

**THE FEARLESS ORGANIZATION:
THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND EFFECTIVE TEAMS
IN THE CHANGING DUTCH ACADEMIC LANDSCAPE**

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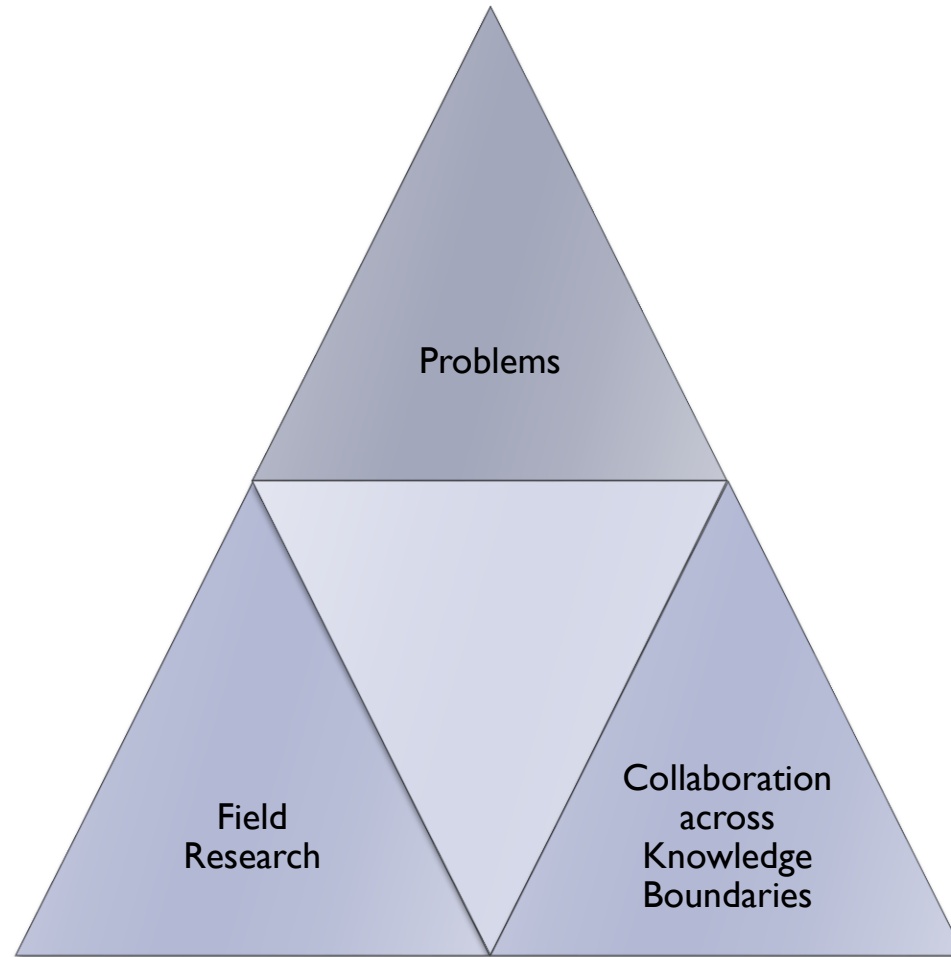


Speaking Up and Teaming Up

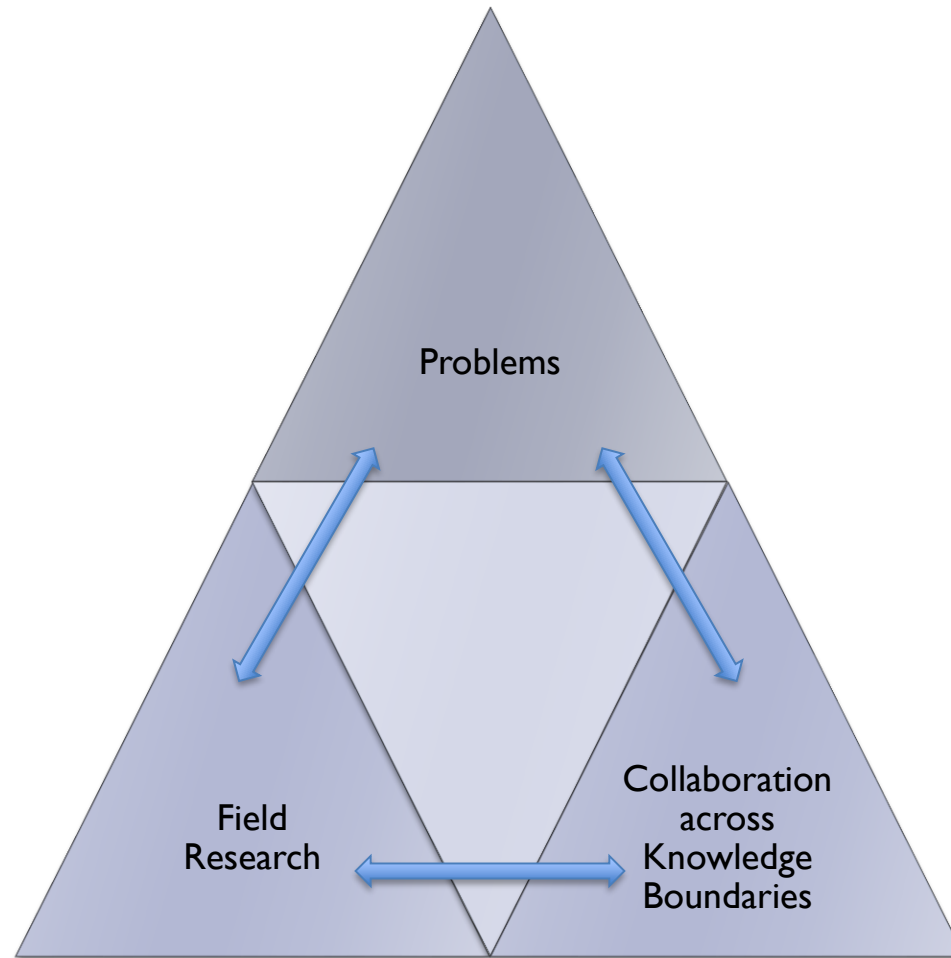
to build an inclusive community in academia and beyond

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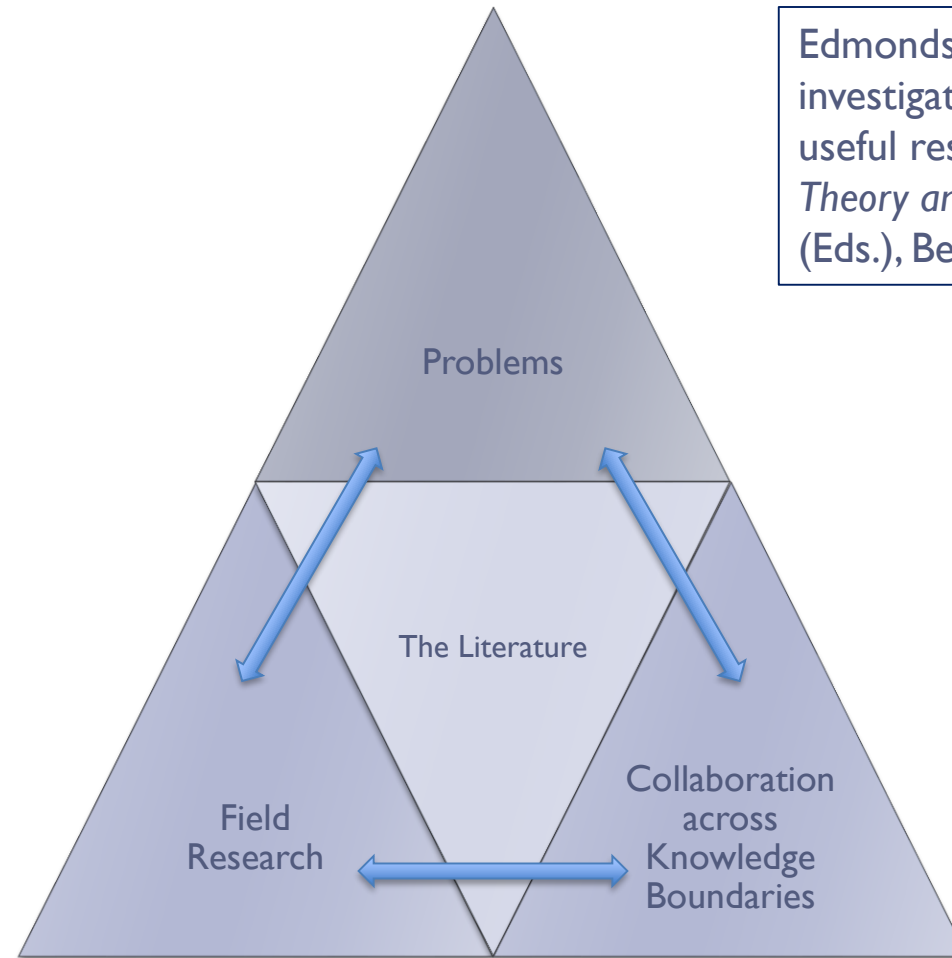
An Approach to Relevance



An Approach to Relevance



An Approach to Relevance



Edmondson, A.C. (2011). Crossing boundaries to investigate problems in the field: An approach to useful research. In *Useful Research: Advancing Theory and Practice*, E. Lawler and S. Mohrman, (Eds.), Berrett-Koehler, pp. 37-55.

And Yes, The Literature Plays a Central Role

Errors in Hospital Patient Care Teams

RQ: Do better teams make fewer medication errors?

Correlating Team Effectiveness Scores with Error Rates

WORK UNIT	ERRORS
MEMORIAL 1	23.68*
UNIVERSITY 1	17.23
UNIVERSITY 3	13.19
MEMORIAL 2	11.02
MEMORIAL 4	8.6
MEMORIAL 5	10.31
UNIVERSITY 2	9.37
MEMORIAL 3	2.34



* preventable and potential adverse drug events (ADEs) per 1000 patient-days

- The unexpected result: Survey measures of team effectiveness are **POSITIVELY** correlated with error rates

Which Unit is the Safest?

We don't know!

WORK UNIT	DETECTED ERRORS
MEMORIAL 1	23.68*
UNIVERSITY 1	17.23
UNIVERSITY 3	13.19
MEMORIAL 2	11.02
MEMORIAL 4	8.6
MEMORIAL 5	10.31
UNIVERSITY 2	9.37
MEMORIAL 3	2.34

Sorted by qualitative rating of unit climate



* preventable and potential adverse drug events (ADEs) per 1000 patient-days

▶ Edmondson, A. (1996). Learning from mistakes is easier said than done: Group and organizational influences on the detection and correction of human error. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 32 (1): 5-28

Next... triggered by: A Request for Help Assessing Team Effectiveness

Psychological Safety & Team Learning

RQ: Do teams vary in psychological safety within the same organization, and if so, does psychological safety influence team learning and team performance?

Findings

- ▶ Empirical and psychometric support for the validity of **team psychological safety** as a construct and measure
- ▶ Empirical evidence of relationship between **psychological safety** and **team learning**
- ▶ Empirical evidence that **psychological safety** predicts **team performance**, mediated by **team learning**

▶ Edmondson, A. (1999) Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly* (44), 350-383.

THE WORK ISSUE

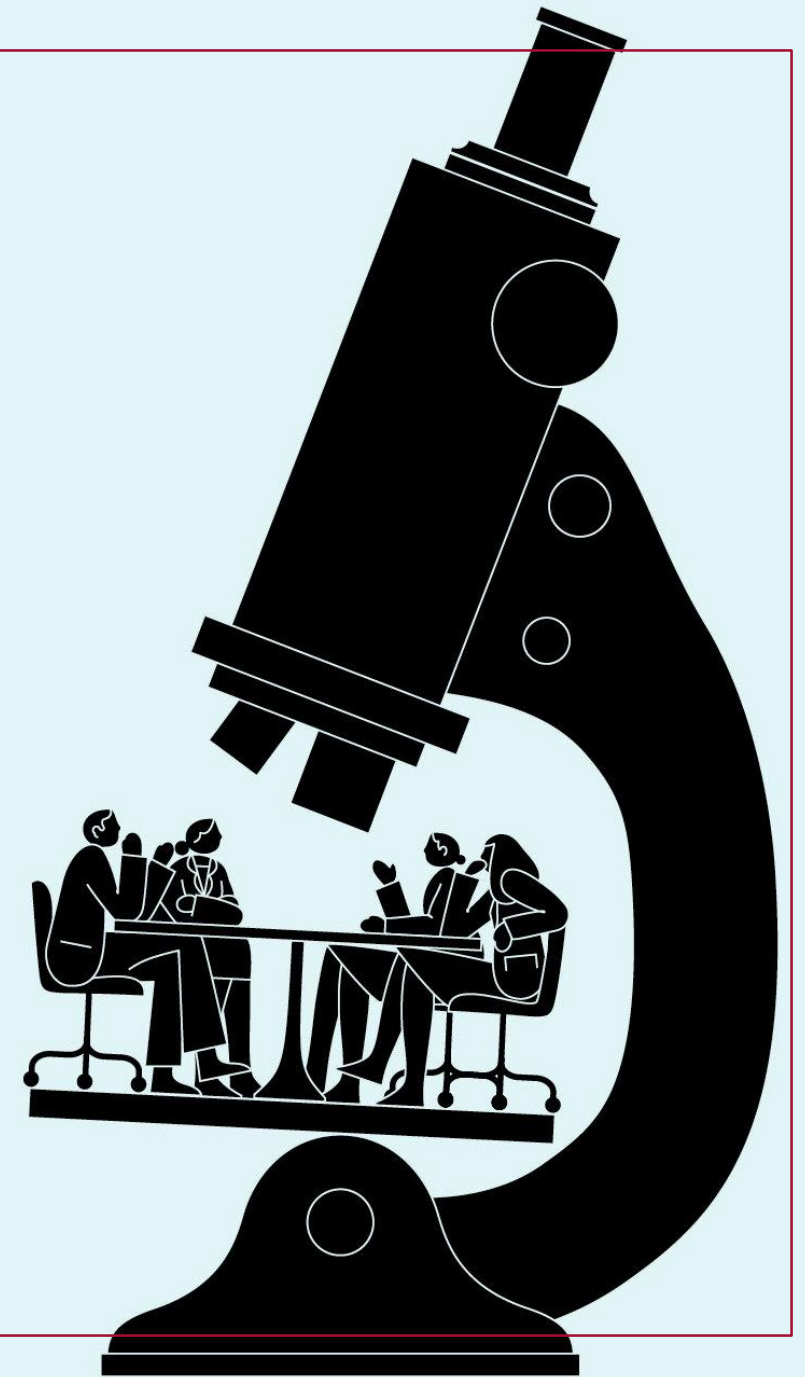
What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team

New research reveals surprising truths about why some work groups thrive and others falter.

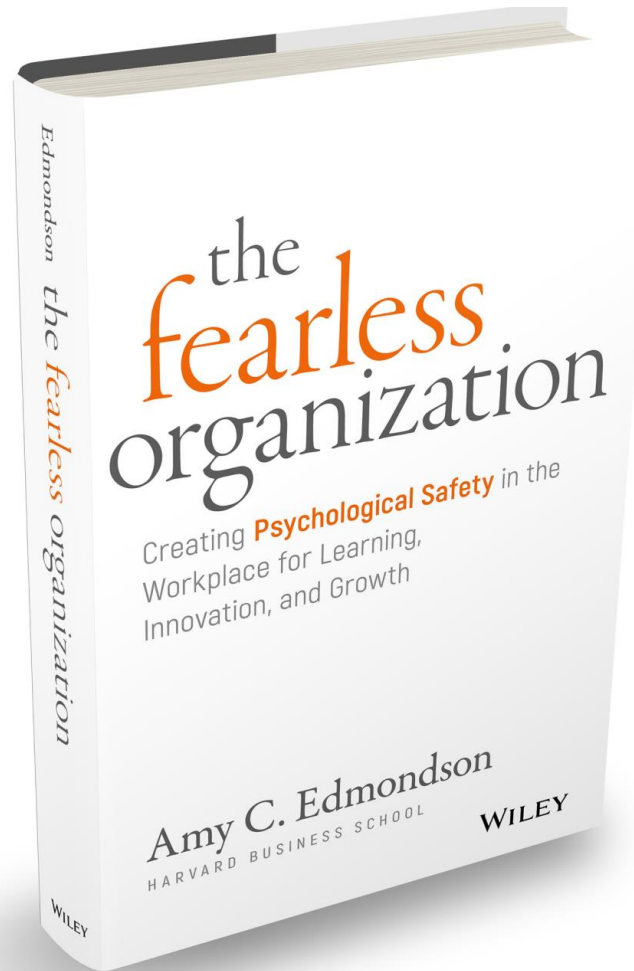


“When [Julia] Rozovsky and her Google colleagues encountered the concept of **psychological safety** in academic papers, it was as if everything suddenly fell into place”

Source: *NY Times*



WHEN IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT TAKES A BACK SEAT: PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



A belief that the context is safe for interpersonal risk taking – that speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes will be welcomed and valued.

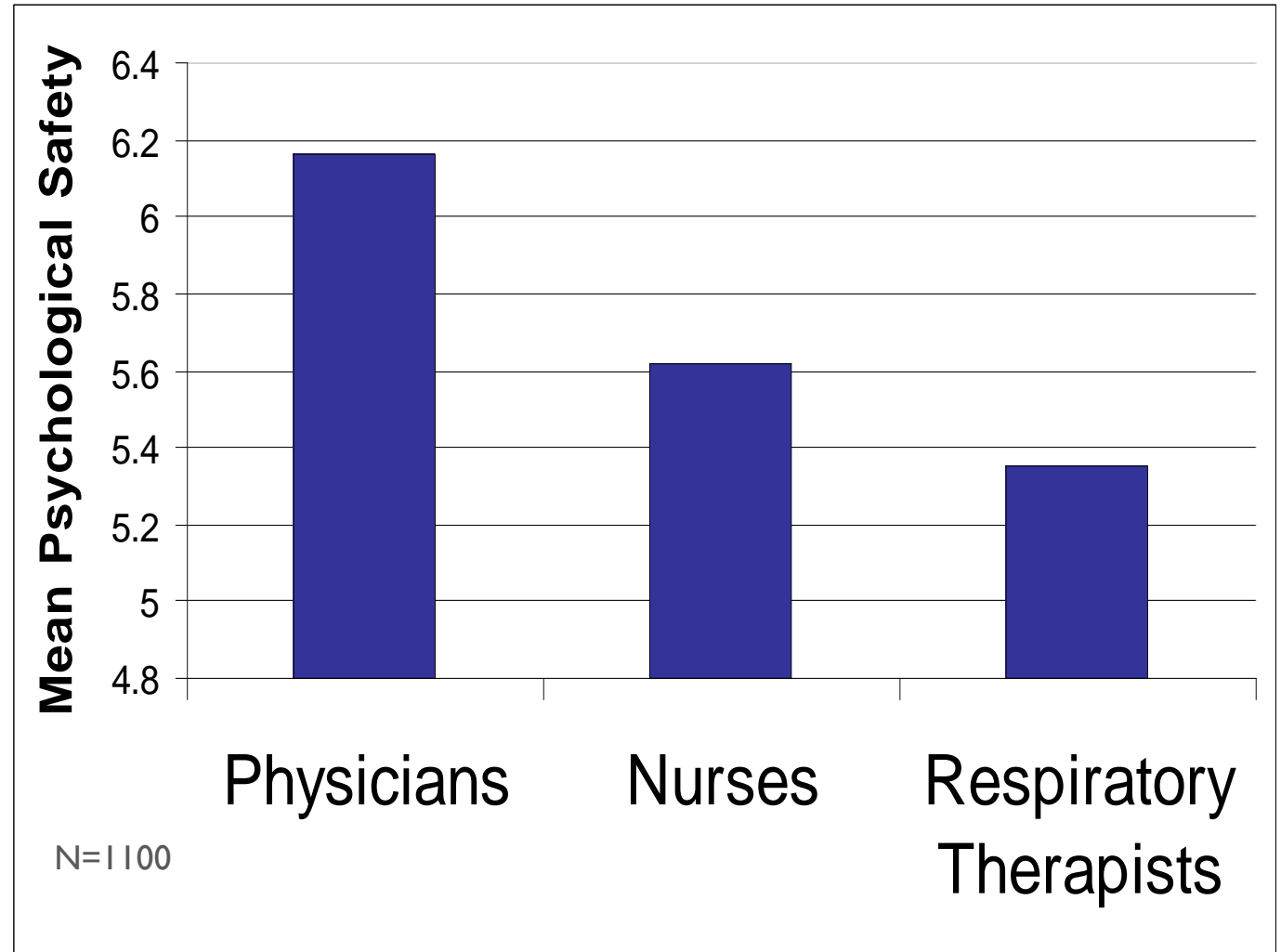
THINK OF IT AS FELT PERMISSION FOR CANDOR.

Status and Psychological Safety in the ICU

H1: Role-based Status explains differences in Psychological Safety

GLM Contrast Comparing Psychological Safety of

- Physicians to Nurses: $p < .001$
- Nurses to Therapists: $p = .016$
- Overall planned contrast: $p = < .001$





PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IS NOT:

- A personality factor
- Being nice
- Freedom from conflict
- A guarantee that all your ideas will be applauded
- Permission to slack off
- Oversharing
- *The goal...*

CONFRONTING A NEW REALITY

- **Volatile:** Rapid changes, ups & downs/big swings
- **Uncertain:** Difficult to predict future events/values
- **Complex:** Multiple interconnected elements
- **Ambiguous:** Unclear meaning of signals/events

= V.U.C.A.



SPEAKING UP MATTERS MORE THAN EVER...

CONFRONTING A NEW REALITY – IN ACADEMIA?

- **Volatile:** Rapid changes, ups & downs/big swings
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= V.U.C.A.



SPEAKING UP MATTERS MORE THAN EVER...

BUT WAIT!



Doesn't fear motivate
people to work hard?

FEAR MOTIVATES... BUT WHAT DOES IT MOTIVATE?

FEAR MOTIVATES... BUT WHAT DOES IT MOTIVATE?

**The World's
Largest
Automaker**

**Green Car of
the Year
2008**



Volkswagen



THE ILLUSION OF HIGH PERFORMANCE IS REVEALED

The Study That Brought Down Volkswagen

ERIC JAFFE SEP 24, 2015

A closer look at the West Virginia report at the center of the VW emissions scandal.

*Volkswagen C.E.O. Martin Winterkorn
Resigns Amid Emissions Scandal*

*Volkswagen Agrees to \$1.2 Billion German
Fine in Emissions-Cheating Scheme*

CEO MARTIN WINTERKORN



There was always a distance, a fear and a respect. . . If [Winterkorn] would come and visit or you had to go to him, your pulse would go up. If you presented bad news, those were the moments that it could become quite unpleasant and loud and quite demeaning.”

Source: Reuters (2015)

A Recipe for Failure: Stretch Goals + Closed Ears

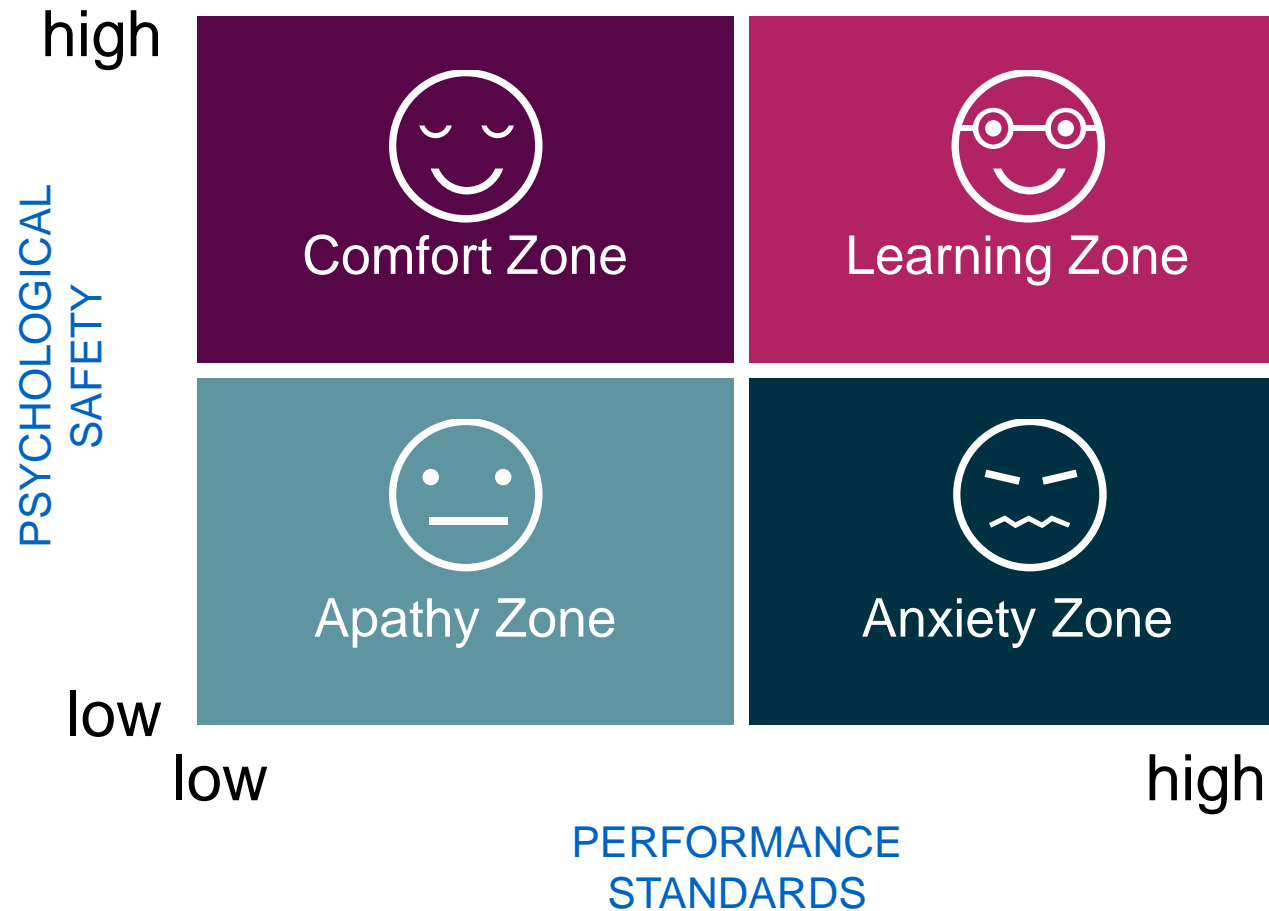
FEAR: WHAT WE KNOW



Fear motivates hiding

Fear limits creativity,
learning and problem
solving

NO TRADEOFF BETWEEN HIGH STANDARDS & PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



Which quadrant do you believe researchers in your organization find themselves in most often?

What are the implications for research performance?

WHAT LEADERS DO TO BUILD A FEARLESS CULTURE



1. FRAME THE WORK

2. INVITE ENGAGEMENT

3. RESPOND PRODUCTIVELY

FRAME THE WORK

COGNITIVE FRAMES

Implicit beliefs that shape how people make sense of a situation and influence how they act and respond... = a mindset

(RE-)FRAMING

Words and actions that shape others' frames (mindsets) about the work in productive ways.



FRAMING THE WORK: SUCCESS THROUGH COURSE-CORRECTION



Source: New York Times, Corner Office, August 12, 2016

I said, “Early, often, ugly. It’s O.K. It doesn’t have to be perfect because then I can course-correct much, much faster.”

No amount of ugly truth scares me. It’s just information to make a decision.

FRAMING THE WORK: COMPLEX SYSTEMS BREAK DOWN...

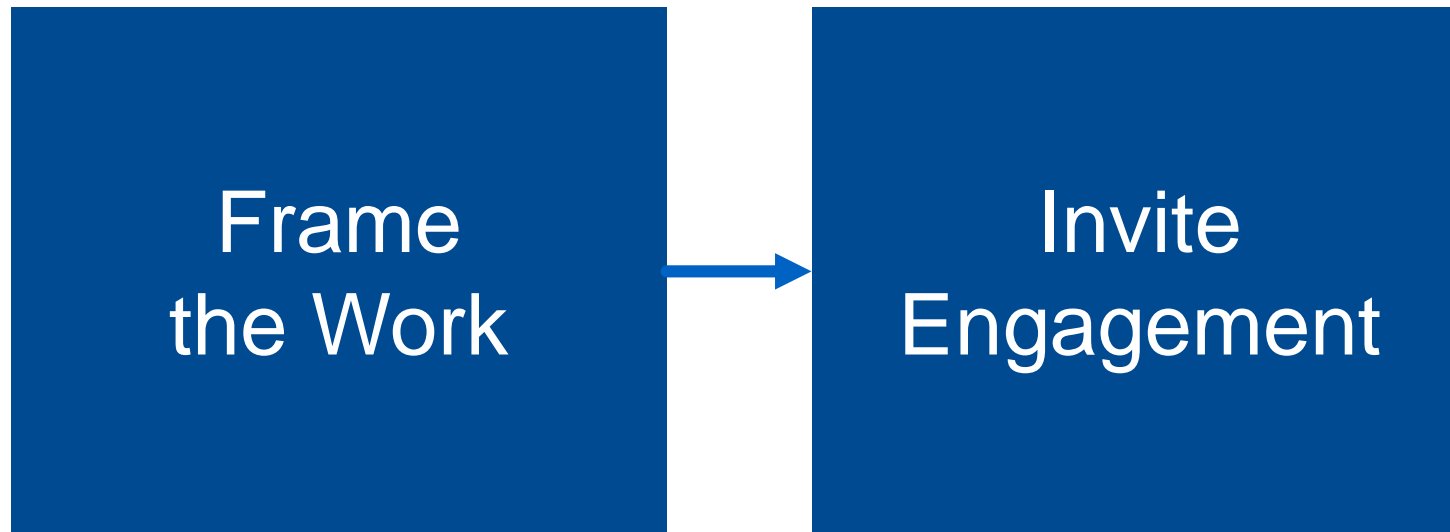
(speaking up saves lives)

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AND CLINICS



“Healthcare by its nature is a complex, error prone system”

WHAT LEADERS DO TO BUILD A FEARLESS CULTURE



INVITE ENGAGEMENT: ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

- To broaden the discussion
 - What do others think?
 - What are we missing?
 - What other options could we consider?
 - **Who has a different perspective?**
- To deepen the discussion
 - What leads you to think so?
 - What's the concern that you have about that?
 - Can you give us an example?
 - Can you explain that further?
 - What do you think might happen if we did X?

Good questions focus on what matters, invite careful thought, and give people room to respond.

Jot down one good question of each type to use next week

WHAT LEADERS DO TO BUILD A FEARLESS CULTURE



WHAT HAPPENS TO MESSENGERS?

*“You have to make honest feedback a positive experience. It has to be that the red is a **gem**. I had to demonstrate with my behavior that I welcomed it.”*

Alan Mulally, to Diane Brady, *Business Week*. April 12, 2012



A PRODUCTIVE RESPONSE

- **Appreciative** (*thank you for that clear line of sight*)
- +
- **Forward looking** (*how can we help?*)

WHAT LEADERS DO TO BUILD A FEARLESS CULTURE

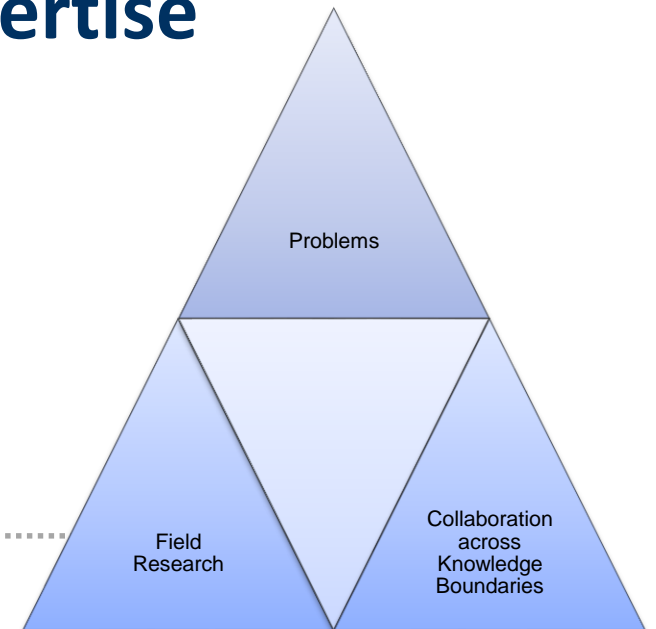


1. **Framing the work** accurately – ensuring shared understanding of the reality of complexity, uncertainty, novelty, and failure;
2. **Inviting engagement** by asking good questions;
3. **Responding** that welcomes messengers and promotes forward-focused problem-solving.

THE GROWING NEED FOR COLLABORATION

teams (n.) and team • ing (v.)

- You cannot be expert on everything
- Most projects require multiple sources of expertise
- Bringing them together is vital



THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF TEAMWORK

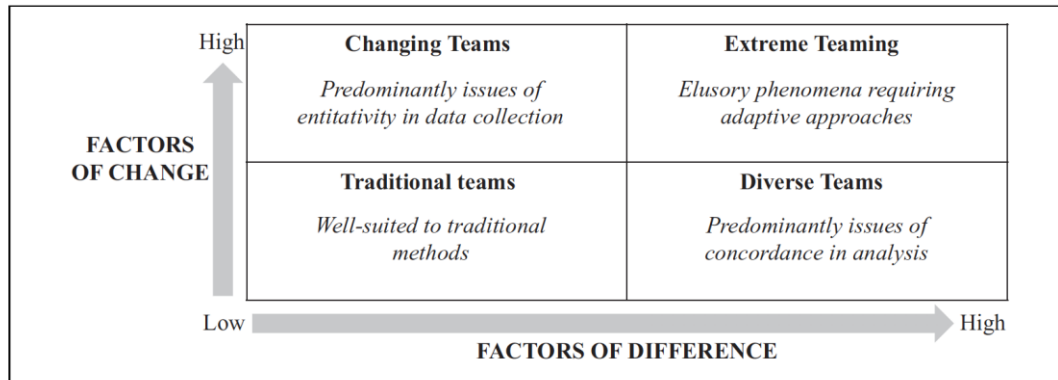


Figure 2. Co-occurrence of factors.

Forces Driving Change

- **Globalization** –Rapid, dynamic work in response to change, more boundaries to cross, more virtual communication
- **Scientific knowledge**– More types and greater depth of expertise to cross
- **Complex problems** – Agnostic to sectors, with incomplete or changing requirements

Article

Organizational
Psychology
Review

Into the fray: Adaptive approaches to studying novel teamwork forms

Organizational Psychology Review
2020, Vol. 10(2) 62–86
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DOI: 10.1177/2041386620912833
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Abstract

Novel forms of teamwork—created by rapid change and growing diversity among collaborators—are increasingly common, and they present substantial methodological challenges for research. We highlight two aspects of new team forms that challenge conventional methods. Factors pertaining to change (e.g., in membership) create *entitativity* challenges such as whom to count as team members, while factors pertaining to difference (e.g., in expertise) create *concordance* challenges such as how to interpret disagreement in groups. We review research methods that are well-suited to each of these specific challenges. We identify the particular challenges of studying teams that exhibit high difference *and* change simultaneously and call for adaptive methods that enable insight into how they work. Clarity about the dimensions of deviation from ideal team forms, along with shared terminology, will help researchers make and discuss tough methodological choices and assist reviewers in evaluating them.

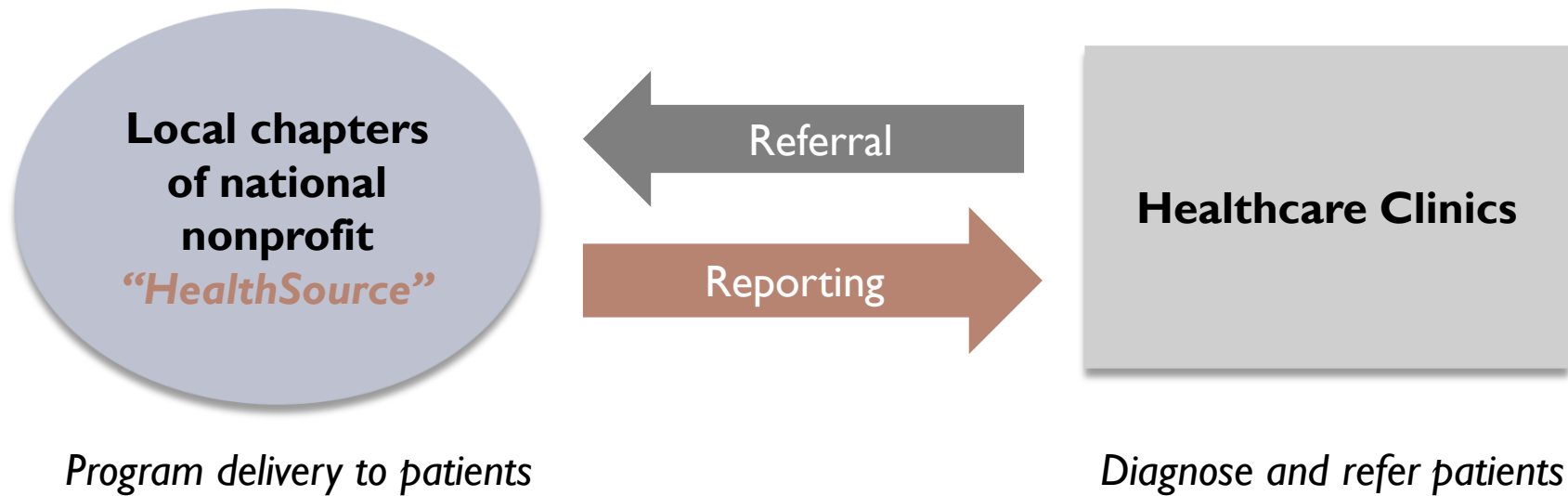
Joint Problem Solving in Fluid Cross-Boundary Teams

RQ: What factors enable performance when teams working across organizational boundaries with fluid membership pursue process innovation for mutual gain?

Kerrissey, M. , Mayo,A., & Edmondson,A.C. Joint Problem Solving in Fluid Teams (Under second review).

The Team Goal:

New Process Design for Diabetes Prevention Program Enrollment and Payment



Study Overview

Phase 1: Qualitative

- ▶ Collected interview and archival data to explore how these fluid, boundary-crossing teams made progress
- ▶ 14 inter-organizational teams
- ▶ Induced theory about team factors enhancing performance

Phase 2: Quantitative

- Developed and administered survey
- 299 inter-organizational teams
- Measured and explored relationship of team factors to performance



Overview of Findings

Qualitative

Two reactions to low stability:

(1) Investing in relationship building

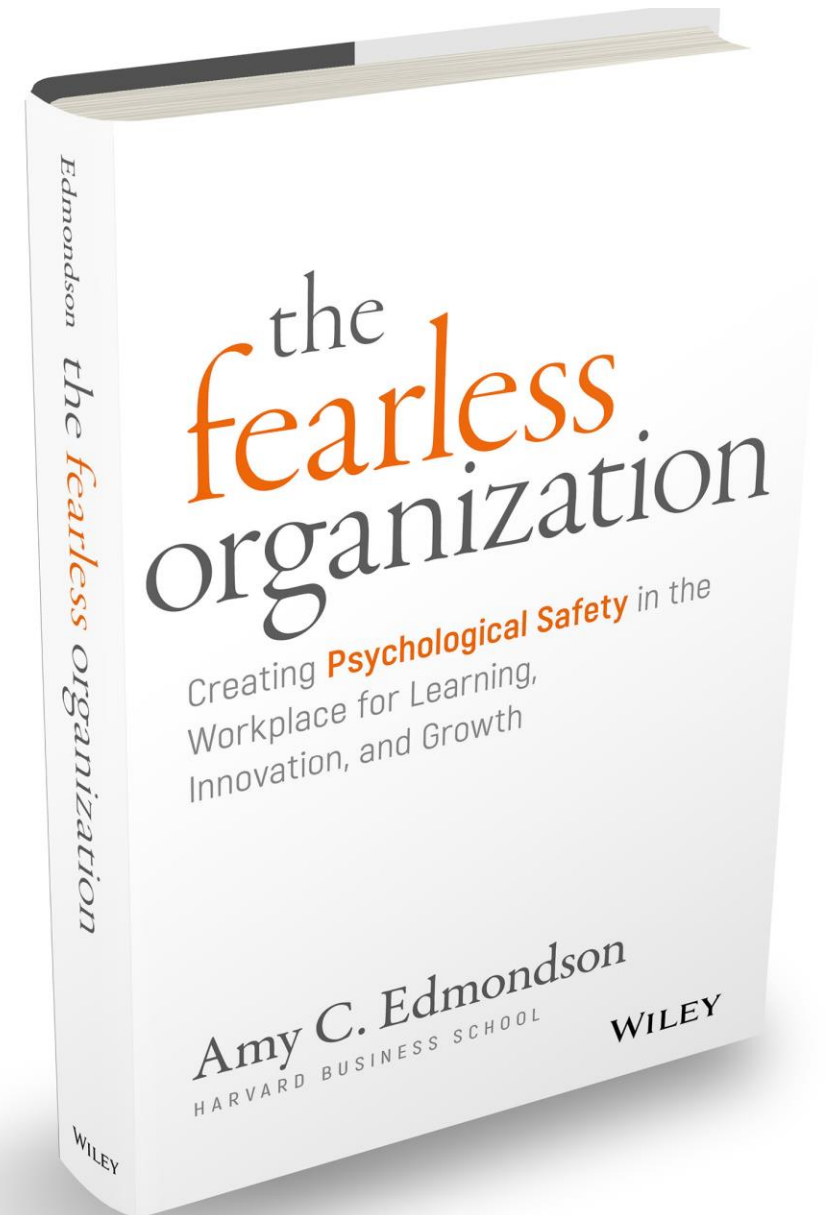
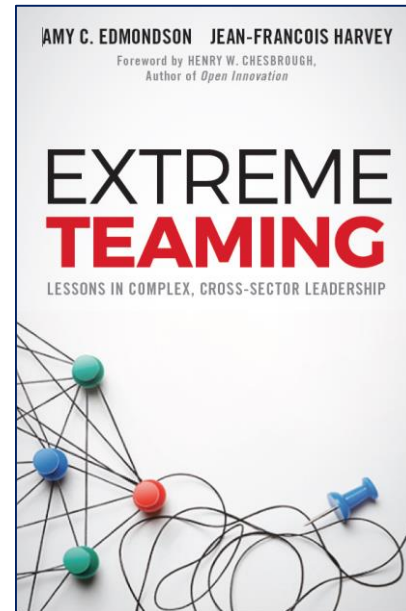
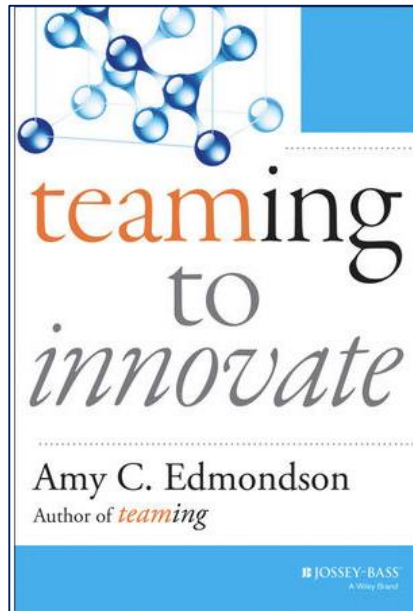
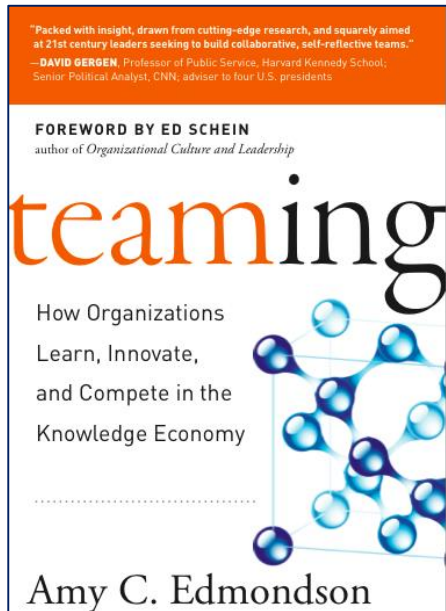
(2) Joint problem-solving orientation

Quantitative

Joint problem solving orientation is a measurable construct with a robust, positive relationship to performance.



FOR MORE...



FEAR THAT IS SHARED IS PRODUCTIVE

Interpersonal Fear at Work

Subtle/Hidden

Experienced Alone

Concerned with What Others Think

Inhibits Innovation

Fear Related to COVID-19

Obvious/Explicit

A Shared Experience

Concerned with What We Can Do

Promotes Innovation



To the extent that people you work with have felt more comfortable than usual expressing their concerns and questions, how can you keep that transparency and vulnerability alive in the future?

FOR REFLECTION AND ACTION

1. **Framing**: What will I do to clarify the importance of voice? How can I make sure everyone appreciates the level of uncertainty or interdependence we face, so that they recognize the *necessity* of relating fearlessly to each other?
2. **Inviting**: What can I do to model *curiosity* about what others see and bring? In what situations can I ask more, and better, *questions*, rather than just expressing my perspective?
3. **Responding**: What will I do to *signal* that what I am hearing matters? What will I do to acknowledge the effort it takes when people bring ideas or questions forward? What can I do to destigmatize bad news and intelligent failure?
4. **Purpose**: What can I do to build commitment to the longer-term shared purpose of our group – helping to ensure that everyone understands why our work makes a difference, and for whom, and that it's worth fighting for?

FAILURE IS INEVITABLE – BUT NOT ALL FAILURE IS GOOD



1

Preventable Failures

- Where we know how to do it right; we have a playbook, yet deviations occurred...



2

Complex Failures

- Complex factors (organizational, market, natural) combine in completely new ways to produce failure in familiar contexts



3

Intelligent Failures

- Undesired results of thoughtful forays into novel territory



WHEN AND HOW PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY MATTERS FOR EXCELLENCE



ROUTINE OPERATIONS



COMPLEX OPERATIONS



INNOVATION OPERATIONS

As uncertainty increases, psychological safety is more and more important to success...

PROBLEMATIC VS. PRODUCTIVE SILENCE

PROBLEMATIC SILENCE



- Withholding voice related to a potentially serious work/performance risk
- Withholding voice related to risks to human safety/dignity
- Withholding voice pointing to a potential improvement or innovation opportunity
- An unasked (thus, unanswered) question restricts your ability to contribute or succeed
- Your silence denies colleagues the opportunity to help you solve a problem.
- **Your primary focus in that moment is concern with how you will look if what you say isn't well received.**

PRODUCTIVE SILENCE



- Withholding content that is off topic.
- Withholding content due to confidentiality or security concerns
- Withholding personal insults, sarcasm, or other unprofessional remarks
- Staying silent to listen intently to what others are saying, to learn more and figure out how you can contribute
- **Your primary focus in that moment is ensuring the quality of the work or furthering the organization's mission.**

TEAMING WITHOUT A BLUEPRINT → “EXECUTION-AS-LEARNING”

It's agile, collaborative & iterative:

- Your teams face many **UNKNOWNNS**
- Team members must bring in different **EXPERTISE** at different times.
- They lack a fixed set of **DELIVERABLES** or fixed **ROLES**.
- They must do **NEW** things that haven't been done before.
- They must **ACT** – to learn.
- They will sometimes **FAIL** along the way...



SPEAKING UP & INNOVATION

“A hallmark of a healthy, creative culture is that its people feel free to share ideas, opinions and criticisms... without that, collaboration is not possible.”



Source: Catmull & Wallace (2014)

Inclusive Leadership

- ▶ Unit Medical Directors who:
 - ▶ Are accessible
 - ▶ Acknowledge their own fallibility
 - ▶ Proactively invite input

Inclusive leaders

***lower the psychological costs of speaking up and
raise the psychological costs of silence***