



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Training boosts psychological safety in teams

**Psychological safety is crucial for the performance and innovative drive of a team. A training programme developed by researchers at Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH and Zurich University of Applied Sciences ZHAW can be used to strengthen psychological safety in a direct and verifiable way.**

Speaking one's mind, asking sensitive questions, admitting mistakes, offering criticism or making an unusual suggestion – actions of this nature always come with a degree of risk for the person behind them, and the workplace is no exception. In fact, there it is particularly crucial to the pursuit of innovation and progress for staff to have the courage to speak out. Without having to fear being laughed at or penalised. This is where psychological safety comes into play. Psychological safety exists when team members perceive the team as a safe environment for them to take risks. To enable teams to work specifically on strengthening their psychological security, researchers from the Institute for Data Application and Security IDAS at Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH have developed and trialled a training programme in collaboration with Zurich University of Applied Sciences ZHAW. It is now available to the public.

#### 15 minutes training per week

In developing the programme, the researchers drew on findings from basic research as well as other investigations of their own. They created a series of short exercises and had them tested on a total of 50 teams with 4 to 22 members each. Teams from companies such as Swisscom, SBB and Digitec Galaxus AG took part. Every Monday for six months, participants received an email with instructions for an exercise and short questions about the previous week's exercise. Each exercise took about 15 minutes and could be assigned to one of three categories: Skills Exercises, where a new behaviour is tried out; Reflection Exercises, where the team members are asked to think about a specific aspect; and Team Exercises, where something new is worked out in the team or new ways of behaving are tried out.

#### Better performance and greater innovative drive

In order to prove the effects of the exercises, the researchers conducted online surveys every two months. For comparison purposes and to be able to identify and exclude other contributing factors from the company environment, a control group also took part in the trials, consisting of 12 other teams from the participating companies. These teams did not complete any exercises and were only required to fill out questionnaires on team development. The surveys confirmed the effect of the training on the psychological safety, performance and innovative strength of the participating teams. In contrast, no significant changes were observed in the control group.

The complete training, consisting of 24 exercises, including instructions, is available to the public free of charge and can be used on its own. [www.psych-safety.org](http://www.psych-safety.org)

#### Find out more

[Project page](#)

[Institute for Data Applications and Security IDAS](#)

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