
Psychological Safety in Teams: Voice and Operational Candour

15 – 19 February 2027
Cape town





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Programme Summary

Psychological Safety in Teams establishes an operational climate where individuals contribute candid observations, surface emerging risks, and challenge orthodoxies without fear of humiliation or professional retribution. When interpersonal apprehension permeates an operational unit, critical information remains concealed, masking systemic vulnerabilities until severe disruptions occur. Grounded in empirical organisational research, this five-day curriculum provides department heads, operational directors, and unit heads with structured behavioural tools to dismantle defensive silence, normalise productive vulnerability, and institutionalise candid dialogue across operational workflows. This masterclass is provided by Mars Training Centre UK.

The Business Case

Organisations that rely on compliance-driven silence experience suppressed innovation, delayed escalation of operational flaws, and chronic disengagement. Cultivating a robust climate of psychological safety directly mitigates silent risk accumulation while accelerating collective problem-solving across core functions.

- **Risk Identification Velocity:** Accelerates the reporting of operational hazards, near-misses, and project divergences before systemic harm develops.
- **Innovation Through Candour:** Unlocks constructive dissent and uninhibited ideation by decoupling personal status from experimentation failures.
- **Talent Retention and Morale:** Eliminates emotional exhaustion associated with impression management, protecting institutional knowledge capital.
- **Defensible Decision Quality:** Enhances governance outcomes through systematic devil's advocacy and thorough scrutiny of strategic assumptions.

Principles and Evidence Base

- **Edmondson Team Psychological Safety Framework:** Anchors the measurement of interpersonal climate, voice behaviour, and constructive problem-solving dynamics.
- **Four Stages of Psychological Safety Model:** Maps developmental progression across inclusion safety, learner safety, contributor safety, and challenger safety.
- **Human and Organisational Performance HOP Principles:** Reframes operational errors as operational variability and learning opportunities rather than individual negligence.



Intended Participants

- Directors and operational heads accountable for high-stakes functional outcomes and risk visibility.
- Divisional general managers seeking to eliminate informational silos and defensive communication patterns.
- Programme executives managing cross-functional initiatives where uninhibited feedback drives delivery success.
- Governance, risk, and compliance managers seeking earlier detection of emerging operational vulnerabilities.

The content directly serves operational heads in manufacturing, financial administration, technological infrastructure, and public services.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate workplace communication climates using validated diagnostic survey batteries.
2. Participants will be able to distinguish between interpersonal fear, comfortable harmony, and high-accountability psychological safety.
3. Participants will be able to implement blameless operational post-mortems that isolate structural causes rather than scapegoating individuals.
4. Participants will be able to formulate inquiry-driven meeting protocols that actively elicit minority viewpoints and unvarnished data.
5. Participants will be able to model vulnerability by acknowledging uncertainty and reframing failures as data-gathering experiments.
6. Participants will be able to design a functional intervention roadmap to institutionalise candour across diverse reporting lines.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Foundations of Team Voice and Interpersonal Climate

How does interpersonal risk awareness influence functional decision-making and error reporting?

- Mechanisms of Defensive Silence and Impression Management
- The Edmondson Construct: Defining and Measuring Voice Climate
- Distinguishing Safety from Soft Management and Low Standards
- The Four Stages Progression: Inclusion to Challenger Safety
- Baseline Team Diagnostic Administration and Metric Evaluation

Day 2: Normalising Vulnerability and Reframing Failure

How can operational units transition from punitive reactions to systematic operational learning?



- Taxonomy of Failures: Preventable, Complex, and Intelligent Failures
- Human and Organisational Performance Paradigms in Daily Operations
- Conducting Blameless Post-Mortem Reviews and Learning Debriefs
- De-escalating Defensive Threat Responses to Critical Feedback
- Executive Language Patterns that Encourage Admission of Gaps

Day 3: Facilitating Constructive Dissent and Meeting Candour

How are operational forums structured to dismantle unthinking consensus and surface hidden risks?

- Meeting Architectures that Neutralise Status Differentials
- Implementing Structured Devil's Advocacy and Red Teaming Protocols
- Inquiry-Based Dialogue: Moving from Interrogation to Exploration
- Techniques for Soliciting Dissenting Evidence on Crucial Projects
- Managing Strong Cognitive Disagreement Without Interpersonal Friction

Day 4: Institutionalising Safety in Performance and Governance

How do operational procedures, evaluations, and appraisals reinforce or undermine openness?

- Aligning Key Performance Indicators with Candid Problem Escalation
- Psychological Safety in Talent Onboarding and Career Check-Ins
- Whistleblowing, Ethical Escalation, and Psychological Voice Portals
- Navigating Safety Across Cultural and Power Distance Gradients
- Designing Feedback Loops for Continuous Team Health Monitoring

Day 5: Intervention Architecture and Cultural Sustainability

How do functional heads construct and sustain systemic changes in operational behaviour?

- Designing a Functional Psychological Safety Action Roadmap
- Coaching Direct Supervisors in Daily Conversational Safety Practices
- Overcoming Structural Cynicism and Legacy Organisational Fear
- Measuring Progress: Longitudinal Safety Climate Tracking
- Capstone Safety Intervention Strategy Presentation and Peer Review

Methodology

Delivery combines diagnostic self-audits, conversational simulations, video-based interactional analysis, and facilitated role scenarios. Participants engage with real-world case simulations to evaluate defensive dynamics, test open inquiry interventions, and refine their own communication habits.



- Suggested activity: Conducting an anonymised psychological safety assessment audit on sample operational team data.
- Suggested activity: Role-playing an error-disclosure scenario transitioning from defensive blame to systematic process inquiry.
- Suggested activity: Designing and facilitating an executive decision meeting simulation that successfully surfaces suppressed dissenting evidence.

Capstone Output

Each participant formulates an operational Psychological Safety Roadmap. This tangible deliverable contains a baseline diagnostic report, calibrated meeting protocols for candid inquiry, a standardised blameless review template, and an enterprise implementation schedule designed to safeguard institutional voice and improve risk discovery.

Frequently Asked Questions

What analytical tools are utilised during the sessions?

The curriculum uses validated psychometric survey batteries, interactional behavioural rubrics, and structured blameless review matrices to evaluate and track the communication climate within operational groups.

Does fostering safety reduce accountability or dilute performance standards?

No. Psychological safety operates concurrently with high performance standards. Edmondson's research establishes that high safety paired with rigorous accountability forms the learning zone, whereas low safety creates anxiety and hidden risk.

How does this curriculum address entrenched hierarchical resistance?

The syllabus provides practical inquiry frameworks and de-escalation protocols specifically calibrated to operate constructively across strict organisational hierarchies and high power-distance cultures.

Can the diagnostic instruments and review templates be adapted internally?

Yes. All diagnostic rubrics, meeting structuring guides, and blameless analysis templates are open for immediate contextual tailoring and deployment within your sponsoring institution.