



# The Civility at Work Companion Guide

Created by Inclusivv in partnership with SHRM

# Welcome to the Civility at Work Companion Guide

At Inclusivv, we are on a mission to help organizations build cultures of trust, inclusion, and respect through peer-to-peer dialogue and structured conversations. In partnership with SHRM, we are proud to bring you the Civility at Work Companion Guide: a resource to help you explore, practice, and embody the themes presented in [Building Civility at Work video series](#).

We believe that by fostering civil conversations, we can bridge divides, strengthen teams, and create better workplaces and a better world. Inside, you will find stories, science, and tools, along with reflection prompts to help you apply new insights immediately.

66

**Civil conversations are not a luxury. They are essential to building workplaces where everyone feels safe, valued, and heard.** 99

— Jenn Graham, CEO and Founder of Inclusivv

## What You Will Find Inside

### PART 1

#### **The Inner Work of Civility**

How leaders set the emotional climate, the influence of self-talk, reframing core wounds, five leadership capacities, and practices for regulation.

### PART 2

#### **The Everyday Work of Civility**

Why small interactions matter, the cost of incivility, shifting from reactivity to curiosity, healthy versus unhealthy conflict, and tools for tense moments.

### PART 3

#### **The Cultural Work of Civility**

How culture shapes civility, the role of psychological safety, unsafe practices to retire, the four keys to safety, and rhythms that sustain trust.

# The Inner Work of Civility

## Where Leadership Begins

Civility at work begins long before the meeting, the policy, or the decision. It begins within each of us. Leaders who learn to manage their presence, emotions, and inner narratives set the tone for safer, steadier, and more resilient teams.

This section explores how your inner work shapes the culture around you. By strengthening your awareness and practicing new ways of responding, you can create conditions where trust, creativity, and respect naturally grow.



### What You Will Discover

1. Why your presence is contagious.
2. How your inner voice can either limit or lift you.
3. The influence of “core wounds” on leadership patterns.
4. The five leadership capacities that strengthen civility.
5. Practices to regulate emotions and model steadiness.

## Why It Matters

When leaders avoid inner work, unresolved patterns resurface as workplace tension. When leaders commit to it, they model steadiness and courage, inspiring others to do the same. This is the foundation of civil leadership.

 [shrm.co/inclusivv](http://shrm.co/inclusivv)



# Emotional Presence

---

## Why It Matters

Leadership isn't just about guiding projects and making decisions, it is about setting an emotional climate. Psychologists call this **emotional contagion**.

Emotions ripple through groups like waves on water. Within moments of entering a room, people unconsciously mirror the tone, posture, and energy of those around them.

### A Tale of Two Meetings



**Manager A** walks into Monday's meeting, sighs, and says, "This week will be brutal." Shoulders slump. Energy drains.

**Manager B** opens with, "What small win can we celebrate from last week?" Smiles spread. Engagement rises.



*The workload is the same. The atmosphere is not.*

## What This Means for You

- Your mood is not private. It sets the weather for the team.
- Emotional presence is not optional. It is part of leadership.
- When you manage your state, you make it easier for others to thrive.



### Reflection: Take Emotional Inventory

When you walk into a room, what emotions do you most often bring with you?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# The Voice in Your Head

# Your Inner Dialogue

Each of us carries an inner voice — the ongoing inner dialogue that shapes our emotions, decisions, and leadership behavior. Sometimes, it encourages us. Sometimes, it criticizes.

This “self-talk” influences leadership more than we realize. Harsh inner dialogue activates stress responses, making us defensive and reactive. Compassionate inner dialogue supports patience, creativity, and empathy.

## Two Different Leaders



**Leader A** faces a mistake and thinks, “I always fail.” She enters the meeting defensive and ready to blame.



**Leader B** thinks, “This was difficult, but it does not define me.” She enters with curiosity and openness.

*The same situation. Two outcomes. The difference is the conversation in the mind.*

## Why It Matters

Neuroscience shows that self-compassion reduces burnout and increases resilience. Leaders who extend kindness to themselves are more likely to treat others with patience and respect.



## Reflection: Self-Talk Journal

1. Write down one phrase your inner critic often repeats.
2. Now, reframe it with a more compassionate response.
3. Recognize how the reframed phrase shifts your posture, tone, and outlook.

# The Core Wounds We Carry

## What Are Core Wounds?

Leadership is shaped not only by skills but also by past experiences. Core wounds are deep beliefs formed early in life that resurface under stress. They were once protective. Left unexamined, they become barriers to growth.



### Common Core Wounds and Their Impact

- “I am not safe” → Resists change, micromanages to feel in control
- “I am not valued” → Overworks, chases approval, withdraws when unseen
- “I am powerless” → Avoids decisions, holds back ideas
- “I cannot trust” → Refuses to delegate, dominates discussions
- “I must be perfect” → Punishes mistakes, stifles innovation

### A Leadership Story

*Maria, a senior director, carried the wound “I must be perfect.” Every mistake felt like failure, so she over-edited reports, stayed late, and expected the same from her team. Over time, creativity shrank and burnout spread.*

*When Maria reframed her story to “Learning matters more than perfection,” she started celebrating experiments instead of only flawless outcomes. Her team became braver, more innovative, and more loyal.*



#### Reflection: My New Story

Your old story is the limiting belief shaped by past experiences or core wounds, while your new story is the empowered narrative you’re choosing to write moving forward.

Old Story

---

---

---

New Story

---

---

---

# The Five Leadership Capabilities

## Building the Muscles of Civility

Civility is not a single action, it is a discipline. Like muscles, leaders can strengthen their capacity to lead with grace. These five capabilities create the foundation for resilient leadership.

### 1. Self-Awareness

Recognize your triggers, blind spots, and impact.

*Example:* A manager used to get really defensive whenever her ideas were challenged. Once she realized this, she began to see those moments not as threats, but as opportunities to learn.

*Practice:* At the end of the day, ask, “How did my presence affect others today?”

### 2. Emotional Regulation

Pause before reacting. And choose curiosity over judgment.

*Example:* A leader rewrites a frustrated email after taking a breath, turning conflict into collaboration.

*Why it matters:* Calm signals safety. Stress signals threat.

### 3. Empathy

See beyond your own perspective.

*Example:* A leader notices an employee’s silence and asks, “What support would help you right now?”

*Why it matters:* Practicing compassion increases cooperation and reduces burnout.

### 4. Accountability

Take responsibility and honor limits.

*Example:* After a leader interrupts someone, they circle back and say, “I realize I interrupted you earlier. I want to hear your full thoughts.”

*Practice:* Frame feedback as an act of respect, not punishment.

### 5. Courage

Act on values, even when it is hard.

*Example:* A CEO admits, “I do not have all the answers, but here is what I know and what I am committed to.”

*Why it matters:* Integrity creates cultures within which people dare to speak truthfully.



#### Reflection: Five Capabilities

Identify one capability to strengthen this month. Write one practice you will try each day to build that muscle.

# Practices for Regulation

## Why It Matters

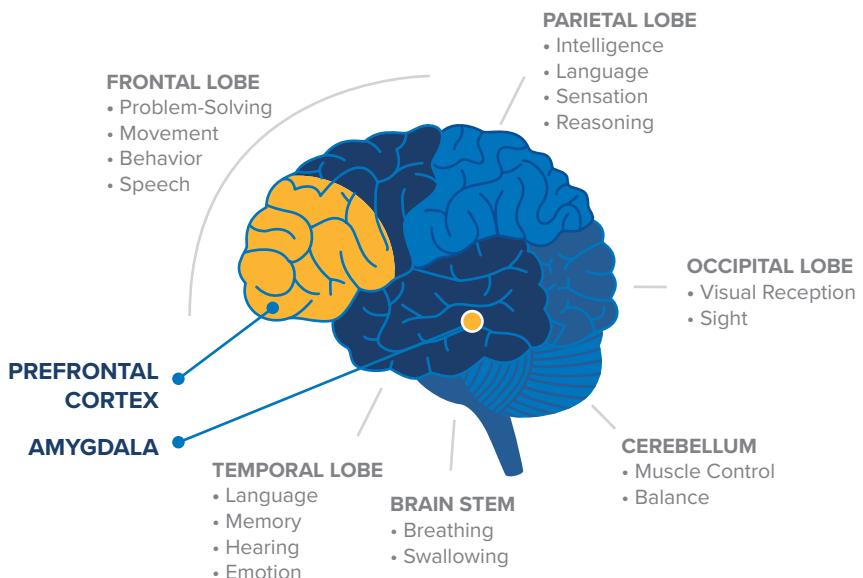
Awareness is powerful, but practice is what transforms it into new behavior. Emotional regulation helps leaders choose responses rather than being swept away by reactions.



## Practical Approaches

- 1. Breath Reset:** Inhale for four counts, then exhale for six.
- 2. Step Away:** Delay sending a message until emotions settle.
- 3. Journaling Pause:** Write what you want to say, then reframe it.
- 4. Outcome Check:** Ask yourself; “What result do I want here?”

**What the Science Shows**  
Regulation activates the **prefrontal cortex**, which supports reasoning and problem-solving. Without it, the **amygdala**, the brain's alarm bell, takes over. Calm leaders create calm teams.



### Reflection: Practice Pausing

Write down which of these practices you will try this week. Describe when and how you will use it.

---

---

---

# Part 1: Summary and Reflections

---

## Key Takeaways

- ✓ Civility begins with inner work.
- ✓ Self-talk shapes leadership presence.
- ✓ Awareness of wounds allows new stories to form.
- ✓ Five capabilities strengthen resilience and trust.
- ✓ Emotional regulation steadies both leaders and teams.



### Watch the Video | The Inner Work of Civility

[shrm.co/inclusivv](http://shrm.co/inclusivv) featuring Video 1.



#### Reflection: Looking Back on the Inner Work of Civility

Take time to pause and respond.

1. What did you learn about your inner voice?

---

---

2. Which wound or story felt most familiar to you?

---

---

3. Which capacity do you most want to strengthen?

---

---

4. How will you practice pausing this week?

---

---

5. How will practicing inner work change the way your team experiences you?

---

---

# The Everyday Work of Civility

## Building Trust Through Accountability and Empathy

Civility is not only shaped in big moments — It is built in the daily interactions between colleagues, managers, and teams. Every hallway conversation, and every email, every meeting becomes a chance to either strengthen or erode trust.

This section will explore how to respond to conflict with curiosity rather than reactivity, how to balance accountability with empathy, and how to use practical tools that turn tense moments into opportunities for connection.



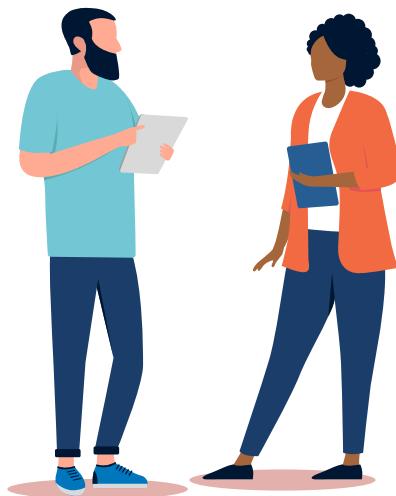
### What You Will Discover

1. Why small moments matter more than grand gestures.
2. The measurable impact of civility on workplaces.
3. How to turn reactivity into curiosity.
4. The difference between healthy and unhealthy conflict.
5. How emotions serve as information, not distractions.
6. Practical tools and frameworks for navigating tense situations.

## Why It Matters

When leaders avoid inner work, unresolved incivility isn't just about big moments or formal gestures. It's built in the everyday interactions we have with each other. Every chat, meeting, or email is a chance to build trust or chip away at it. When we lead with curiosity instead of reactivity and balance accountability with empathy, we create stronger, more connected teams. Practicing civility in small ways every day helps turn tough moments into opportunities for understanding and growth.

 [shrm.co/inclusivv](http://shrm.co/inclusivv)



# Civility in Small Moments

# Small Acts, Big Impact

Civility shows up in the smallest gestures: a hallway hello, the tone of an email, or the way someone responds in a tense meeting. Every small interaction either builds trust or weakens it.

Think about the last time someone truly listened to you at work. They did not interrupt. They looked you in the eye, nodded, and let you finish. That moment may have taken less than a minute, yet it stayed with you.

Now recall the last time you were dismissed with a sigh, an eye roll, or a rushed comment. That also lingers. These signals, stacked together, shape culture more than any official value statement.



## Leaders Should Choose

- Patience → instead of irritation
- Curiosity → instead of judgment
- Acknowledgment → instead of dismissal

## Scenario

Two colleagues argued over a project deadline. Both felt frustrated. One shifted tone and said, “Tell me what feels most important to you right now.” The disagreement was not solved instantly, but the energy shifted from division to collaboration.



## Reflection: Small Acts of Civility

When was the last time a small act of civility made a difference for you?

# Why Civility Matters

## The Measurable Impact

Civility is not simply polite behavior. It has a measurable impact on well-being, engagement, and performance.

## What the Research Shows

**94%**

of U.S. workers agree that a civil workplace culture is essential for the mental well-being of employees.

**72.4M**

acts of incivility per day in the workplace.

**62%**

of workers agreed that their manager or supervisor has ignored acts of incivility in the workplace.

Incivility can show up as subtle acts of disrespect, such as interruptions, dismissive gestures, or negative tones, that accumulate and harm workplace culture.

Raising an eyebrow, checking a phone midconversation, or adopting a sarcastic tone might seem small, but over time, these actions drain energy and erode trust. Leaders then spend time repairing damage instead of moving forward.

### The Cost of Incivility

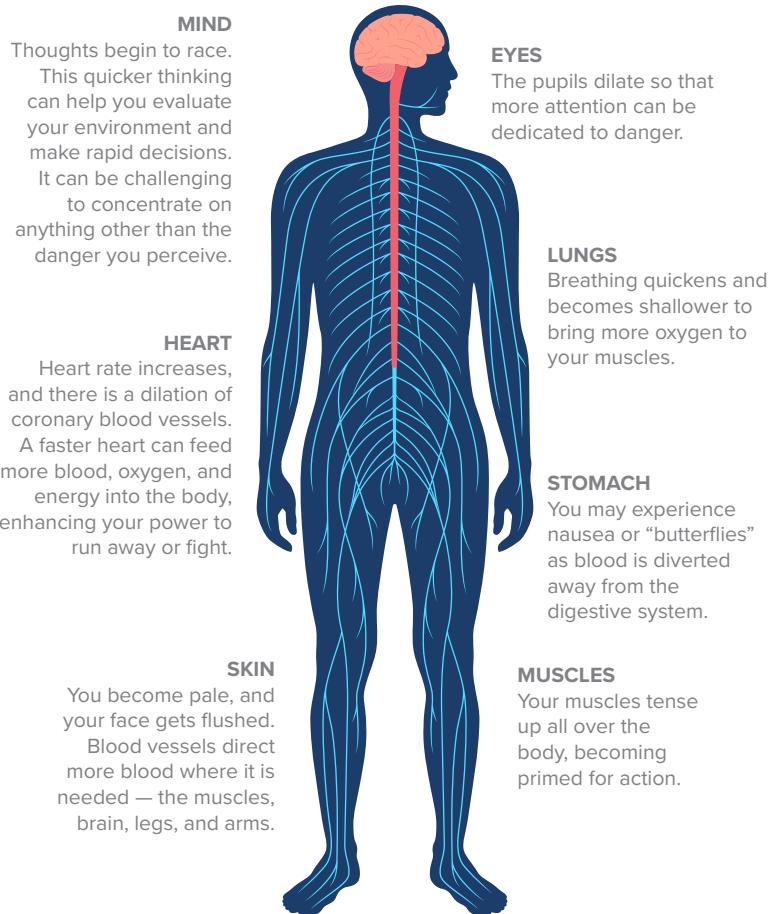
- ✓ Lost time and productivity.
- ✓ Decreased willingness to share ideas.
- ✓ Higher turnover.
- ✓ Damage to customer experience.

### The Benefit of Civility

- ✓ Lower turnover rates.
- ✓ Higher engagement and creativity.
- ✓ Stronger collaboration.
- ✓ Improved customer interactions.

Source: Q2-Q4 2025 Civility Index, SHRM, 2025.

# From Reactivity to Curiosity



## Why We React

Conflict activates the nervous system. It triggers protective responses: defend, attack, or shut down. These instincts are normal but not often helpful in building trust.

## The Power of Curiosity

Curiosity creates a new pathway. When we wonder instead of judge, we invite dialogue. Curiosity lowers tension, builds psychological safety, and signals respect.

## Shifting Questions

Instead of "Why would you do that?" → try "What felt important to you in that choice?"

Instead of "This is wrong," → try "Help me understand how you see it."

Instead of "That will never work," → try "What might make this work?"

### Scenario

*A manager introduced a new policy and was met with resistance. She could have doubled down. Instead, she asked, "What concerns do you have about this?" The question turned pushback into feedback that improved the rollout.*

# Healthy vs. Unhealthy Conflict

## Why Conflict Can Be Good

Conflict is not always negative. In fact, healthy conflict can fuel innovation and strengthen trust. The difference lies in how it is approached.



### Healthy Conflict Looks Like

- ✓ Respectful tone.
- ✓ Focus on issues, not people.
- ✓ Willingness to learn from differences.
- ✓ Clear agreements at the end.
- ✓ Stronger trust afterward.

### Unhealthy Conflict Looks Like

- ✓ Blame or contempt.
- ✓ Focus on winning, not solving.
- ✓ Avoidance of responsibility.
- ✓ Lack of closure.
- ✓ Erosion of trust.

*Recognizing these patterns early helps leaders step in with intention.*

### Common Triggers to Watch Out For

- Perceived disrespect — interruptions or condescending tones.
- Unmet needs for autonomy — feeling micromanaged.
- Perceived unfairness — unequal treatment or unclear expectations.
- Miscommunication and assumptions — jumping to conclusions.
- Stress and fatigue — short tempers fueled by burnout.

### Scenario

*A manager introduced a new policy and was met with resistance. She could have doubled down. Instead, she asked, “What concerns do you have about this?” The question turned pushback into feedback that improved the rollout.*

# Emotions as Information

# A Different Way of Seeing Feelings

Emotions are often treated as distractions in the workplace. In reality, every emotion carries a message. When we listen closely, we can cut through the noise and respond in ways that serve ourselves and those around us.

One practice we can do is simply identifying and naming our emotions. Neuroscience shows this reduces their intensity and creates space for reflection.



## Examples

- Frustration → signals a need for clarity
- Defensiveness → signals a need for respect
- Anger → signals a boundary has been crossed
- Anxiety → signals a need for safety
- Overwhelm → signals a need for support

## Scenario

*A team member grew quiet and disengaged. Instead of labeling him “unmotivated,” his manager asked, “What support would help right now?” The answer was that expectations were unclear. Once clarified, the employee re-engaged.*



## Reflection: Taking Emotional Inventory

What emotions show up most often for you at work? What needs might they point to?

# Tools for the Moment

## A Four-Step Reset

When conflict escalates, leaders need tools they can use in real time. This simple sequence helps reset the tone of a conversation:



## 1. Pause:

Take a breath  
before speaking.



## 2. Mirror:

Repeat back what you hear.  
*“So, you are saying the deadline feels unrealistic?”*



### 3. Validate:

## Acknowledge the feeling.

*“I can understand why that is stressful.”*



## 4. Reframe:

### Ask a constructive question.

*“What step could we take this week to move forward?”*

## Why It Works

These small moves shift the nervous system out of defense and into collaboration. They also show that you are listening and invested in solving the issue.



## Reflection: My Reset Tools

Think of a current workplace tension. Write out how you could apply the four steps in your next conversation.

# Frameworks for Feedback and Repair

---

## Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

Feedback can either build growth or create shame. NVC helps leaders shift from blame to learning.

### The Four-Steps:

- 1. Observation:** Describe what happened factually.
- 2. Feeling:** Share how it affected you.
- 3. Need:** Identify what matters.
- 4. Request:** Ask for a next step.

## NVC in Practice

Here's a classic workplace example and how to respond using NVC.

You're in a team meeting. A manager looks at an employee's presentation and says, "This isn't good enough." The room goes quiet. The employee looks down, avoids eye contact, and doesn't speak again for the rest of the meeting. How would you approach this manager?

### Observation

1. *"Yesterday, in the meeting, I heard you tell Jordan their presentation wasn't good enough."*

### Feeling

2. *"Jordan shared that they felt embarrassed and discouraged, and I noticed they stopped participating."*

### Need

3. *"I understand that your intent was to keep the project at a high standard. At the same time, Jordan needs feedback that helps them learn and build confidence."*

### Request

4. *"Would you be open to giving detailed feedback privately first and then sharing key lessons with the team in a more supportive way?"*

When managers shift from harsh critiques to supportive communication, they still get they also protect trust and motivation.

# Frameworks for Feedback and Repair

---

## Calling In and Calling On

### Calling In: Address harm privately, assuming the person did not intend it.

“Calling in” is about addressing the issue directly with an assumption that the person didn’t intend harm. It often happens in private, to protect their dignity, and may also include suggesting resources to encourage more learning on the topic.

It sounds like: *“I know you did not intend harm, but I want to share how that comment may have landed.”*

### Calling On: Address in the group, inviting reflection without singling someone out.

“Calling on” is better for group settings and is about inviting self-reflection without directing shame at any individual. Often, it can be as simple as asking for clarification, such as *“Can you explain what you mean by that?”* or it might look like encouraging broader input by inviting others in the group to contribute, like *“I’m curious what others think about that. Does anyone else have a different perspective to share?”*

## GRACE Framework

When emotions are especially high, there is GRACE: a five-part framework for moving through tough conversations.

**G** ——— **Get Grounded.** Take a breath. Steady yourself. Ask: *“What outcome do I want here?”*

**R** ——— **Reflect and Reframe.** Listen and reframe accusations into shared concerns. *“What I am hearing is ...” “It sounds like you are feeling ...”*

**A** ——— **Acknowledge Emotions.** Name feelings without judgment. People fight hardest when they feel unheard.

**C** ——— **Collaborate.** Move from “me versus you” to “us solving together.” Ask: *“How can we move forward in a way that works for both of us?”*

**E** ——— **Express Gratitude.** End with appreciation. Even a simple *“Thank you for talking with me”* leaves dignity intact.

# Part 2: Summary Reflections

---

## Key Takeaways

- ✓ Civility lives in small, daily moments.
- ✓ Respect has measurable impact on well-being and performance.
- ✓ Curiosity transforms reactivity into dialogue.
- ✓ Healthy conflict builds trust; unhealthy conflict erodes it.
- ✓ Emotions are signals pointing to unmet needs.
- ✓ Leaders can use simple tools and frameworks to de-escalate conflict.



## Watch the Video | The Everyday Work of Civility

[shrm.co/inclusivv](http://shrm.co/inclusivv) featuring Video 2.



### Reflection: Looking Back on the Everyday Work of Civility

Take time to pause and respond.

1. Which everyday act of civility resonated most with you?

---

---

2. How do you tend to respond when conflict arises?

---

---

3. What small shift would help you move from reactivity to curiosity?

---

---

4. Which framework feels most helpful for your current context?

---

---

5. What commitment could you make to bring more empathy and accountability into your team's daily interactions?

---

---

# The Cultural Work of Civility

## Fostering Psychological Safety at Scale

Civility doesn't just live in individual choices, it must be woven into the culture of workplaces. Even if only a single leader practices civility, the broader environment determines whether it will thrive or fade.

This section explores how to create organizations where civility is reinforced at scale. It draws on neuroscience; research on psychological safety; and practical tools for shaping norms, rituals, and systems.



### What You Will Discover

1. How culture shapes whether civility sticks.
2. The role of psychological safety in performance and innovation.
3. The biology of safety and stress in the workplace.
4. Practices and habits that corrode trust.
5. Four keys to building safety at scale.
6. Everyday rhythms and repair rituals that sustain trust.

## Why It Matters

A healthy workplace culture makes all the difference in how people connect and collaborate. When respect, empathy, and accountability are built into everyday norms, people feel safe to speak up and take risks. That sense of psychological safety fuels stronger teamwork, better problem-solving, and more innovation. Creating this kind of culture helps trust grow and keeps civility alive across the whole organization.

 [shrm.co/inclusivv](http://shrm.co/inclusivv)



# Culture Shapes Civility

## Why It Matters

Policies and programs can spark change, but culture is what sustains it. Culture is formed in daily behaviors, shared agreements, and unspoken norms. These patterns either reinforce or undermine civility.

### A Tale of Two Cultures

Two companies face the same challenge: a missed project deadline.



**In Company A,** the manager reacts with blame. People retreat into silence, afraid of being targeted.



**In Company B,** the manager asks, “*What got in the way?*” The team reflects, adjusts, and prevents repeat issues.

*The difference is not the challenge. The difference is the cultural safety.*

## What Leaders Can Do

- Name and reinforce behaviors that support trust.
- Interrupt patterns of blame or avoidance.
- Create rituals that normalize reflection and repair.



### Reflection: Culture Audit

How would you describe your workplace culture today?

# The Case for Psychological Safety

---

## What Is Psychological Safety?

It's the belief that it is safe to take interpersonal risks. It means people can share ideas, voice concerns, or admit mistakes without fear of humiliation or punishment.

### Signs of Safety vs. Fear



#### Safety Signals

- ✓ Leaders ask questions with genuine interest.
- ✓ Teams challenge ideas, not people.
- ✓ Mistakes are treated as opportunities to learn.



#### Fear Signals

- ✓ Silence in meetings.
- ✓ Side conversations instead of direct dialogue.
- ✓ Problems hidden until they are too late to solve.



#### Reflection: Safety vs. Fear

1. What behaviors have you noticed within your organization that display psychological safety?

---

---

---

2. What behaviors have you noticed that signal fear within your organization?

---

---

---

# The Biology of Safety

# How Our Nervous Systems Respond

Safety is not just an idea, it is a biological state. Our nervous systems constantly scan for danger or connection.

## Three Modes of the Brain

**Danger Brain:** Fight, flight, or freeze. Stress hormones surge; empathy drops. Prolonged time here leads to burnout.

**Task Brain:** Focused on constant doing. Productivity may rise temporarily, but energy and engagement decline.

**Safety Brain:** Calm and connected. Collaboration and creativity flow. This is where innovation thrives.



## Scenario

*A manager described her team as “always running but never arriving.” They were stuck in “Task Brain.” By adding reflection breaks and encouraging pauses, she shifted them toward “Safety Brain.” Performance improved, and so did well-being.*



## Reflection: Brain State

Which “brain state” best describes you or your team right now?

# Unsafe Practices to Retire

## Practices That Corrode Trust

Many common workplace habits undermine civility without leaders realizing it.

### Examples Include

- Telling people to “*leave their feelings at the door*.”
- Forcing breakthroughs instead of creating space for collaboration.
- Treating people as problems to fix instead of whole human beings.
- Shaming hesitation rather than encouraging questions.
- Rewarding competition without rewarding collaboration.



### Story Snapshot

A financial services company used to say, “We do not bring feelings to work.” Over time, resentment built, turnover rose, and innovation stalled. When leaders began acknowledging emotions as valid data, engagement and performance increased.



#### Reflection: Stop, Start, Continue

**Stop:** What unsafe practices would you like you or your colleagues to stop?

---

---

---

**Start:** What new practices would you like to see within your organization?

---

---

---

**Continue:** What would you like to keep doing to foster psychological safety?

---

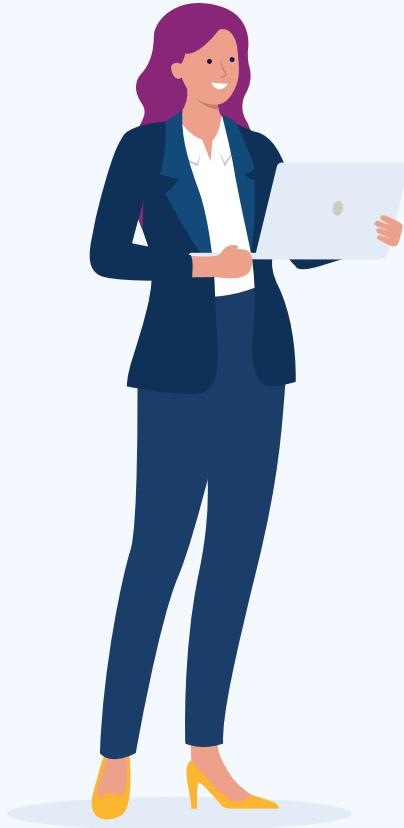
---

---

# The Four Keys to Safety

# What It Takes to Build Psychological Safety

Building safety at scale requires more than goodwill — it requires consistent practices in four domains:



## 1. Rapport Practices

Everyday actions that build connection, like beginning meetings with a check-in.

## 2. Embodied Practices

Leaders modeling calm through posture, tone, and breath. Even a short pause before responding signals steadiness.

### 3. Leadership Practices

Starting with curiosity changes the tone; “Help me understand ...” Asking for consent builds agency, “Does this feel safe enough to try this approach this week?” Focusing on imperfect action keeps momentum without being overwhelmed: “What is one small step we can test in the next 48 hours?”

## 4. Cultural Practices

Systemwide rituals and agreements, such as repair check-ins or norms like “challenge ideas, not people.”



## Reflection: The Four Practices

Which of the four practices feels most important to strengthen in your organization? And how might you implement it?

# Cultural Practices of Civility

## Everyday Micro-Practices

Culture shifts when leaders and teams commit to small, repeatable acts of kindness, respect, and civility. Small actions can make a big difference in establishing psychological safety for the entire organization.



### Examples Include

- Starting meetings with a quick check-in question.
- Taking two slow breaths before difficult conversations.
- Framing feedback with “I see, I feel, I need.”
- Asking in one-on-ones; “What is not being said?”
- Asking for consent; “Does this work well for you?”
- Focus on imperfect action; “What is one small step we can take?”
- Celebrating small wins, not just outcomes.
- Asking for people to give shoutouts to peers at the end of meetings.

### Story Snapshot

*During an Inclusivv Civility Training with a management team, there was a moment when the facilitator asked the leaders to give a shoutout to another leader in the room if they had witnessed any great examples of their leadership. The first remark moved another leader almost to tears, and as more and more leaders gave shoutouts, it transformed the energy in the room. Immediately after the training, they decided to implement shoutouts across all team meetings to foster that same sense of recognition and praise.*

### Why They Work

Over time, these micro-practices create rhythms that normalize respect and safety. They signal that civility is not a special event — it is part of daily work.



#### Reflection: Micro-Practices

Which micro-practice could you begin using this week?

---

---

---

# Repair and Rhythm

## Why Repair Matters

Even in safe cultures, mistakes and harm will happen. The difference lies in how quickly and respectfully leaders repair. Repair-focused practices acknowledge the harm, own the impact, and restore trust.



### A Simple Repair Ritual

1. Name the harm.
2. Own the impact.
3. Ask what is needed.
4. Commit to a step.
5. Close with appreciation.

## Why Rhythm Matters

Safety becomes sustainable when it is built into the cadence of work. Examples include:

- Weekly check-ins.
- Biweekly one-on-ones.
- Monthly retrospectives.
- Quarterly safety surveys.

*Without rhythm, practices fade. With rhythm, they stick.*



### Scenario

*A global team added a practice to their retrospectives: “What harm needs repair?” At first, it was awkward. Over time, it became routine. Trust deepened, and collaboration improved.*

# Part 3: Summary Reflections

---

## Key Takeaways

- ✓ Culture determines whether civility thrives or withers.
- ✓ Psychological safety is the foundation of innovation and trust.
- ✓ Safety is a biological state, not just a concept.
- ✓ Certain workplace habits erode trust and must be retired.
- ✓ Safety grows when leaders practice rapport, accountability, and cultural rituals.
- ✓ Micro-practices and rhythms sustain civility over time.



## Watch the Video | The Cultural Work of Civility

[shrm.co/inclusivv](http://shrm.co/inclusivv) featuring Video 3.



### Reflection: Looking Back on the Cultural Work of Civility

1. What signals of safety or fear do you see most often in your workplace?

---

---

2. Which unsafe practice are you ready to retire?

---

---

3. Which of the four keys to safety will you focus on first?

---

---

4. What small rhythm could you introduce to strengthen trust in your team?

---

---

5. If you could make one cultural commitment that would ripple widely, what would it be?

---

---

# About Inclusivv

---

## More on Inclusivv and SHRM Resources

Inclusivv is proud to partner with SHRM to foster open dialogue, strengthen psychological safety, and equip organizations with the tools to build more respectful and connected workplaces. Here are two key resources to support SHRM Members in advancing workplace civility:

### Culture Conversations™

Culture Conversations help teams build psychological safety and cohesion through structured, peer-to-peer dialogue.

- More than 60 ready-to-use conversation topics.
- Facilitation training and tools for managers.
- Designed to foster empathy, trust, and employee engagement.

[> Download overview of Culture Conversations](#)

### Civility Works™

Civility Works helps organizations build a more respectful, civil, and connected workplace culture through engaging, evidence-based training.

- Comprehensive suite of workshops, on-demand courses, and a Train-the-Trainer program
- Available in both in-person and virtual formats
- Designed for leaders, people managers, and individual contributors

[> Download overview of Civility Works](#)



### About Jenn Graham

Jenn Graham is the founder and CEO of Inclusivv. For more than a decade, she has worked with leaders and organizations worldwide to create environments where open dialogue builds trust and fosters inclusion. Featured in all three videos, Jenn brings this work to life with stories and strategies rooted in her vision for building a more inclusive and civil world.

[> Follow Jenn on LinkedIn](#)