

# Psychological Safety in Teams:

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## The Canary in the Coalmine

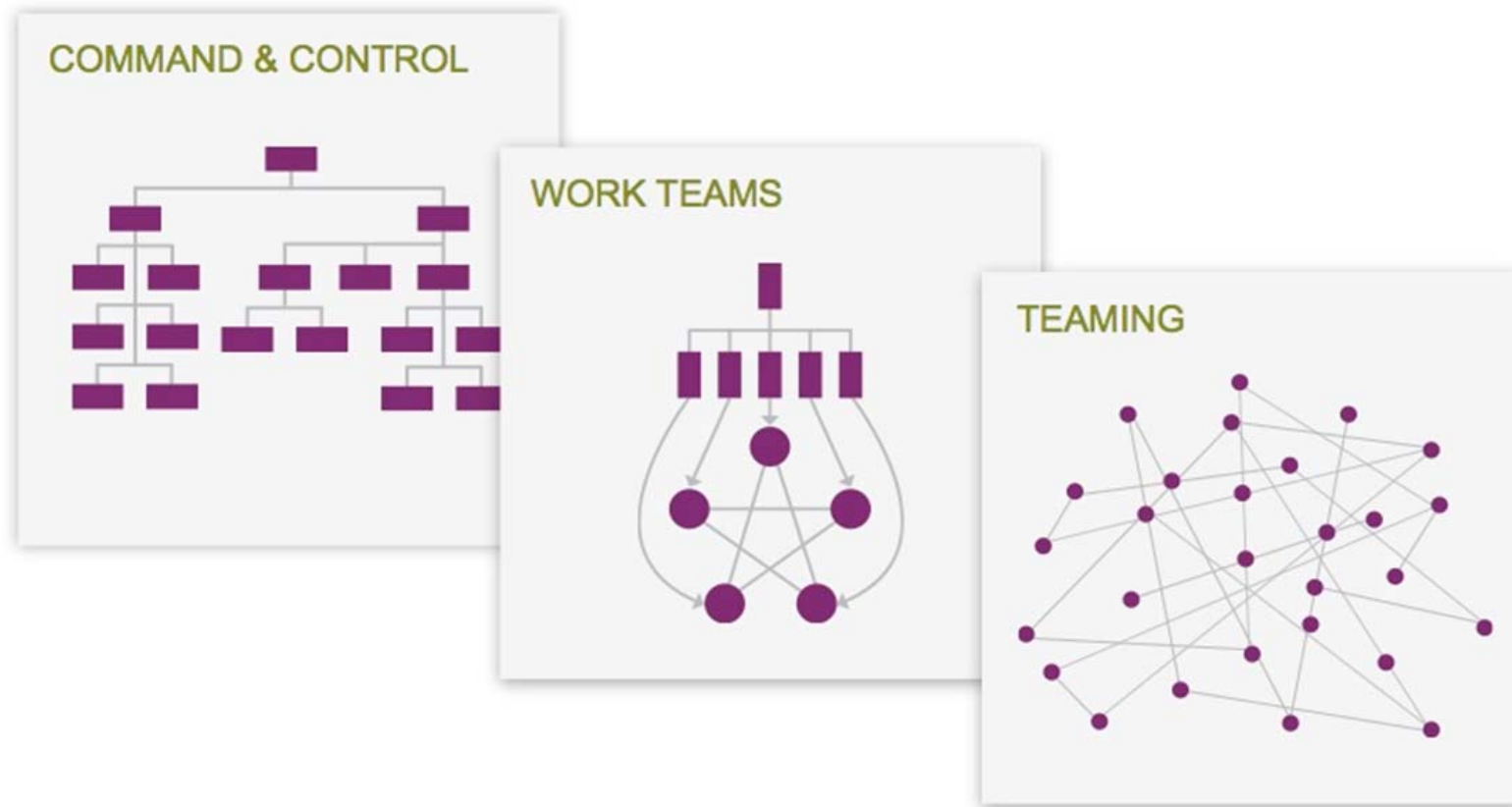
Presented by:

VHA National Center for Organization Development (NCOD)



# What is Psychological Safety and Why is it important?

# Teaming – The Changing Nature of Work



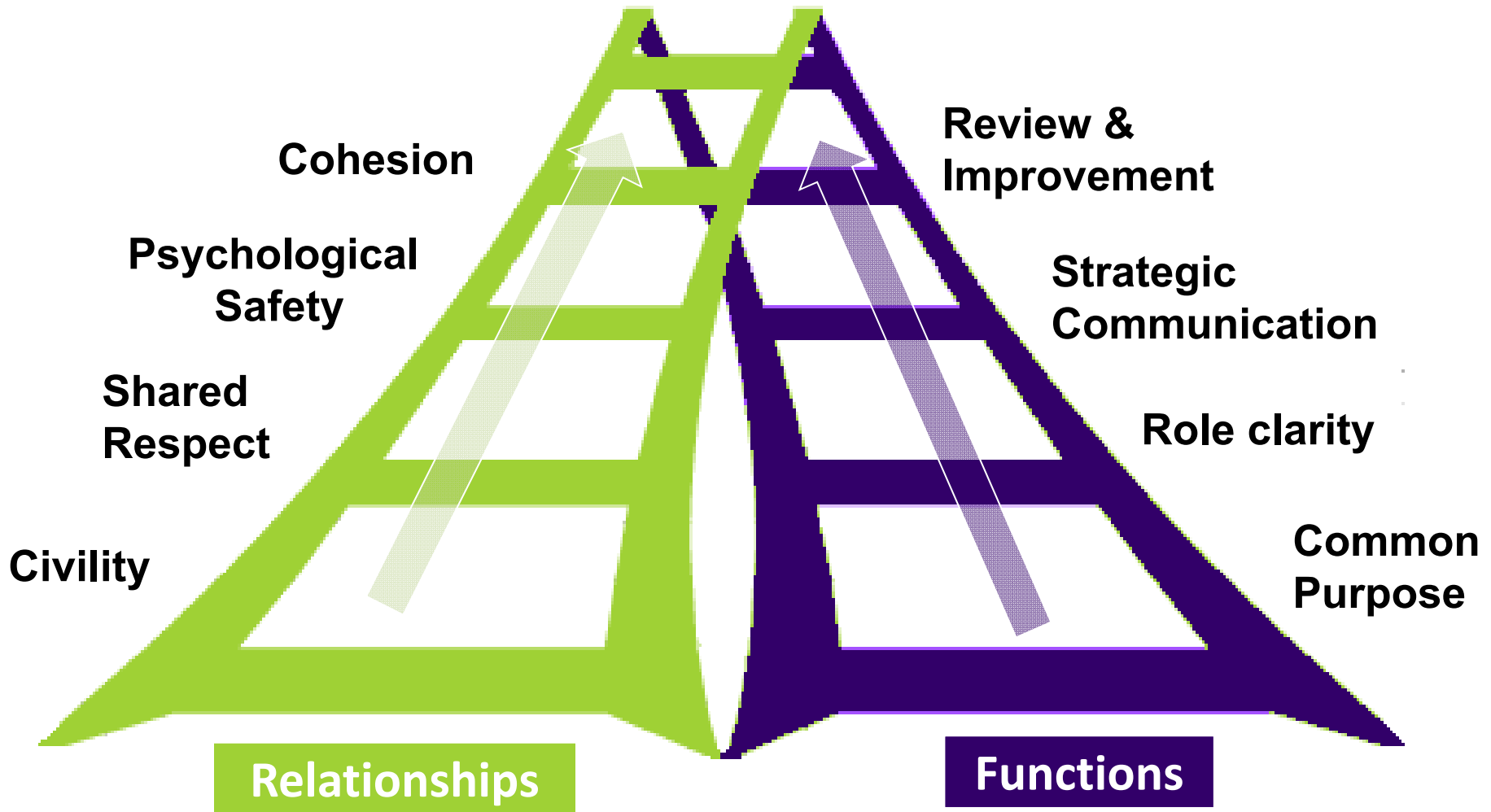
# Teaming is a Verb

Team • ing (v.)

Teaming is teamwork on the fly-coordinating and collaborating, across boundaries, without the luxury of stable team structures

Teaming is especially needed when work is **COMPLEX** and **UNPREDICTABLE**

# Engaged, Effective VA Teams



# Making it Safe to Team

**Psychological safety** is the degree to which employees trust that asking questions, sharing new ideas, raising concerns, disclosing honest mistakes and reporting violations will not be penalized or perceived negatively in the workplace.

**IT'S ESSENTIAL  
TO TEAMING**



# The Canary in the Coalmine

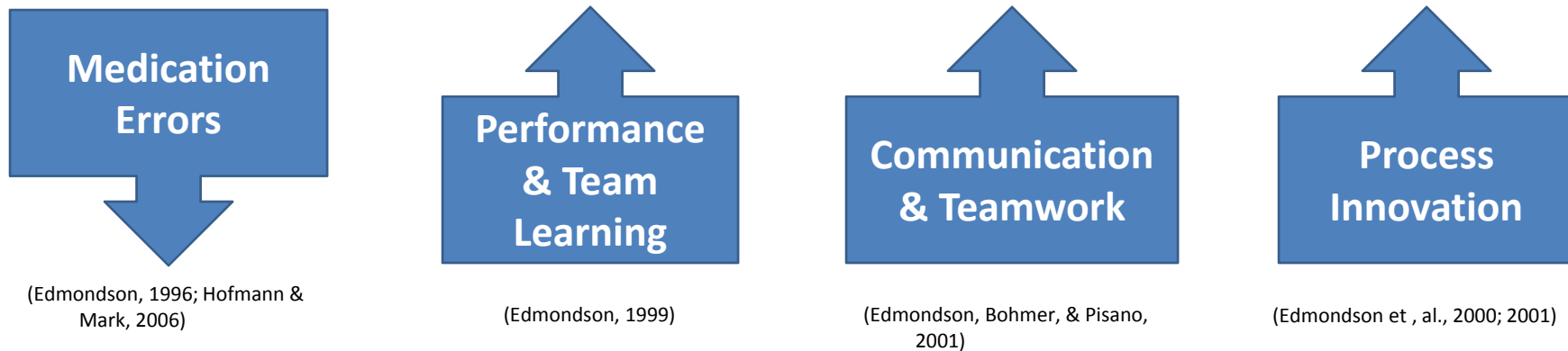
Psychological Safety is not an  
end in and of itself

It can act as a barometer  
of organizational health



# Psychological Safety - Business Case

## Psychologically-safe healthcare environments experience:



## In VA, greater psychological safety is related to:





# What can get in the way?

# The Influence of Context

The chess pieces are darker on:

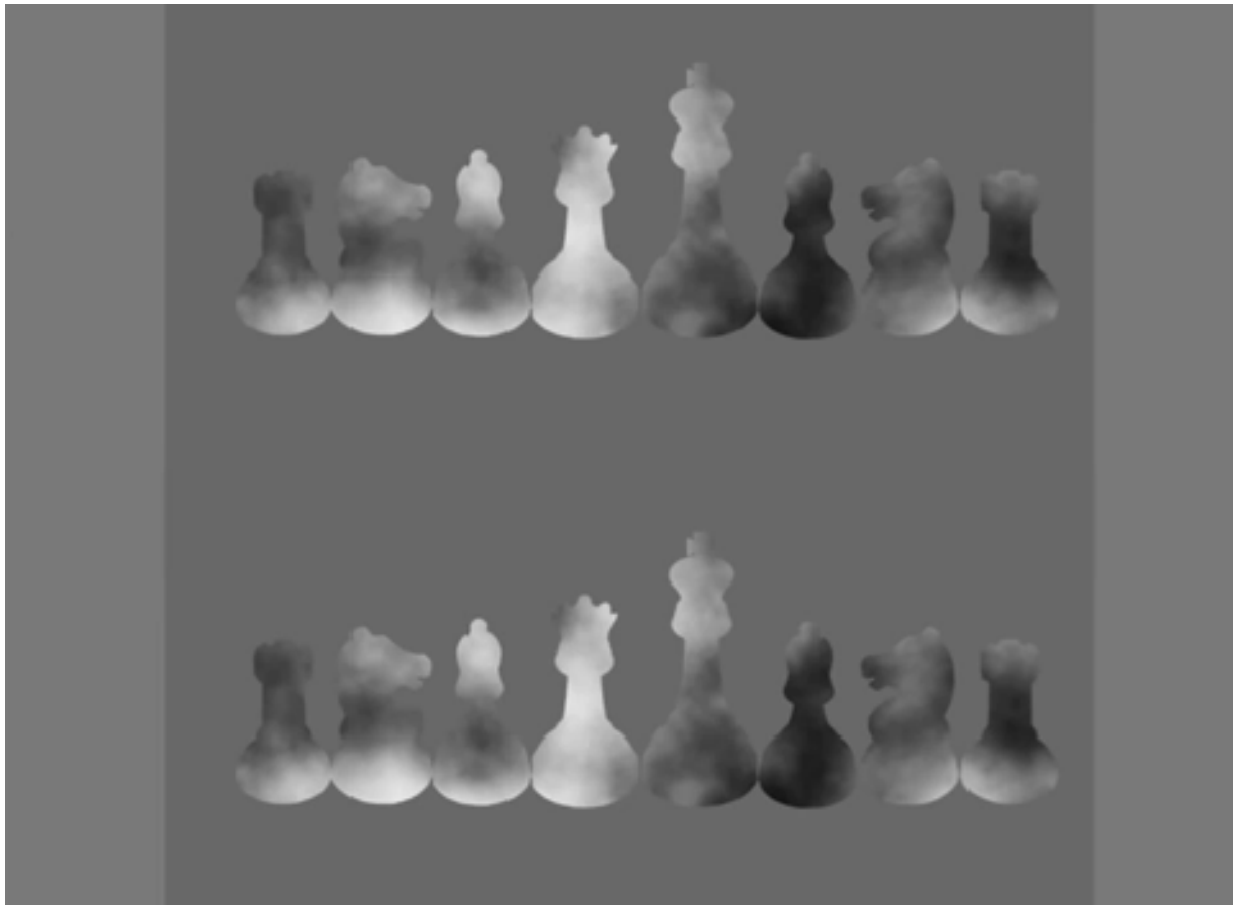
a) Top Row



b) Bottom Row



# The Influence of Context



# The Influence of Context

**I see this dress as:**

- a) Primarily white with gold lace**
- b) Primarily blue with black lace**
- c) Other**



# Ladder of Inference



Decide on  
action

Interpret  
meaning

Filter data

Take in data

Our ability to learn and work together is limited by our feelings that:

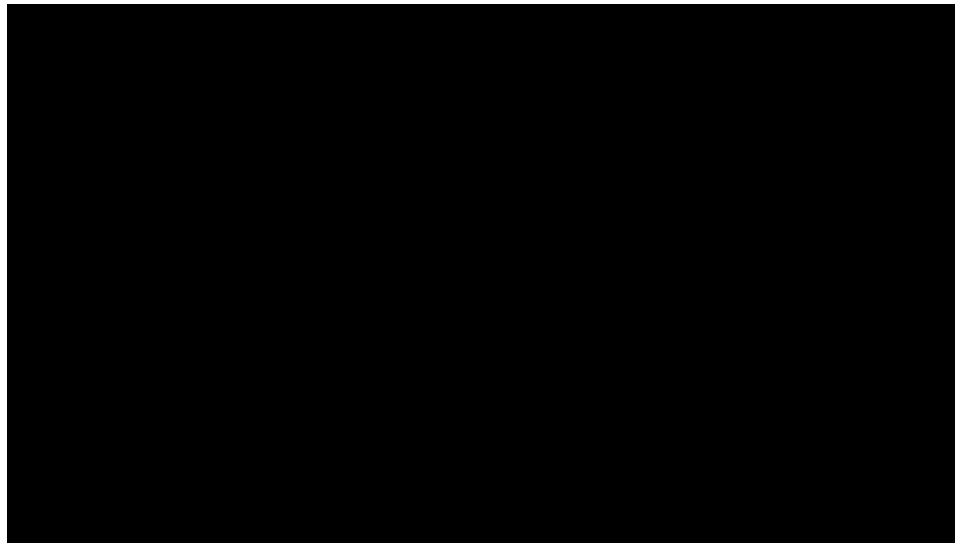
**The data we  
select are the  
real data**

**Our beliefs  
are based on  
real data**

**Our beliefs  
are the  
truth**

**The truth is  
obvious**

# It Can Be Challenging...



# Common Challenges

Impact/Intention

Power Dynamics



Physiology

# What influences Psych Safety?



# Psych Safety and Leadership

**Sets Tone**

**Biggest  
Influencer**



**PS as Local  
Phenomenon**

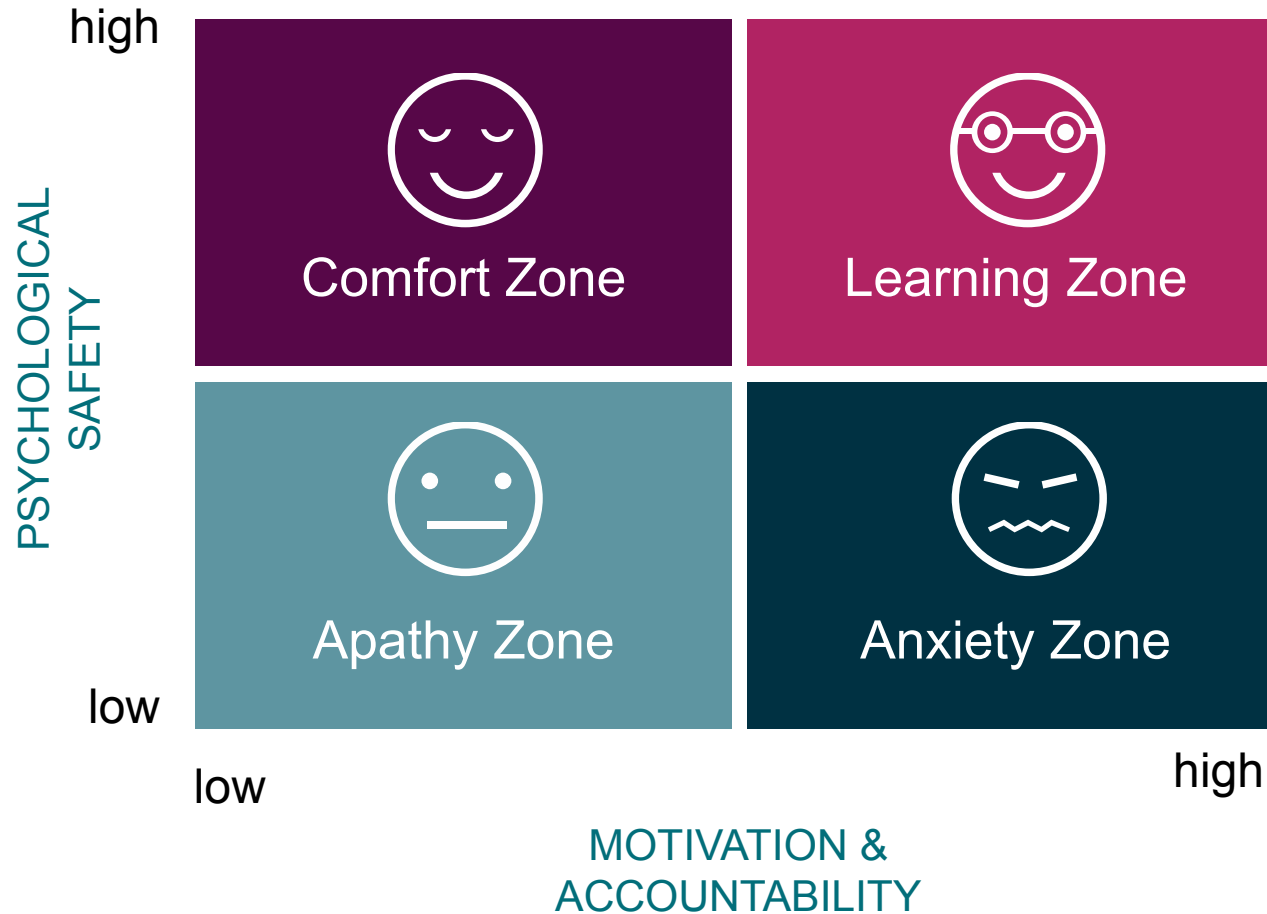
# Psych Safety and Leadership



# Accountability

- Psychological safety is not about being 'nice' or about lowering performance standards.
- Clarity about consequences enhances psychological safety
- Blameworthy Acts:
  - Reckless behavior
  - Disruptive behavior
  - Disrespectful behavior
  - Knowingly violating standards
  - Working way beyond your boundaries
  - Failure to learn overtime

# Accountability



# Psych Safety and Team Behaviors

Speaking Up

Experimentation



Collaboration

Reflection

# What's Being Done?

# What's Being Done?

- Psychological Safety Summit – Feb 2015
- Build awareness and desire throughout the system
- Develop specific skill-building interventions aimed at supervisors
- How can you help?



## For more information, please contact VHA National Center for Organization Development (NCOD)

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