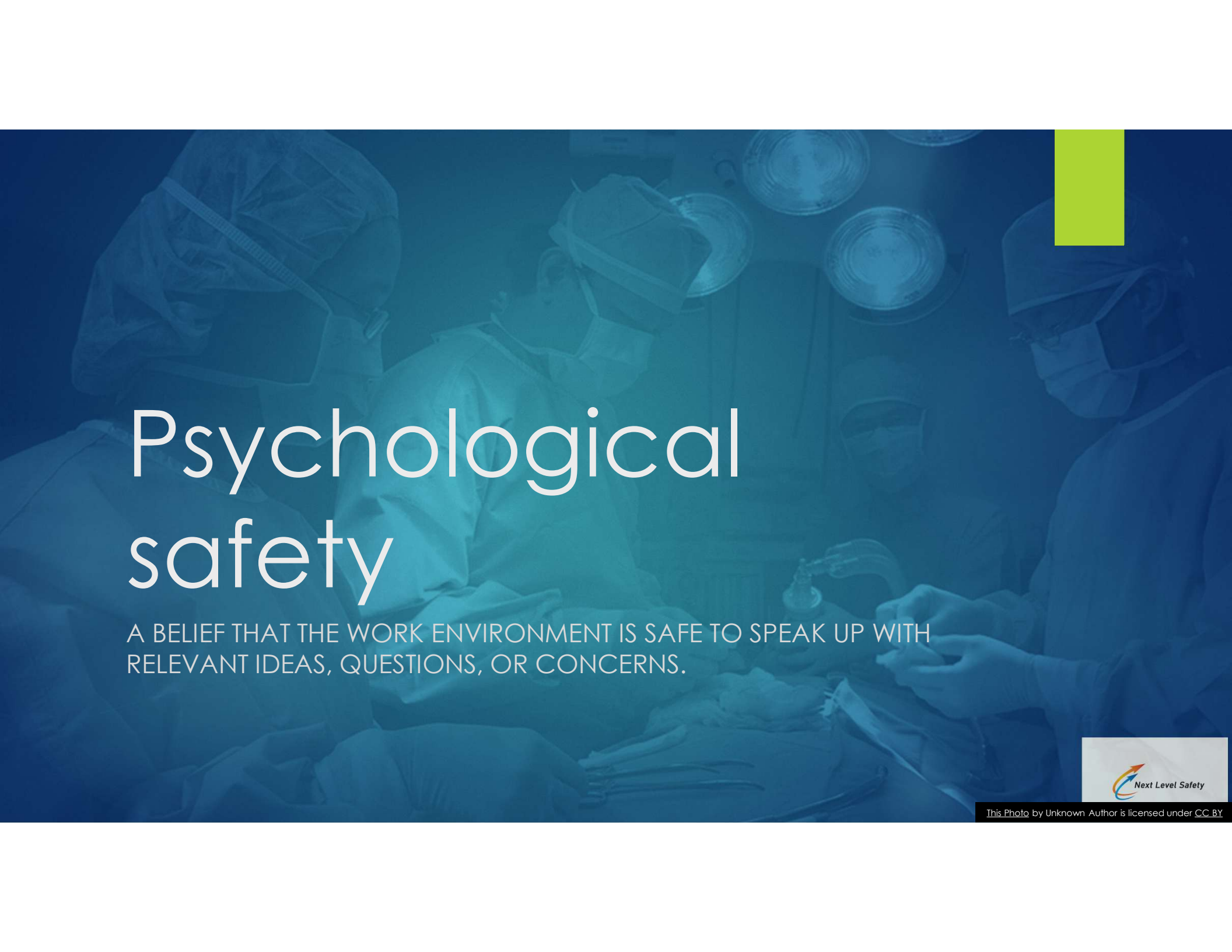




Psychological safety

A BELIEF THAT THE WORK ENVIRONMENT IS SAFE TO SPEAK UP WITH RELEVANT IDEAS, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS.

Survey measure of psychological safety

- ▶ If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you.
- ▶ Members on this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.
- ▶ People on this team sometimes reject others for being different.
- ▶ It is safe to take a (interpersonal) risk on this team.
- ▶ It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.
- ▶ No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermine my efforts.
- ▶ Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.

Why psychological safety



Enhances the team approach.

Enhances speak-up listen-up programs.

Enhances interpersonal communication skills.

Enhances accident investigation and analysis.

Necessary for human performance programs.

Google identified psychological safety as the most important of five elements of a successful team.

How psychological safety relates to performance standards

	Low standards	High standards
High psychological safety	Comfort zone	Learning & High-performance Zone
Low psychological safety	Apathy zone	Anxiety zone

(Edmondson, 2019)

Examples of the anxiety zone

- ▶ Psychological safety is gained or lost at the top.
- ▶ Examples of psychologically unsafe environments include:
 - ▶ Wells Fargo cross-selling scandal which involved an unrealistic goal of accounts per customer.
 - ▶ Volkswagen diesel-gate involved motivation by fear to ensure Volkswagen could meet US emission standards.

“Motivation by fear is highly effective – effective at creating the *illusion* that goals are being achieved” Amy Edmondson



Psychological safety leads to improved learning, creativity, and performance.

(O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020)

Psychological safety plays a vital role in high-risk work contexts

- ▶ Psychological safety:
 - ▶ is a group level phenomenon,
 - ▶ is critical element to achieve high level communication, decision-making and trust, and
 - ▶ results in increased crew learning and quality improvement initiatives.

(Edmonson, 2019 & O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020)



Psychological safety and accident prevention

- ▶ Clear, direct, and candid communication is an important aspect of reducing accidents.
- ▶ A compelling company purpose combined with caring leadership motivates people to be safe and productive.
- ▶ Worker safety starts with encouraging and reinforcing employees' speaking up about hazards and other concerns.

(Edmondson, 2019)



Surgical teams



US Airways flight 1549



Diamond mine

Operationalizing psychological safety

- ▶ Shell Oil's Deepwater Ursa exceeded industry benchmarks in productivity, reliability, and efficiency.
- ▶ Novel approach contributed to an 84% decline in Shell's accident rate.

(Chen, 2017)



Source: NPR, Oil Rig Workers Get Vulnerable to Make The Job Safer

Leader's toolkit



Setting the stage by framing



Situational humility



Proactive inquiry

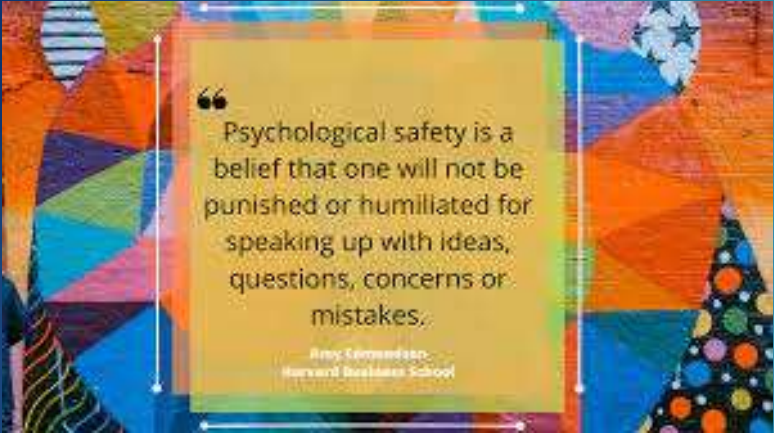


Clarifying the need for voice

Attributes of a powerful question:

- ▶ Generates curiosity in the listener
- ▶ Stimulates reflective conversation
- ▶ Is thought-provoking
- ▶ Surfaces underlying assumptions
- ▶ Invites creativity and new possibilities
- ▶ Generates energy and forward movement
- ▶ Channels attention and focus inquiry
- ▶ Stays with participants
- ▶ Touches a deep meaning
- ▶ Evokes more questions.

(Edmondson, 2019)



“Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.

Amy Edmondson
Harvard Business School

- ▶ A psychological safe organization is one where it's okay to say:
 - ▶ I don't know,
 - ▶ I made a mistake,
 - ▶ I don't think that's a good idea, or
 - ▶ I need help with something.

Psychological safety is potentially impacted by every interaction.

References

Chen, A. (2016, June 17). *Invisibilia: How learning to be vulnerable can make life safer*. Retrieved from National Public Radio: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/06/17/482203447/invisibilia-how-learning-to-be-vulnerable-can-make-life-safer>

Edmondson, A. C. (2019). *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth*. Wiley.

O'Donovan, R., & McAuliffe, E. (2020). A systematic review exploring the content and outcomes of interventions to improve psychological safety, speaking up and voice behaviour. *BMC Health Services Research*, 1-11. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-020-4931-2>

The background of the slide is a dark blue field filled with numerous 3D question marks of varying sizes and orientations, creating a sense of depth and inquiry. In the upper right corner, there is a solid lime green rectangular block.

Questions!