

Build Learning Teams and Encourage Learning through Trust & Respect

Guidance:

Community Leadership will determine the target audience for this training.

Attendees should arrive with the following: this one-pager; and the 2022 GRGB Training Packet.

The first 15-20 min is designed to be spent reading this page (front/back) and considering the questions on the back. The next 40-45 min will be a senior-leader led conversation, starting by sharing personal observations from the questions on the back.

Why do we need to build Learning Teams?

“History shows the navy which adapts, learns, and improves the fastest gains an enduring warfighting advantage. The essential element is fostering an ecosystem—a culture—that assesses, corrects, and innovates better than the opposition.” CNO Gilday

A learning team, with a learning culture, is this ecosystem.

What has the Navy learned about building Learning Teams?

After the 2017 collisions, Navy commissioned a study that reported out in December 2018 as “The Competitive Advantage of a Learning Culture”. The report stated that

“in today’s rapidly changing, competitive landscape, organizations need to continually adapt and evolve. A learning culture is... a requirement, a differentiator, and a competitive edge.”

The study concluded that to build a learning culture, a leader must do two things:

- 1) Embrace human factors as a necessary prerequisite
those conditions necessary for humans to perform optimally as a team
- 2) Embody the values and behaviors of the organization
which is why leaders must role-model GRGB Leadership Behaviors every day

How do we embrace these Human Factors?

As stated in the study, the number one enabler for human factors is “psychological safety”, creating a climate where our people feel respected, and trust that it is safe to speak up... with new ideas... or to identify risk to people, team, or mission.

It is common for those unfamiliar with the term “psychological safety” to mistake it for a recent cultural buzzword: a softer, low accountability space, incompatible with military excellence.

The term has existed since the 1950s, and refers to an environment that has both high trust and high accountability... existing well beyond the senior leader, with the team reinforcing high standards with each other... each team member knowing their leader and teammates have their back - their best interests at heart. As a result, they can speak up with confidence to make things better.

Teams, built by leaders modeling trust and respect, with high psychological safety, will learn better, innovate better, and solve problems better. In doing so, they will also develop a high level of connectedness, where team members are less likely to conduct destructive behaviors, individually, or as a group (personal or unit mishaps).

Teams with high psychological safety are the learning teams GRGB Leaders will build and sustain.

What does the Charge of Command have to say about Trust & Respect?

“Generate trust through action, both internal and external to your command, and continually assess the level of trust given to you and that you give to others.”

“Trust and effective communications - absolute necessities in combat - must be developed and perfected in times of peace.”

“Acknowledge the value of every Sailor and civilian. Take care of them and their families. Embrace diversity of thought and background. Foster inclusion and connectedness.”

With this as a background, now read through the GRGB Leadership Behavior card (located on Page 15 of the 2022 GRGB Training Packet).

When complete, consider the following questions for yourself and for your team, and then discuss your thoughts and observations.

For yourself:

- Even more important than your self-assessment with GRGB leadership behaviors is how other people see you. Through this lens, and on a scale of 1 to 10, how do you think other people rate you as a leader when it comes to: humility, authenticity, and empathy? What can you do better?
- When is the last time you sought out and/or considered an opposing view? What did you do with this knowledge? How did you treat the person who provided it?
- Do all of the “sub-cultures” within your command demonstrate “trust and respect”? Are there areas or pockets where toxicity, hostility or harassment occur?

For your team:

- If you had a beloved family member with the opportunity to join your team (the one you lead, or the one you are a part-of with your ISIC), would you recommend they do so? Why or why not?
- How would you assess the level of trust between the levels in your command structure? What could be done to build greater trust?
- Does your organization have meetings that reflect a free-flow of information based on strong psychological safety, or are people guarded because they don’t trust that they can be honest?

From your community:

- Community-specific question.
- Community-specific question.
- Community-specific question.

Questions, Comments, or Observations? Send them to GRGB_Lead_N17@us.navy.mil.