



Working Remotely: Tip of the Week

July 13, 2021

Name It To Tame It - Creating Psychological Safety

As we move to a return-to-work stage, many of us will be experiencing a range of emotions, and stresses, including feelings of threat to our well-being. Our irrational emotional centers will be responding to perceived psychological threats in the same way as we react to physical threats: flight or fight, fear, or anger. To help control psychological threats, we need to create psychological safety. Psychological safety allows our conscious brain to put the brakes on our emotions, restore feelings of control and transform how we respond to perceived threats.

The notion of 'Name it to Tame it' (see Sing, 2021) is a coaching concept that can be used to help create psychological safety at work by recognizing the following:

- Threats to psychological safety create a powerful, unconscious, adverse reaction in the brain.
- Shaming, blaming, judging, embarrassing, discrediting, and excluding – which can be mired in bias – create stress, and stress is a threat to psychological safety.
- By explicitly naming psychological threats (including biases), our rational brain has a chance to tame the perceived threat.
- Psychological threats can be reduced by thinking aloud with others, encouraging creativity, naming behaviors that exhibit bias, and making clear decisions that are communicated well.

When experiencing stress, take some time to stop and name what is threatening you. Share it with someone trusted who may be able to help you think through the perceived threat, allowing you to make more rational decisions. Our capacity to create psychological safety at work by naming and taking actions to tame shared fears and perceived threats is as important to creating a safe workplace as implementing physical health and safety guidelines.

Reference:

Ring, S. (2021). *Name it to Tame it*. Executive Leadership Coaching Program.

NOTE: The Tip of the Week is going monthly. Watch for the next tip on September 3, 2021, in ELITE's NEW monthly digest! For more tips on working remotely, please visit <https://bit.ly/mc-remote-working-e>.

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