a diverse and inclusive environment where employees can reach their full potential.
- To create a safe environment for individuals to raise concerns, regardless of their level within the company structure.
- To result in more diverse leadership including increased female representation and visibility in senior roles.



**People will trust their leaders when their leaders do the things that make them feel psychologically safe.**

Simon Sinek

---

These three elements are critical to a successful workplace culture, and are relevant to individuals, groups and organisations.

# 1

## Belonging

A foundation for individuals to feel comfortable and secure in expressing their authentic selves. When individuals feel a sense of belonging, they are more likely to engage in open communication, collaborate with others, and take risks without fear of judgment or rejection.

Belonging creates an atmosphere where diversity is celebrated, and individuals are encouraged to bring their unique perspectives and contributions to the table.

# 2

## Trust

When an organisation, group or individual drives open and honest communication, without judgement, to develop steps towards a collaborative workplace.

A trusting relationship between the employer, employee and colleagues allows peoples' individual talents, creativity, passion and energy to be expressed and accepted. This enables a truly collaborative environment where different skill sets may be optimised, and the core values of the organisation understood.

# 3

## Psychological Safety

The belief that your environment allows interpersonal risk taking, such as voicing your opinion or speaking up as a minority or lesser-heard voice.

This encourages differing opinions and stimulates discussions and understanding across all topics and scenarios to increase inclusiveness within a workplace.

---

Psychological safety and wellness are fundamental to the aims of diversity, inclusion and fairness. Diversity, equity and inclusion are key to psychologically safe workplace settings, though it is important to note that equity differs from equality.



Diagram: [www.progressiveae.com/overview/dei](http://www.progressiveae.com/overview/dei)

## 2.0 HOW TO LEARN

Focus groups are a valuable tool for engaging and developing a better understanding of studio culture. They create alignment through discussion of what matters to people.

Sessions can be insightful for the participants too, allowing them to learn more about what makes a difference and what matters to others.

Use this practical framework as a guide to introduce psychological safety to the workplace.

---

The architecture industry, like many others, will benefit from understanding psychological safety and the way it contributes to the cultivation of a healthy and productive workplace.

## Commitment to Diversity

Recognising the importance of psychological safety within architecture, practices must actively create an environment where diverse voices are encouraged and celebrated.

This inclusive approach enhances creativity and innovation, and nurtures a sense of belonging to promote personal and professional growth for all team members.

## Research Existing Data

To find any gaps in the psychological safety and wellness of current practice culture, review any existing data available. This will create a foundational understanding of staff experience and the needs that employees have previously shared.

- Understand the trends in staff retention and what they value;
- Assess exit interviews and reasons people have left the practice;
- Review what people are asking in entry interviews, to understand what they're looking for in a company;
- Reflect on what people used to ask for – pay, hours of working, flexibility; compared to what they ask for now in the context of greater choice of employers and benefits;
- Analyse the outcomes and responses from employee engagement surveys.

---

### Starting the Conversation

Focus groups are an effective way to develop an understanding of current studio culture, and can focus on the sense of belonging and trust within the team and their working environment.

Participants are recommended to be a cross selection of staff. Use a short presentation to introduce the mission and definitions around safety and wellness, supported by a series of short questions as a guide for the conversation.

### Identify Needs

Based on the review of available data, is there a particular need within the studio that needs to be addressed? Consider current staff experience when it comes to bias, diversity, communication, equity, inclusivity, recognition and boundaries.

---

Inviting staff to participate in an open forum enables them to share their experiences, and feel heard and acknowledged. This can foster the development of psychological safety.

01

Although values may generally align amongst staff, the listening and learning discussions create a platform for staff to come together and feel a sense of belonging within the practice.

02

These sessions can be a valuable tool for the studio to engage with it's people, getting to know them through inclusive discussion and gaining a better understanding of what matters to them.

03

Each group's conversation can develop in different ways depending on the participants and their cultural backgrounds, tenure, gender and life experiences, etc.

04

Sessions can be insightful for the participants too – allowing them to learn more about each other, such as what makes a difference, what matters, and finding shared experiences to build empathy and connection.

## 3.0 LISTENING & LEARNING

Within this toolkit, focus groups have been referred to as 'Listening and Learning Sessions', which is a more inclusive and relevant description for the intended purpose of creating psychological safety.



---

Depending on the most appropriate course for your team, invite an external facilitator, human resources, or diversity, equity and belonging representative to facilitate the sessions as group chair.

## Establish Listening & Learning Sessions Across Sample Groups

Group the selected staff based on their experiences and needs. They should represent both architect and non-architect roles, and can be nominated, or selected from volunteers responding to a call out for participation across various experiences.

Ensure diversity across different age, race, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, sexual orientation etc.

- Senior leaders;
- Early careers;
- High performers.

## Agenda for the Sessions

Based on the needs previously identified, collate the questions to facilitate the conversation. The aim is to create a safe space for staff to openly share their experiences and feel heard.

Use the presentation (appendix 1) as a guide to facilitate your conversation.

## Data Collection

Prepare how you will document the session data, and consider how belonging, psychological safety and trust can be measured.

It is suggested to audio record the session (for anonymity), and then transcribe the audio into notes to review. For transparency, advise the focus group attendees about the data collection process prior to beginning the session.

## Discussion & Data Collection: Starting the Session

Each group chair should present material that lays a foundation for the discussion:

- Introduce a set of objectives for the group and the session;
- Reiterate the mission of Safety and Wellness;
- Introduce key definitions of belonging, trust and psychological safety. This helps to create a shared vocabulary.

**Introduction**

---

• Objectives:

- Communicate the mission and definitions of "Safety and Wellness"
- Discuss each definition
- Complete a survey and provide

**Mission: Safety and Wellness**

---


*Our mission is to bring awareness to Psychological Safety and Belonging in the workplace and to communicate the benefits to both employees and employers.*

*In order to have working environments that are equitable, and safe for all levels we will develop strategies and frameworks for development and implementation. We hope that all workplaces to pursue a significant*

**How do we define Psychological Safety and Wellness**

---

- There are 3 key ideas when defining Psychological Safety and Wellness for any individual, group or organisation.
- These are:
  - Belonging
  - Trust
  - Psychological Safety



**CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE**  
ARCHITECTURE

Each of the definitions can be introduced, inviting input:

- Belonging;
- Trust;
- Psychological Safety.

Discussions should centre around these definitions and what they mean for the participants within the context of current and previous working environments.

Consider the effects of the pandemic, team dynamics, employee expectations and internal communication as possible topics that may arise during conversations.

### Belonging


Is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group or place. It's the basic fundamental drive to form and maintain lasting, positive, and significant relationships.

At the workplace, this is about the relationship between the employee and the organization and its culture.

*Discuss*

### Consider

- What do you think belonging means to you?
- Have you ever experienced a time when you felt like you belonged at work or in another environment?
- What made you feel like you belonged?
- Have you ever experienced a time when you felt isolated in a workplace?



**CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE**

### Trust

Is when an organisation, group or individual drives open and honest communication, without judgement, developing steps towards a collaborative workplace. By doing so the relationship between the employer, employee and customer is strengthened, leading to increased talents, creativity, productivity and innovation.

This drives a more engaged and working towards common goals.

*Discuss*

### Consider

- How easy do you find it to share your ideas and opinions at work?
- What prevents you to express your opinion or ideas at work?
- Do you feel that people can have a difference of opinion without causing tension?
- How would you describe the difference between trust and psychological safety?

*"Psychological safety at work doesn't mean that everybody is nice all the time. It means that you embrace the conflict and you speak up, knowing that your team has your back, and you have their backs."*

- David Altman, CCL COO

**CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE**

### Psychological Safety

Is the belief that your environment is safe for interpersonal risk taking by listening to what other people are saying, even when it differs to your opinion or belief, without fear of negative consequences to your self image, status or job.

Encourage differing opinions and ideas across all topics/scales in the workspace.

*Discuss*

### Consider

- What does trust mean to you?
- How has trust been broken for you in the workplace?
- What was the outcome if/when trust was broken?
- How do you develop trust?

**Trust:** Choosing to risk making something you value vulnerable to another person's actions.

**Distrust:** What is important to me is not safe with this person in this situation (or any situation).

- CHARLES FELTMAN  
The 2018 Bank of Rust, An Executive Partner for Building Trust at Work, Second Edition

**CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE**

## Discussion & Data Collection: Survey Questions

Follow up the session by emailing a short survey to the participants:

This optional survey provides attendees with the chance to contribute further reflections and communicate in a way they may feel more comfortable with after the session has concluded.

Including a written element also adds quantitative data to support the discussions held in person with the focus groups.

It is essential that the focus group attendees are given feedback on the lessons or initiatives that develop as a result of the discussions.

### Survey Questions

- I can be my authentic self at work
- I feel respected at work
- I feel like I belong at work
- I feel valued for the unique contribution I can make at work
- I feel safe to take risks at work

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BW5R>

NB: Questions have been developed by Culture Amp

#### Champions of Change: Psychological Safety & Wellness Survey

1. I can be my authentic self at work?

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Comments

2. I feel respected at work?

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Comments

3. I feel like I belong at work?

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Comments

4. I feel valued for the unique contribution I can make at work?

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Comments

5. I feel safe to take risks at work?

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Comments

## 4.0 THEMES & STRATEGIES

Themes can be identified by analysing data collected through listening and learning sessions, surveys, and other sources.

These insights guide the implementation of initiatives to foster a safe and empowering environment, where every team member feels valued and able to contribute their best.

---

Identifying themes will create awareness around strengths and weaknesses within company culture, and identify areas of improvement.

By grouping issues together that may be tabled during the Listening and Learning sessions, themes from the discussions will form an understanding of staff experience within each area.

Suggested themes that may arise are: company organisation, culture, social frameworks, leadership, communication and team dynamics.

Below are statements or questions that could be used to guide discussions. They may also form the basis for some additional discussion guidance or questioning.

---

### Practice Organisation

- Does the team feel mistakes, setbacks and difficult conversations are handled in a positive way?
- Do staff returning from extended/parental leave feel supported and included?
- Is there a disconnect between hybrid or remote working, and studio culture?
- Is the company 'mission' clear, and do staff feel connected to a sense of greater purpose?

---

### Social Frameworks

- Do staff feel safe to express themselves in the workplace, and do they feel a sense of belonging?
  - Does inclusion and participation in events or activities feel forced or optional?
  - Do non-architects feel included and supported within the practice?
-

---

## Practice Culture

- If mistakes are made, or trust is broken, are second chances given?
- Is there a sense of hierarchy within the practice?
- Have clear boundaries been set around work expectations and overtime?
- Is work being recognised, and are accomplishments celebrated?
- Does diversity in age, gender, experience, tenure, cultural background feel welcomed like a sincere aspiration of the practice?

---

## Leadership

- What types of management are helping or hindering staff development?
- Do team members feel empowered to learn and grow stronger together?
- Is there a sense of trust in the management and leadership of the practice?
- Do junior staff feel like they have support and mentoring from someone more senior?

---

## Communication

- Is there a desire for more transparency with internal communication?
- Does the team feel safe to speak up and share ideas? Are different communication styles accounted for?
- Do staff feel encouraged to contribute, give feedback, and feel heard?

---

## Projects / Team Dynamics

- Have opportunities been created to encourage inclusivity, promote collaboration and shared ideation?
- Is hierarchy an issue between team members, or within project teams?
- Do staff feel equity is being recognised between various tenures?
- Do staff of all levels have the ability to contribute to design reviews?

---

### From Undertaking the Listening & Learning Sessions

- Listening and learning sessions are a very valuable tool to engage and develop a better sense of understanding studio culture.
- They are a helpful platform to create internal alignment and generate broader understanding of staff experience.

### Learnings Should Inform Actions

- List research undertaken or lessons learnt which inform the actions / commitments / outcomes you are committing to taking.
- It is essential that the contributors are given feedback on lessons or initiatives that develop from the discussions.
- Some ideas and suggestions may not be feasible to implement as actions, but it is important to acknowledge the learnings.

### Collating Data to Inform Policy Change

- The data and information collected from staff during Listening and Learning sessions, surveys and other strategies are valuable in shaping current and future policies.
- By understanding the needs and experiences of staff, emphasis can be made on the identified themes to improve the psychological safety, belonging and trust of the team.
- This contributes to building trust between employees and leadership, as staff see changes implemented as a result of listening to their needs.

### Learnings & Themes

After collating the data collected from listening and learning sessions, surveys and other sources, identify the recurring themes. These can support the implementation of new initiatives that continue to foster a psychologically safe work environment.



---

## Proactive Communication

It is essential that the participants from each Listening and Learning session are given feedback on lessons or initiatives that will be developed as a result of their discussions, and any detail or rationale for those that will not or cannot be pursued.

This continues to build on the trust and psychological safety being created amongst staff, and ensures they feel heard and their contributions are valued.

## Training and Support

Further initiatives that build trust, connection and belonging could be the support of mental wellbeing.

- Establish a Mental Health First Aider programme to encourage staff connection and create a trusted support network.
- Provide an Employee Assistant Program for staff to utilise for their mental wellbeing.
- Utilise inclusive language in documentation to reiterate psychological safety in writing.

## Building Psychological Safety

---

To continue fostering a psychologically safe work environment, positive behaviours can be integrated into the company culture to create lasting change. Psychological safety is not created overnight, but will naturally occur with the development of belonging and trust.

### Implementing Change

1. Continue gathering information using focus groups, staff engagement surveys, 1-1 interviews for ongoing development.
2. Be open to feedback and provide consistent recognition.
3. Remove stigma around failure and judgement when mistakes are made.
4. Promote respect within the workplace across all levels of the business.
5. Encourage inclusive decision making and collaborative working.
6. Provide resources for training, ongoing development and mentor programs.
7. Bring staff together in a social environment to create connection and belonging amongst peers.
8. Communicate the shared vision, goals and values to create a sense of belonging within the company, for staff to feel like they are contributing to the big picture.
9. Establish a diversity and inclusion focused recruitment strategy to reach candidates with a wider variety of experience.

# 5.0 RESOURCES

## Listening and Learning Session Presentation

The slides shown below form the basis of the presentation and discussion held by Champions of Change Coalition member practices in their discussion and evaluation of 'Psychological Safety and Wellness within the Workplace'. These slides could be used to form the basis of your discussion with staff.

CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE UNDERSTANDING SAFETY AND WELLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

### Psychological Safety and Wellness - Outputs

Presentation / Guide 1:

- Understanding the topic
- Description of how to create discussions
- Likely themes and strategies

Presentation 2:

- A briefing presentation to support the facilitated discussions

CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE

1

### Understanding Psychological Safety and Wellness in the Workplace

Champions of Change Architecture Group

CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE

2

### Contents

- Understanding / The Definitions
- Approach
- Listening and Learning Discussions
- Understanding Feedback
- Developing Key Themes and Strategies
  - Studio Organisation
  - Studio Behaviour
  - Social Frameworks
  - Leadership
  - Communication
  - Projects / Design / Teams
- Further Considerations
- Supporting Info, Guidance, Reading



CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE

3

### The Focus Area

Our Objectives and Key Actions

- Our mission is to bring awareness to Psychological Safety and Belonging in the workplace and to communicate the benefits to both employees and employers
- In order to have working environments that are diverse, inclusive, equitable, and safe for all levels within an organisation.
- We have discussed as a group and then carried out listening and learning sessions in several participating studios to understand the culture.
- We will continue to develop strategies and frameworks to support communication, training and implementation.

Belonging, psychological trust and support – our duty of care within both Practices and the broader Construction industry

CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE

4

### Understanding/Definitions

How do we define Psychological Safety and Wellness?

There are 3 fundamental key ideas to define what Safety and Wellness for any individual, group or organisation.

- 1 Belonging
- 2 Trust
- 3 Psychological Safety

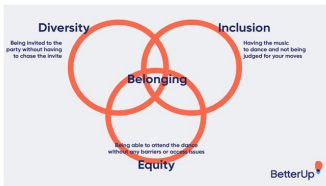
CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE

5

### Belonging

Is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group or place. It's the basic fundamental drive to form and maintain lasting, positive, and significant relationships with others.

At the workplace, these relationships can be extended to the organisation and its values and to the work itself.



CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE

6

## Trust

Is when an organisation, group or individual drives open and honest communication, without judgement, developing steps towards a collaborative workplace.

By doing so the relationship between the employer, employee and colleagues allows for people's individual talents, creativity, passion and energy to be expressed and accepted.

This drives a more cohesive team and organisation by understanding and working towards the same core values.

**“**  
**Trust:** Choosing to risk making something you value vulnerable to another person's actions.  
**Distrust:** What is important to me is not safe with this person in this situation (or any situation).  
Charles Feltman, The Thin Book of Trust: An Essential Primer for Building Trust at Work, Second Edition

**CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE**

7

## Psychological Safety

Is the belief that your environment is safe for interpersonal risk taking by listening to what other people are saying, even when it differs to your opinion or belief, without prejudice or judgement, providing a safe place for people to speak up and voice their opinions.

Encourage differing opinions to stimulate discussions & understanding across all topics/scenarios to increase inclusiveness within your workspace.

**“**  
 Psychological safety at work doesn't mean that everybody is nice all the time. It means that you embrace the conflict and you speak up, knowing that your team has your back, and you have their backs.  
David Altman, CCL COO

**CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE**

8

## What is the Difference between Trust and Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is the belief that your environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.  
 Its similar but slightly different to trust.

**TRUST**  
 Will YOU give others the benefit of the doubt when you take a risk?  
  
 "Bob is probably going to freak out if I disagree with him."

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY**  
 Will OTHERS give you the benefit of the doubt when you take a risk?  
  
 "My team expects me to speak up. It's how we do things."

Source: Edmondson, A. C. (2012). Managing the risk of learning: Psychological safety in work teams. Boston, MA: Division of Research, Innovation, Learning, and Strategy, MIT. Edmondson, A. C., Johnson, S., Magee, J., & Edmondson, A. C. (2017). Psychological safety: An interdisciplinary review and research agenda. Frontiers in Psychology, 8(2017), 1-10.

**CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE**

9

## Developing a Studio Perspective

**Focus Group / Listening Sessions**  
 The need to investigate within the studio teams through focused Listening and Learning Sessions. Develop and Understanding of studio culture with specific focus on the sense of belonging and respect that is engendered within the working environments. These will be with a cross studio selection of staff using a short presentation to introduce the mission and definitions around safety and wellness supported by series of short questions as a guide for the conversation.

- Studio Initiatives
- Support Structures
- Mentoring Programs
- Pulse Surveys
- Exit Interviews
- Induction processes
- Case Studies

**CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE**

10

## Listening and Learning

11

## Establish

Establish listening and learning sessions across representative sample groups.

- Senior leaders
- Early career
- High performers

Ensure diversity across different age, race, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, sexual orientation etc.

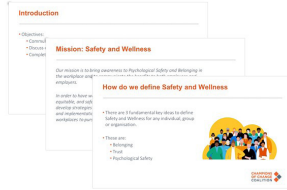
**CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE ARCHITECTURE**

12

## Testing and Data Collection

Each group chair should present material for the discussion:

- Introductory set objectives for the group and the session
- Reiterating the mission of Safety and Wellness
- Introduced key definitions of belonging, trust and psychological safety



13

## Testing and Data Collection: Definitions and Considerations

Each of the definitions to be introduced:

- Belonging
- Trust
- Psychological Safety

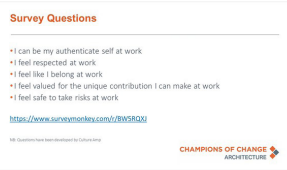
Discussions should centre around these definitions and what they meant for the participants within the context of both current and previous working environments



14

## Testing and Data Collection: Survey Questions

Followed by series of additional questions for further consideration.



15

## Learnings

From undertaking the listening learning sessions:

- Listening and learning sessions are a very valuable tool to engage and develop a better sense of understanding studio culture,
- but also, great platform to create an alignment and generate understanding in staff body

What we learn that should inform actions:

- List research undertaken or lessons learnt which inform the actions / commitments / outcomes you are committing to
- Essential that the contributors are given feedback on lessons or initiatives that develop from the discussions.



16

## Developing Insights

- Each listening and learning session can be quite different - although generally values may align, i.e. we all care about each other and about what we do;
- It can be very useful for the studio as a way to get to know its people through discussion and a better understanding of what matters to them;
- Each discussion would develop in particular ways depending on the participants and their cultural backgrounds, tenure and life experiences, etc.
- Sessions can be insightful for the participants too – allowing them to learn more about each other - what makes a difference, what matters to each other, etc



17

## Themes and Strategies

18

## Developing Themes and Insights

Group the responses along suggested themes

- Practice organisation
- Practice behaviours
- Social frameworks
- Leadership
- Communication
- Projects and design teams



19

## Quotes and commentary

Commentary from previous discussions



20

## Practice Organisation – Themes and Strategies

Possible Themes	Possible Ideas, Actions, Strategies
Groups may define belonging in multiple levels – individual, team, local practice and aligning to the broader organisational vision	
Understand the importance of continual checking-in (not just at start employment)	
Acknowledgement that 'Hybrid working' can be dislocating	
Online peer review system disconnection	
Buddy system or peer review systems can 'drop off'	
belonging can come from how HR deal with personal issues	
Dress code can create stress if not clear	

21

## Studio Behaviour – Themes & Strategies

Possible Themes	Possible Ideas, Actions, Strategies
Safe space for self-expression is necessary	
Being 'open' to ideas as a company	
Continually build trust	
Understand the impact of unconscious bias	
Understand benefit in pride in being part of something bigger (beyond local)	
Understand the importance of belonging varies at various stages of career	
Give trust at beginning	
Ability to safely fail	
Imposter syndrome common when fresh out of university	

22

## Social Frameworks - Themes & Strategies

Possible Themes	Possible Ideas, Actions, Strategies
Understand individual selectivity about social events	
Understand concerns around the openness of invites	
People being interested in you as a person	
Men highlighting how gossip ruins reputation	
Being comfortable to be yourself	
Trust is hard to establish if you are shy	
Second language can be a barrier	

23

## Leadership - Themes & Strategies

Possible Themes	Possible Ideas, Actions, Strategies
Shared responsibility	
Seniority allows more risk taking	
Men have less trust in management	
Women were more decisive on broken trust	
Actions not words	
Psych safety depends on the leader	
Leaders who 'muck in' engender respect and trust	
Leadership sets the tone by providing establishing trust,	
Clear boundaries and expectations must be set and understood	
Communications from leadership	

24

## Communication - Themes & Strategies

Possible Themes	Possible Ideas, Actions, Strategies
General Desire for transparency	
Good Communication is the key to trust	
Being listened to is critical	
Importance of 'the acknowledgement'	
Importance of first impressions	
Cultural upbringing can impact	

25

## Projects, Design and Teams – Themes & Strategies

Possible Themes	Possible Ideas, Actions, Strategies
Exposure to other projects and teams	
Open design reviews forum	
Inclusion into design	
Seeing your work/ project on the wall	
Performance anxiety early in your career / Fear of letting people down	

26

## Additional Considerations

- Listening and Learning Presentation
- Reading List
- Publications
- Reports and Guidance

27

Thank You

28

---

Blood Lust, Trust and Blame, Samantha Crompvoets, 2021

Cultural change is supposed to help fix powerful institutions when things go wrong. In Blood Lust, Trust & Blame, sociologist Samantha Crompvoets tells the story of what went wrong in the Australian Defence Force and helped unearth allegations of war crimes. She argues the term needs to be done away with in order to ensure institutions sign up for real change. This book is a chronicle of the consequences of pursuing the truth, the politics of accountability, and the cost of in-action.

"Culture diagnosis' is problematic. It's too abstract, too unwieldy, and ultimately blurs accountability. Impact on senior leaders on organisational culture is limited, Underlying issues are power and control, influence versus authority, bad apples versus poisoned orchard. Individual actions versus collective accountability"

Belonging, Owen Eastwood, 2022

In Belonging Owen Eastwood reveals, for the first time, the ethos that has made him one of the most in-demand Performance Coaches in the world. Drawing on his own Maori ancestry, Owen weaves together insights from homosapiens' evolutionary story and our collective wisdom. He shines a light on where these powerful ideas are applied around the world in high-performing settings encompassing sport, business, the arts and military.

The Four Stages of Psychological Safety, Timothy Clark, 2020

This is the first practical, hands-on guide that shows how leaders can build psychological safety in their organisation, creating an environment where employees feel fully engaged and encouraged to contribute their best ideas.



---

Belonging at Work, Rhodes Perry, 2018

Belonging at Work empowers business leaders, change agents, visionaries, and those on their way to joining them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to build inclusive organisations. The personal stories, case studies, and practical strategies featured in the book offer everything you need to cultivate workplace cultures where all of your stakeholders can show up authentically and feel valued and respected for their contributions.

The Fearless Organisation, Amy Edmondson, 2018

This book explores this culture of psychological safety, and provides a blueprint for bringing it to life. The road is sometimes bumpy, but succinct and informative scenario-based explanations provide a clear path forward to constant learning and healthy innovation.

Think Again, Adam Grant, 2021

Bestselling author and Organisational Psychologist Adam Grant examines the critical art of rethinking — how questioning your beliefs and knowing what you don't know can lead you to success at work and happiness at home.

Culture Amp Staff, (2021), '6 Ways to Foster Belonging in the Workplace', Culture Amp [[hello.cultureamp.com/hubfs/1703-Belonging/Culture-Amp\\_6-ways-to-foster-belonging.pdf](https://hello.cultureamp.com/hubfs/1703-Belonging/Culture-Amp_6-ways-to-foster-belonging.pdf)]

Culture Amp Staff, (2022) 'How to foster belonging at work', Culture Amp [<https://www.cultureamp.com/blog/belonging-at-work>]

Edmondson, A., (2018), 'The Fearless Organisation', John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Edmondson, A., (2002) 'Managing the Risk of Learning: Psychological Safety in Work Teams', Harvard Business School [[https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/02-062\\_0b5726a8-443d-4629-9e75-736679b870fc.pdf](https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/02-062_0b5726a8-443d-4629-9e75-736679b870fc.pdf)]

Hirsch, W., (2017), 'Five questions about psychological safety, answered', Science for Work, [<https://scienceforwork.com/blog/psychological-safety/>]

Leading Effectively Staff, (2023), 'What Is Psychological Safety at Work?', Center for Creative Leadership [<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-article/what-is-psychological-safety-at-work>]

Leavitt, C. (2022) 'Examining Trust', Ohio State University [<https://u.osu.edu/leavitt-75/2022/06/27/examining-trust/>]

Progressive AE, (2022), 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion', [[www.progressiveae.com/overview/dei](http://www.progressiveae.com/overview/dei)]

Sinek, S., (2019), 'The Infinite Game', Portfolio

Waters, S. Phd., (2021) 'Here's how to build a sense of belonging in the workplace', BetterUp [<https://www.betterup.com/blog/belonging>]

**BATES SMART**

Brian Clohessy

Philip Vivian



**COX ARCHITECTURE**

Alex Small



**DKO ARCHITECTURE**

Michael Robertson



**GRIMSHAW**

Malgorzata Haley

Neil Stonell



**SJB ARCHITECTS**

Bronwyn Lee



**WOODS BAGOT**

Lisa James



