

An aerial photograph of a coastline. The left side shows deep green water, transitioning to a lighter green and yellowish-green as it approaches a white sandy beach on the right. The water's surface has a textured, rippled appearance. The sky is a pale, overcast grey.

TOWARD >

**Casestudy**  
**Team Coaching**  
**with Senior**  
**Leadership Team**

Senior Leadership HR Team  
February-December 2022

# Introduction

TOWARD have been delivering Team Coaching work for several years. We have become particularly interested in the importance of Team Psychological Safety, which has been defined by Amy Edmondson as “a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking.”<sup>1</sup>

The concept refers to the experience of being able to speak up, share ideas, concerns and to ask questions<sup>2</sup>. In psychologically safe teams, team members feel accepted and respected, and feel able to be candid. The key to high-performance teams is the extent to which members are able to take interpersonal risks with one another, and apply their learning that takes place within the team’s practices. Edmondson (1999)<sup>3</sup> suggests it is a group level construct and all team members need to perceive it is characteristic of the team.

Team Psychological Safety is the key to team learning, both about the team itself and the team’s tasks. It is the team’s commitment to and practices with regards to their learning that leads to improved performance.

## Client

A financial services organisation that provides advice and products.

## Client Request

The team was relatively newly formed following HR Director’s appointment in 2021 and subsequent new hires and restructuring.

The aim of this TPS programme was to support this team to build a sense of team and enable the team to push forward together, aligned on its trajectory.

## Objectives of Programme

To get to know one another better and so deepen relationships and create opportunities for shared collaboration

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To build clarity on Team Purpose and Priorities

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To reflect on how to create space for team dialogue, thinking and strategic reflection

<sup>1</sup> Edmondson, Amy (1 June 1999). “Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams” (PDF). *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44 (2): 350–383. (p350)

<sup>2</sup> Edmondson, A (2019) *The Fearless Organisation; Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation and Growth*, Wiley; New Jersey

<sup>3</sup> Edmondson, A (1 June 1999). “Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work

## Methodology

TOWARD were involved in 3 strands of a transformation programme, this Case Study solely focuses on the building of Team Psychological Safety through team coaching with one Senior Leadership Team.

TOWARD were also involved simultaneously in coaching the C-Suite team of Executives in the business, which included the leader of this team.

Two TOWARD coaches co-facilitated the sessions.

## Programme Overview

### Diagnostic Work

1:1 interviews, desk research, TPS survey

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### Team Coaching

Design & delivery of  
4 Face to Face sessions

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### 1:1 Coaching

Offered to all team members.

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### Evaluation

Re-completion of TPS survey, Participant feedback survey after each session & Evaluation Report

## Results

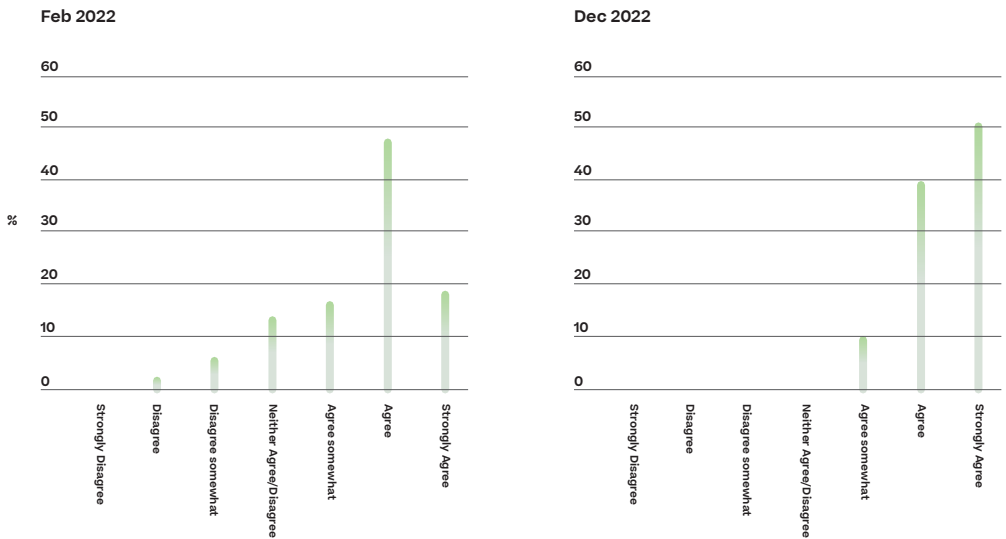
This Team increased Psychological Safety in their team, from 5.57 at the start of the programme to 6.41 (out of 7) at the end; with an increase in all seven elements of Psychological Safety. The standard deviation decreased (from 1.17 at the start to 0.67 at the end of the programme) indicating that the team was more aligned in their thinking as to where they were at as a team which is important given psychological safety is a shared belief. A low standard deviation means the team is aligned and capable to discuss their shared views, and look for ways to progress together. This is a great foundation on which to build a high-performing team.

The diagrams below and overleaf evidence the shift and growth in Team Psychological Safety and its elements. Overall, these changes are really positive and reflect the commitment, efforts and growth that this team has made throughout the course of their Team Coaching programme.

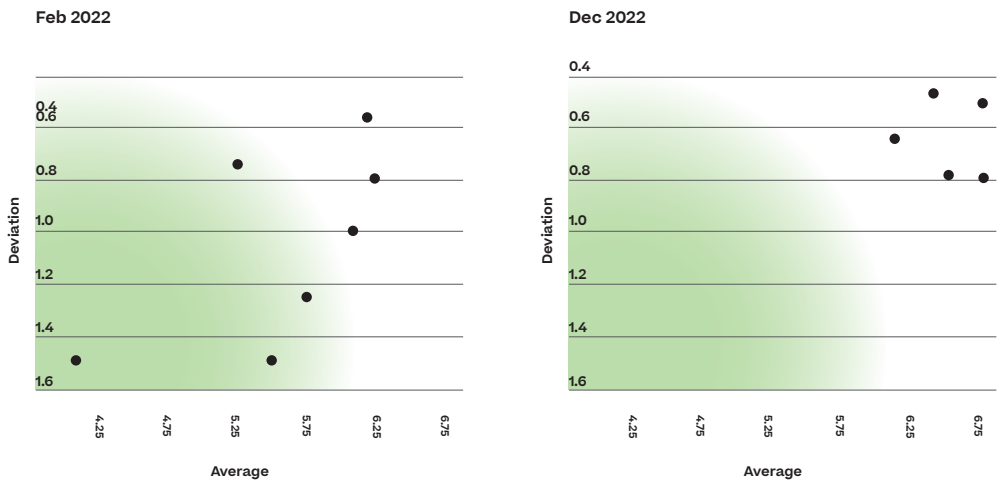
Overall Team Psychological Safety & change over time of programme:

	Feb 2022	Dec 2022	Change
TPS score (out of 7)	5.57	6.41	+0.84
Standard deviation (out of 7)	1.17	0.67	-0.5

Team's scoring of TPS - baseline & after programme:



Team's scoring of elements of TPS - baseline & after programme:





The second TPS survey following the team coaching programme, indicated that the team has maintained the same strengths of APPRECIATION and ASKING for HELP, and has improved in relation to one of the former 'priority improvement areas' of DEALING WITH ISSUES. The ongoing priority improvement areas for this team are MUTUAL SUPPORT and TAKING RISKS.

Building Team Psychological Safety is an ongoing process that the team needs to continue to pay attention to moving forward, giving consideration to how they are doing in each of the 7 elements.

## Conclusion

This case study highlights the significant progress that the Team made through their team coaching programme.

This programme was particularly important given the context of a relatively new team and thus team members valued the opportunity to connect and attend to their relationships. This programme has enabled stronger connections to be forged through getting to know each other better. There would appear to be a move from a sense of the team working in silos to being more connected. There were good levels of trust and respect in the team but the team needed to find ways to constructively challenge each other to contribute to even better decision making.

The second repeated TPS survey showed an improved overall score for team psychological safety and that the team were more aligned and in agreement as to where they were on this journey around each element of psychological safety. The elements of mutual support and taking risks are the areas the team may benefit from focusing on going forward.

Going forward will require the team to continue to attend to building team psychological safety.

# Participant Feedback

## What they said

“ Very professional, empathetic and flexible”

“ Excellent as always”

“ Spot on at stepping in when needed, and stepping back to let the team dynamics come out.”

“ Outstanding facilitation, thank you”

“ Fantastic facilitation - gave us space, managed emotions really well, changed agenda up to give us what we need, thank you both.”

“ They read the room”

“ Good at managing some difficult situations”

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