

# The Fearless Report 2024

**In 2024, 11,143 individuals shared their experience of psychological safety on their teams, providing unprecedented insights into the state of workplace cultures globally.**

At The Fearless Organization Scan, founded on Harvard Business School professor Amy C. Edmondson's groundbreaking research spanning over 25 years, we measure psychological safety - a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes.

Our globally recognized assessment, The Fearless Organization Scan, has supported hundreds of organizations since 2019 in transforming their team dynamics and outcomes.

## What is Psychological Safety?

Psychological safety enables individuals and teams to engage in open conversations, take interpersonal risks, and learn from failures without fear. Edmondson's seminal 1999 research on hospital teams linked psychological safety to fewer medical errors, and Google's 2014 Project Aristotle reinforced psychological safety as the top factor determining team effectiveness. This finding has been consistently validated by MIT, Singapore Management University, and dozens of other reputable institutions.



## The Fearless Organization Scan

Our validated assessment comprises 7 questions measured on a 7-point Likert scale, achieving a Cronbach's Alpha reliability of  $>.82$ . We report an overall Psychological Safety Index (PSI) and subscores across four key domains:

- Willingness to Help
- Inclusion & Diversity
- Attitude to Risk & Failure
- Open Conversation

Scores are presented using the median (central tendency) and the average positive and negative deviations to demonstrate variability clearly.

In 2024, we analyzed 11,143 global responses, examining psychological safety across various demographic groups, including tenure, personality type, gender, and generation.





## Contribute to The Fearless Report

Join the largest global measurement on psychological safety and contribute to The Fearless Report 2025.

## Executive Summary

In 2024, we received 11,143 responses to the free survey, asking participants to rate their perception of psychological safety on their immediate team.

Psychological safety is an interpersonal construct. You will notice that several of the questions are framed in the 1st person, asking the participant to rate their own sentiment, ex: 'working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized', while other questions are framed in the 3rd person, ex: 'members of this team are able to bring up tough issues'.

It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.  No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.  Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.	 Willingness to Help
People on this team sometimes reject others for being different.	 Inclusion & Diversity
If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you.  It is safe to take a risk on this team.	 Attitude to Risk & Failure
Members of this team are able to bring up tough issues.	 Open Conversation

From the results of the 7 questions, we report an overall score - the Psychological Safety Index, as well as 4 subscores:

- Willingness to Help
- Inclusion & Diversity
- Attitude to Risk & Failure
- Open Conversation

These scores are calculated using the Median - the central tendency of the population, as well as the average positive and negative deviation, to understand the variance in scores.

For these 11k+ responses, we also asked participants to provide their demographic information, including:

- Country
- Gender
- Generation
- Industry
- Introvert/Extrovert
- Leadership Position
- Tenure

## Technical Terms Defined

- **Psychological Safety Index (PSI):** An overall score calculated from survey responses, indicating the perceived psychological safety within a team or organization.
- **Median:** A statistical measure representing the middle score when all responses are ordered, providing insight into typical experiences within the group.
- **Average Positive Deviation:** The average amount that scores above the median deviate from it, indicating variability among more positive experiences.
- **Average Negative Deviation:** The average amount that scores below the median deviate from it, showing variability among less positive experiences.

## Overall Results

N = 11,143

PSI median = 73

Willingness to Help = 76

Inclusion & Diversity = 71

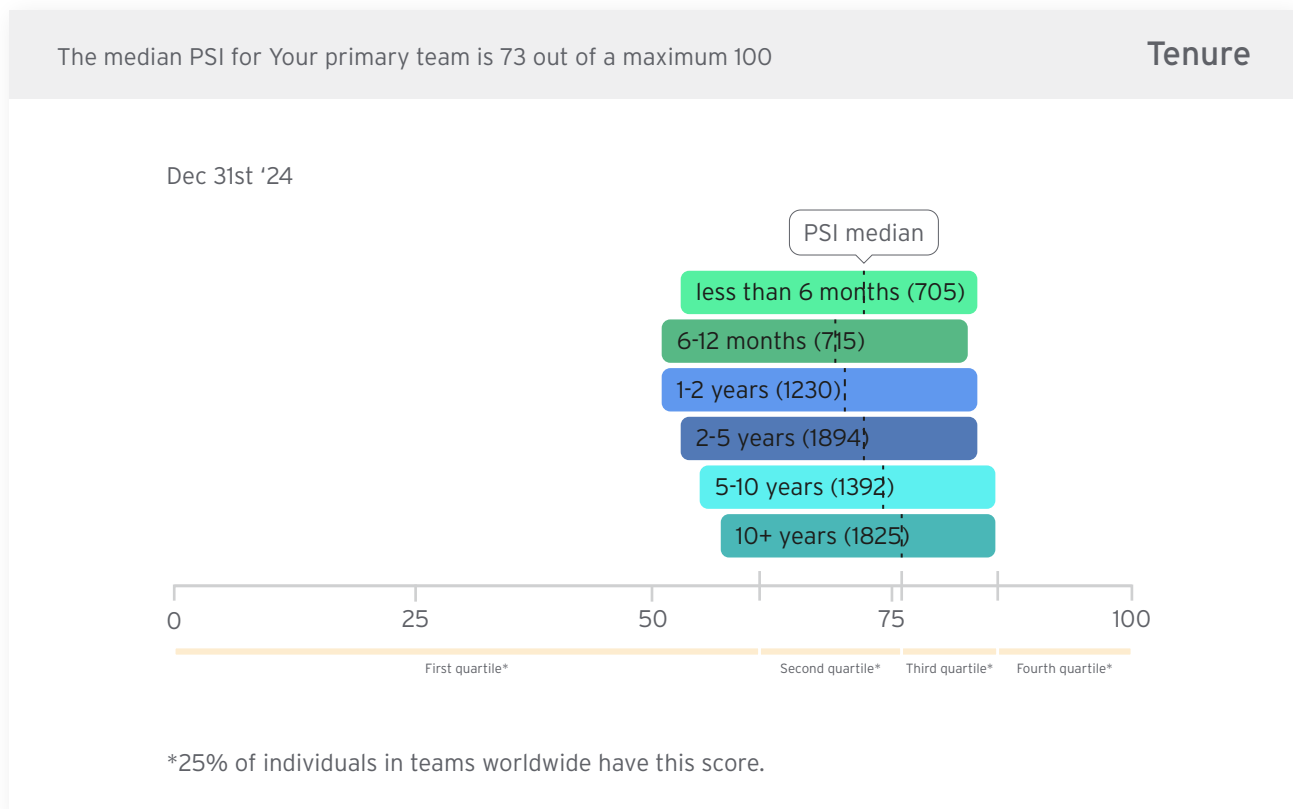
Attitude to Risk & Failure = 71

Open Conversation = 86

# Who Feels Safe? Psychological Safety Across Demographics

## Psychological Safety and Tenure: The Longer You Stay, the Safer You Feel

Psychological safety is often influenced by familiarity, trust, and workplace culture. Data from The Fearless Organization Scan shows a clear trend: psychological safety increases with tenure. Employees who have been in their organizations longer report feeling safer to speak up, take risks, and share ideas without fear of negative consequences.



## Key Findings

- New employees (less than 6 months) report a median Psychological Safety Index (PSI) of 72.
- Psychological safety dips slightly for employees in their first year (PSI 69) and those with 1-2 years of experience (PSI 70).
- After two years, psychological safety increases (PSI 72) and continues to rise with tenure:
- 5-10 years: PSI 74
- 10+ years: PSI 76 (the highest of any group).
- The largest response group was employees with 2-5 years of tenure (1,894 responses), followed by those with 10+ years (1,825 responses).

## What Does This Tell Us?

This data suggests that psychological safety is built over time. Employees with longer tenure

feel safer, likely due to greater familiarity with the organization's culture, stronger relationships with colleagues, and a deeper understanding of team dynamics.

However, the first year appears to be the most challenging period for psychological safety.

Employees in the 6-12 month range report the lowest PSI (69), indicating that new hires may struggle with speaking up, uncertainty about norms, or fear of making mistakes.

The steady increase in psychological safety after two years suggests that trust takes time to develop. Employees who stay longer not only become more comfortable with their environment but may also gain credibility, positional influence, and confidence in contributing to discussions without fear of negative repercussions.

## Implications for Organizations

### 1. Bridge the Psychological Safety Gap for New Employees

- The drop in PSI for employees in their first year suggests that onboarding and early team experiences play a critical role in shaping psychological safety.
- Organizations should proactively create safe spaces for new hires to ask questions, share ideas, and receive feedback without fear of judgment.

### 2. Recognize That Psychological Safety is Built Over Time

- Since PSI steadily increases with tenure, leaders should understand that psychological safety is a long-term investment, not an instant outcome.
- Managers and team leads should prioritize trust-building efforts, especially for employees in their first 1-2 years, to accelerate psychological safety.

### 3. Leverage Long-Tenured Employees as Psychological Safety Champions

- Employees with 10+ years of experience feel the safest (PSI 76). Organizations should encourage them to mentor, model inclusive behaviors, and support newer employees in feeling psychologically safe.
- Creating peer mentorship programs or buddy systems can help shorten the psychological safety gap for newer employees.

### Bottom Line

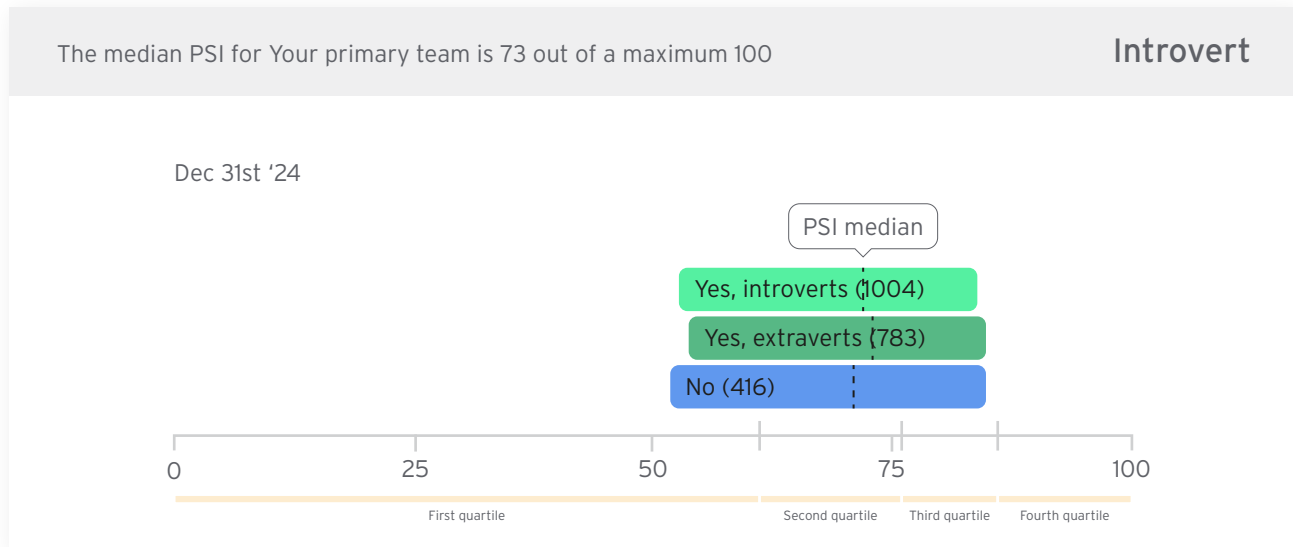
Psychological safety grows with time, but organizations shouldn't assume it will develop naturally. The first year is a critical period where psychological safety is lowest, meaning leaders must intentionally support new employees, build trust early, and create environments where psychological safety is a shared experience, no matter how long someone has been with the organization.





# Psychological Safety and Personality: No Difference Between Introverts and Extraverts?

When it comes to personality type, conventional wisdom might suggest that extraverts, who tend to be more vocal and outgoing, would feel more psychologically safe in the workplace than introverts, who may be more reserved. However, the data from The Fearless Organization Scan tells a different story.



## Key Findings

- Introverts and extraverts reported very similar median scores on the Psychological Safety Index (PSI) of 72 and 73, respectively.
- Those whose personality type was unknown had a slightly lower PSI of 71.
- The total responses were 1,004 introverts, 783 extraverts, and 416 unknown.

## What Does This Tell Us?

At first glance, this data may seem surprising - one might expect extraverts to feel much more at ease speaking up, challenging ideas, or taking risks. However, the similarity in PSI scores across all personality types suggest that personality itself is not the determining factor of psychological safety. Instead, it's likely that other workplace conditions, such as leadership behaviors, team norms, and organizational culture, play a much larger role in shaping psychological safety than whether someone is naturally introverted or extraverted.

This also challenges the assumption that introverts necessarily struggle more with psychological

safety. While they may be quieter or more selective in when they contribute, this does not mean they feel inherently less safe in doing so. On the flip side, extraverts, despite being more outspoken, are not reporting a significantly greater sense of safety, perhaps due to concerns about being judged, dominating discussions, or facing resistance from colleagues.

The 416 individuals who did not indicate a personality type also reported a similar PSI with a median of 71 and similar variance, reinforcing that personality alone does not determine one's experience of psychological safety.

## Implications for Organizations

### 1. Psychological Safety Is Not About Personality, It's About Culture

- Since both introverts and extraverts reported the same levels of psychological safety, organizations should focus less on personality-driven assumptions and more on creating environments where all employees feel safe to contribute in ways that suit their style.

- Psychological safety should not be mistaken for loudness or frequent participation - some of the most psychologically safe teams may still have members who speak up sparingly but meaningfully.

## 2. Ensure Diverse Participation Styles Are Valued

- Just because introverts and extraverts report equal levels of psychological safety doesn't mean they participate in the same ways.
- Leaders should create multiple avenues for contribution - written reflections, smaller group discussions, anonymous input, and live conversations to accommodate different communication preferences.

## 3. Encourage Inclusion Without Bias Toward Outspokenness

- Some organizational cultures may inadvertently reward loudness over thoughtfulness. This data suggests that true psychological safety means ensuring that all voices, whether quiet or loud, are valued and heard.
- Teams should resist defaulting to extraverts as natural leaders and instead cultivate listening, patience, and intentional space for all perspectives.

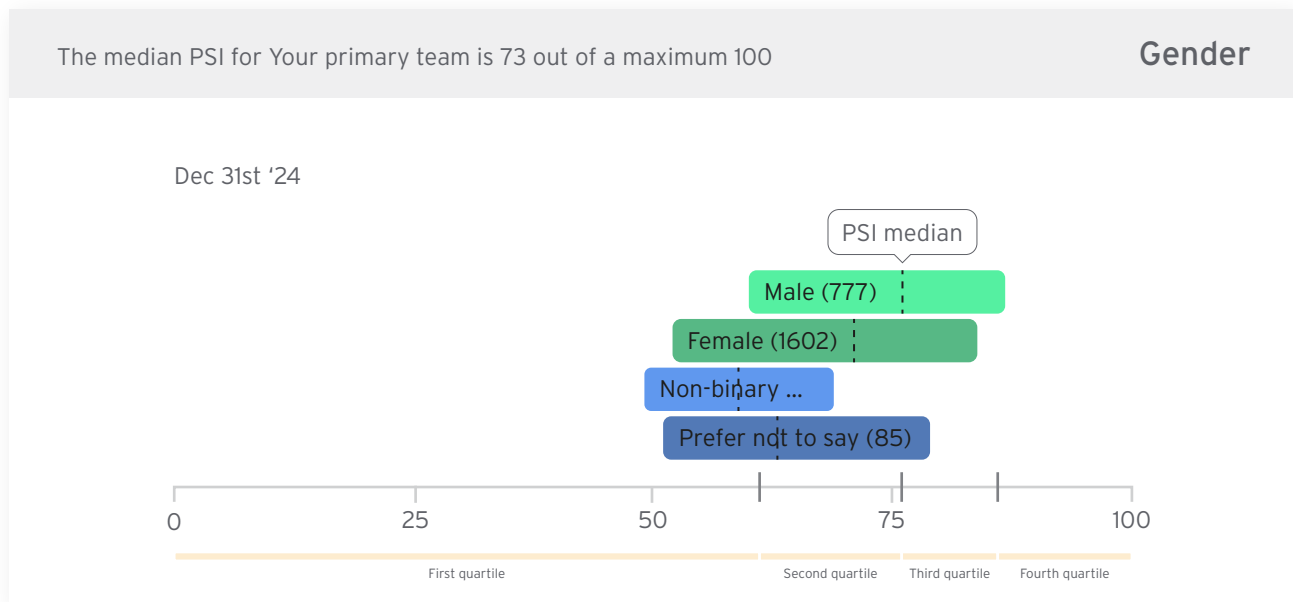
### Bottom Line

While personality type may influence how people engage, it does not appear to impact whether they feel psychologically safe to engage. Psychological safety is fundamentally a team and organizational construct, not an individual personality trait.



# Psychological Safety and Gender: A Divided Experience

Psychological safety is not experienced equally across gender identities, and the data from The Fearless Organization Scan reinforces this reality. With 2,496 total responses, we see significant differences in the median Psychological Safety Index (PSI) across gender groups.



## Key Findings

- Men reported the highest median psychological safety (PSI 76).
- Women reported a lower median score of 71, indicating they feel less safe speaking up, taking risks, or admitting mistakes in their workplaces.
- Non-binary respondents reported the lowest psychological safety at PSI 59, suggesting significant challenges in experiencing inclusion, open conversation, and the ability to take interpersonal risks. However, the sample size for this group was small (32 responses), which means this data should be interpreted with some caution.
- Those who preferred not to disclose their gender had a median PSI of 63, reinforcing the trend that psychological safety is lower for individuals outside of the dominant gender group.

## What Does This Tell Us?

The five-point gap between men and women suggests that psychological safety is not evenly distributed in organizations. Women may experience greater scrutiny, bias, or workplace dynamics that discourage open expression and risk-

taking. This aligns with broader research showing that women often feel a stronger pressure to prove themselves, leading to hesitation in speaking up or challenging ideas.

The lower PSI for non-binary respondents (17 points lower than men) suggests that this group faces significant barriers to psychological safety, likely due to misgendering, exclusion, lack of representation, or outright discrimination. However, because only 32 non-binary individuals participated in the survey, we should be careful in generalizing this finding too broadly. Still, even with a small sample size, the trend aligns with broader research on workplace inclusion for gender-diverse individuals.

The score for those who prefer not to say (PSI = 63) is also telling. This group may include individuals who feel uncomfortable disclosing their gender identity in the workplace, potentially due to fear of bias or judgment. Their lower PSI than women suggests that this discomfort translates into a more cautious, less open work environment for them.



## Implications for Organizations

### 1. Addressing Gendered Barriers to Psychological Safety

- Organizations should examine how gender norms and biases impact workplace dynamics.
- Leadership and managers must foster environments where women and gender-diverse employees feel heard, valued, and safe to contribute.

### 2. Building Inclusivity Beyond the Binary

- While the sample size for non-binary respondents is small, the trend of lower psychological safety aligns with broader research and suggests an urgent need for more inclusive policies, better representation, and stronger allyship.
- Psychological safety initiatives should include a focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion, gender-neutral language, and education on bias and microaggressions.

### 3. Encouraging Open Conversations on Psychological Safety

- Organizations should create safe spaces for dialogue about psychological safety, ensuring that all gender identities feel supported.
- Collecting qualitative insights alongside PSI scores can help organizations understand specific barriers different gender groups face.

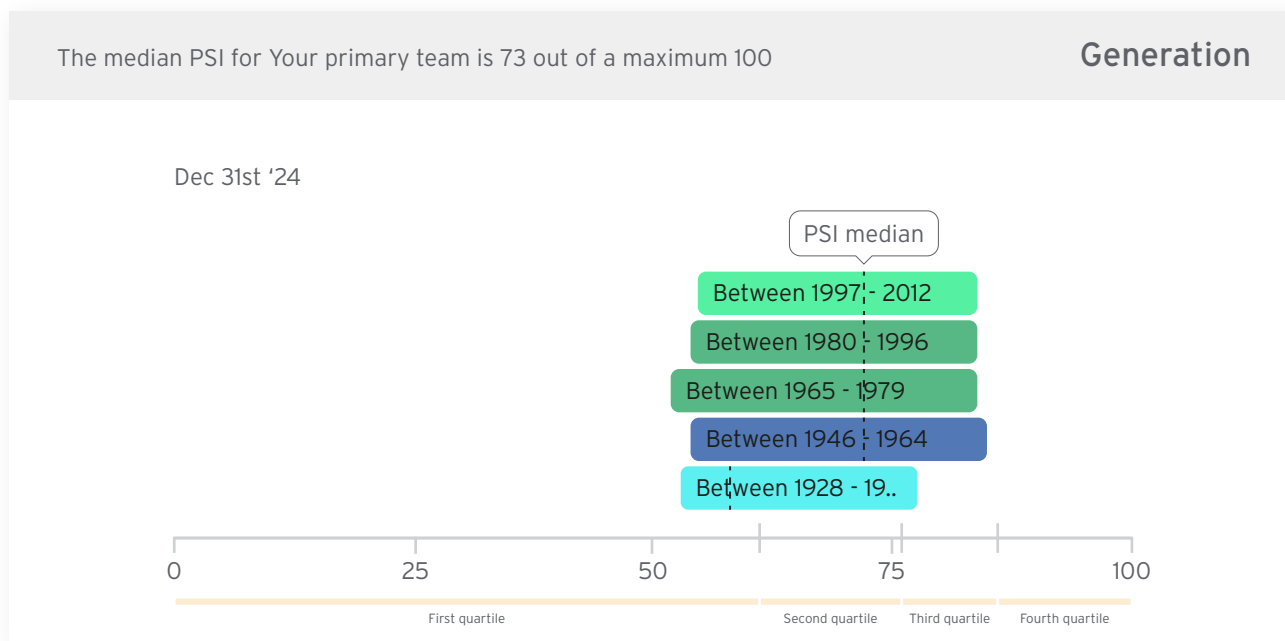
### Bottom Line

This data makes one thing clear: Psychological safety is not a one-size-fits-all experience. Gender plays a major role in shaping how safe employees feel at work, and organizations that fail to address these disparities risk stifling innovation, engagement, and retention.



# Psychological Safety Across Generations: A Consistent Experience

In workplace discussions, generational differences are often highlighted - whether in communication styles, values, or leadership approaches. However, when it comes to psychological safety, the data from The Fearless Organization Scan suggests that generational differences may not be as significant as commonly assumed.



## Key Findings

- Psychological safety is remarkably consistent across generations.
- Employees born between 1997-2012 (Gen Z), 1980-1996 (Millennials), 1965-1979 (Gen X), and 1946-1964 (Baby Boomers) all reported a median Psychological Safety Index (PSI) of 72.
- This consistency holds across the largest response groups: Millennials (1,517 responses) and Gen X (1,027 responses), as well as Gen Z (308 responses) and Baby Boomers (169 responses).
- The smallest group, those born between 1928-1945 (Silent Generation), reported a lower PSI of 58, but with only 14 responses, this data point is not statistically significant and should be interpreted with caution.

## What Does This Tell Us?

This data challenges the assumption that psychological safety varies by generation. If younger employees felt significantly less safe due to inexperience, or if older employees were more hesitant to speak up in modern workplaces,

we would expect to see a clear trend. Instead, all working-age generations experience psychological safety at nearly identical levels.

This suggests that psychological safety is not about age, but about workplace culture. Regardless of generational identity, employees feel psychologically safe when they work in environments that encourage open communication, inclusion, and risk-taking without fear of punishment.

## Implications for Organizations

### 1. Avoid Overemphasizing Generational Gaps

- Since psychological safety levels are consistent across generations, organizations should focus less on generational stereotypes and more on team culture, leadership behaviors, and inclusion practices.
- Rather than assuming younger employees need more encouragement to speak up or that older employees resist change, organizations should create conditions where all employees feel valued and heard.

## 2. Psychological Safety is Built Through Shared Experience, Not Age

- Whether an employee is early in their career or approaching retirement, psychological safety comes from how they are treated within their team, not when they were born.
- Organizations should ensure consistent leadership training, feedback mechanisms, and communication norms that promote psychological safety across all age groups.

## 3. Encourage Intergenerational Knowledge-Sharing

- While PSI scores are stable across generations, employees at different career stages may contribute to psychological safety in different ways.

- Creating psychologically safe spaces for mentorship, reverse mentoring, and collaboration can strengthen workplace culture by leveraging the strengths of each generation.

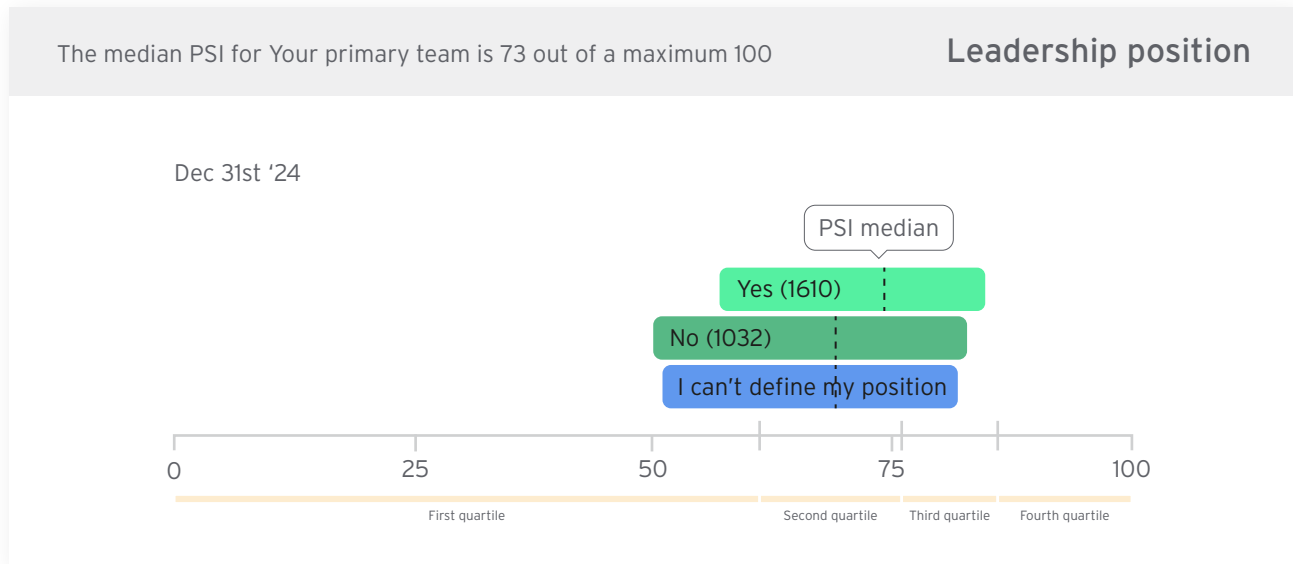
### Bottom Line

Psychological safety is not a generational divide, it is a shared workplace experience. The data makes it clear: when organizations prioritize inclusive, open cultures, psychological safety remains stable across all age groups. Instead of focusing on generational differences, organizations should invest in team-level and leadership practices that foster psychological safety for everyone.



# Psychological Safety and Leadership: A Clear Advantage for Leaders

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping psychological safety, but does being a leader impact how psychologically safe someone feels? The data from The Fearless Organization Scan suggests that it does - leaders report higher psychological safety than non-leaders or those in ambiguous roles.



We asked survey participants: Are you in a leadership position?

## Key Findings

- Leaders reported the highest median Psychological Safety Index (PSI) at 74.
- Non-leaders had a lower median PSI of 69.
- Those who couldn't clearly define their position also reported a PSI of 69.
- The largest response group was leaders (1,610 responses), followed by non-leaders (1,032) and those who couldn't define their position (393).

## What Does This Tell Us?

The five-point gap between leaders and non-leaders suggests that those in leadership roles feel more comfortable speaking up, taking risks, and expressing ideas without fear of negative consequences. This makes sense - leaders often have more influence, authority, and decision-making power, which may reduce their perceived risk when challenging ideas or admitting mistakes.

Meanwhile, non-leaders and those who feel they don't fit neatly into either category report lower psychological safety. This could be due to a lack of control over decision-making, uncertainty about how their input will be received, or fewer opportunities to shape team culture.

Interestingly, those who "can't define their position" reported the same PSI as non-leaders. This group may include individuals in transitional roles, informal leadership positions, or ambiguous team structures, where the expectations around speaking up and taking risks are unclear. Role ambiguity itself may be a psychological safety barrier.

## Implications for Organizations

### 1. Leaders Must Recognize Their Psychological Safety Advantage

- Since leaders experience higher psychological safety, they may underestimate how risky it feels for non-leaders to speak up.
- Leaders should actively invite participation, normalize vulnerability, and create structures that ensure all voices are heard.



## 2. Bridge the Psychological Safety Gap Between Leaders and Non-Leaders

- The 5-point gap suggests a power dynamic at play - organizations should work to reduce fear of speaking up for non-leaders by reinforcing that contributions are welcomed and valued at all levels.
- Psychological safety should be baked into team culture, not just leadership circles.

## 3. Clarify Roles to Reduce Psychological Safety Barriers

- Employees who can't clearly define their position experience the same lower PSI as non-leaders, suggesting that role ambiguity may hinder psychological safety.

- Organizations should ensure clarity in roles, decision-making processes, and contribution expectations so employees feel confident in how and when to share their thoughts.

### Bottom Line

Leaders feel safer than non-leaders when speaking up, but psychological safety should not be a privilege of authority. Organizations must close the psychological safety gap by empowering non-leaders, clarifying roles, and ensuring that every employee, regardless of position, feels heard, valued, and encouraged to contribute.





# Get Involved in The Fearless Report 2025

We invite your organization to participate in our next annual report to better understand psychological safety dynamics globally and to enhance your workplace culture. Participation is easy, confidential, and provides valuable insights for your teams.

## Contribute to The Fearless Report

Join the largest global measurement on psychological safety and contribute to The Fearless Report 2025.

## What You Will Receive

- Insights into key risk areas & strengths
- Evidence-based recommendations for improvement
- Benchmarking against global industry

