

## The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety

Timothy R Clarke in his book “The Four Stages Of Psychological Safety” describes a conceptual model of four “stages” of psychological safety that teams can move through, progressing from stage 1 to stage 4.

These four stages are:



**Stage 1: Inclusion Safety** –Inclusion safety satisfies the basic human need to connect and belong. Whether at work, school, home, or in other social settings, everyone wants to be accepted. In fact, the need to be accepted precedes the need to be heard. When others invite us into their society, we develop a sense of shared identity and a conviction that we matter



**Stage 2: Learner Safety** –Learner safety satisfies the basic human need to learn and grow. You feel safe to engage in the learning process-asking questions, giving and receiving feedback, experimenting, and even making mistakes, not if but when we make them.



**Stage 3: Contributor Safety** –Contributor safety satisfies the basic human need to contribute and make a difference. When contributor safety is present, we feel safe to contribute as a full member of the team, using our skills and abilities to participate in the value-creation process. We lean into what we’re doing with energy and enthusiasm. We have a natural desire to apply what we’ve learned to make a meaningful contribution.



**Stage 4: Challenger Safety** – Challenger safety satisfies the basic human need to make things better. It’s the support and confidence we need to ask questions such as, “Why do we do it this way?” “What if we tried this?” or “May I suggest a better way?” It allows us to feel safe to challenge the status quo without retaliation or the risk of damaging our personal standing or reputation.