



Electric Boat Management Association (EBMA)

Psychological Safety and Building Trust in the Workplace

Facilitated by Gene Knott, PhD, ABPP

Submitted by University of RI Office of Strategic Initiatives

Projected Timeline: April 10, 2024 – June 19, 2024

The recent past in our workplaces and the culture-at-large has shown how imperative the experience to feel "safe and express oneself" more fully has become. The critical roles of managers and leaders at all levels in company settings in ensuring the tone, experience and essential practice of self-expression, building team trust and inspiring management, supervisors and teams is the focus of this seminar series. These past several years, leaders of all levels have come to feel more than ever before—perhaps the need to establish a sense of freedom, invitation to and even expectation for this way of working together in teams—and therefore the leader's obligation to do so has become a "hot" training staple in every industry.

Single Sessions:

Each topic below is to be addressed in a facilitated two-hour workshop session involving the leadership work of EBMA participants. The workshops use a scaffolding learning approach utilizing a professional instructor who demonstrates expertise in the content areas. This workshop series will begin with the knowledge of developing safe spaces through the identification and applications of psychological safety in the workplace, followed by a second workshop on the applications of enhancing trust and inspiration in the workplace.

Psychological Safety in the Workplace:

Psychological Safety (PS) is an environment of rewarded vulnerability. Since the pandemic began, the demand for psychological safety has increased. Interest in the concept is giving way to demand for the condition, and employees now see psychological safety as a near universal term of employment. The critical roles of managers, leaders at all levels and company settings in ensuring the tone, experience and essential practice of self-expression is the focus of this two-hour workshop. Specifically, the four levels of PS are **Inclusion Safety**, which satisfies the basic human need to connect and belong; **Learner Safety**, enabling satisfaction of the basic human need to learn and grow; **Contributor Safety**, satisfying the basic human need to contribute and make a difference; and **Challenger Safety**, which satisfies the basic human need to make things better.

This single-session topical program offers a rationale model for learning and application, and self-assessment tools to build and grow a safer psychosocial environment and work culture. It uses Timothy R. Clark's 2021 paradigm called *The Four Stages of Psychological Safety*, and is a very experiential seminar with evidence for why and how this has become a crucial feature of well-being for the worksite, highlighting usable methods and skills for acquiring and expanding such safety. This range of experience includes the need for feeling included, able to speak out and own one's views, values and opinions, contribute more openly and innovatively and even push back where and when called for.

Trust and Inspiration in the Workplace:

The felt trustworthiness between a leader and their staff members and coworkers provides the foundation for building a trusting relationship, which is pivotal to securing desired outcomes with enhanced speed in any shared organizational enterprise. The workshop offers a rationale, models for learning and application and self-assessment, as well as practice tools to build and grow team leadership competencies through the practice of shared trust, wise applications of delegation and how to use these to inspire the workforce. Using the dual complementary aspects of character and competence, this program enables acquisition and enhancement of trust and productivity, while helping to ensure employee persistence and developmental growth.



Facilitator Information:



Gene Knott is a psychologist and Emeritus Professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Rhode Island (URI). He was a university administrator and professor for 27 years at three different colleges/universities.

Dr. Knott also teaches in URI's MBA program, where his courses have included leadership, coaching and mentoring, decision-making, navigating change and organization development. He has also been an adjunct faculty member in human development, psychology, nursing, adult education and honors and a fellow in gerontology. In addition, Gene has more than four decades' experience in systems consulting and group facilitation, training design and delivery for many public and private sector organizations globally and has been an executive coach for nearly 35 years. He is currently also a contract consultant to the University of RI's Office of Strategic Initiatives.

Gene has worked extensively with seven sectors: health care, human services, banking, high tech, manufacturing, professional associations and higher education. His primary areas of interest include organization change, coach and mentor training, leadership development, workforce management and succession planning, team building, performance development and cultural competency.

Gene is the author or co-author of six books and numerous book chapters and articles, and has made hundreds of invited presentations in North America and elsewhere internationally about his areas of expertise. A co-founder and former president of the Association for Death Education and Counseling, he has also been a frequent presenter on topics of dying and grief, including the impacts of loss and responses to it in organizations.

A psychotherapist for over 40 years, Dr. Knott specializes in behavioral medicine and is an American Board of Professional Psychology Diplomate, a board certification honor accorded by only four percent of North American psychologists.

