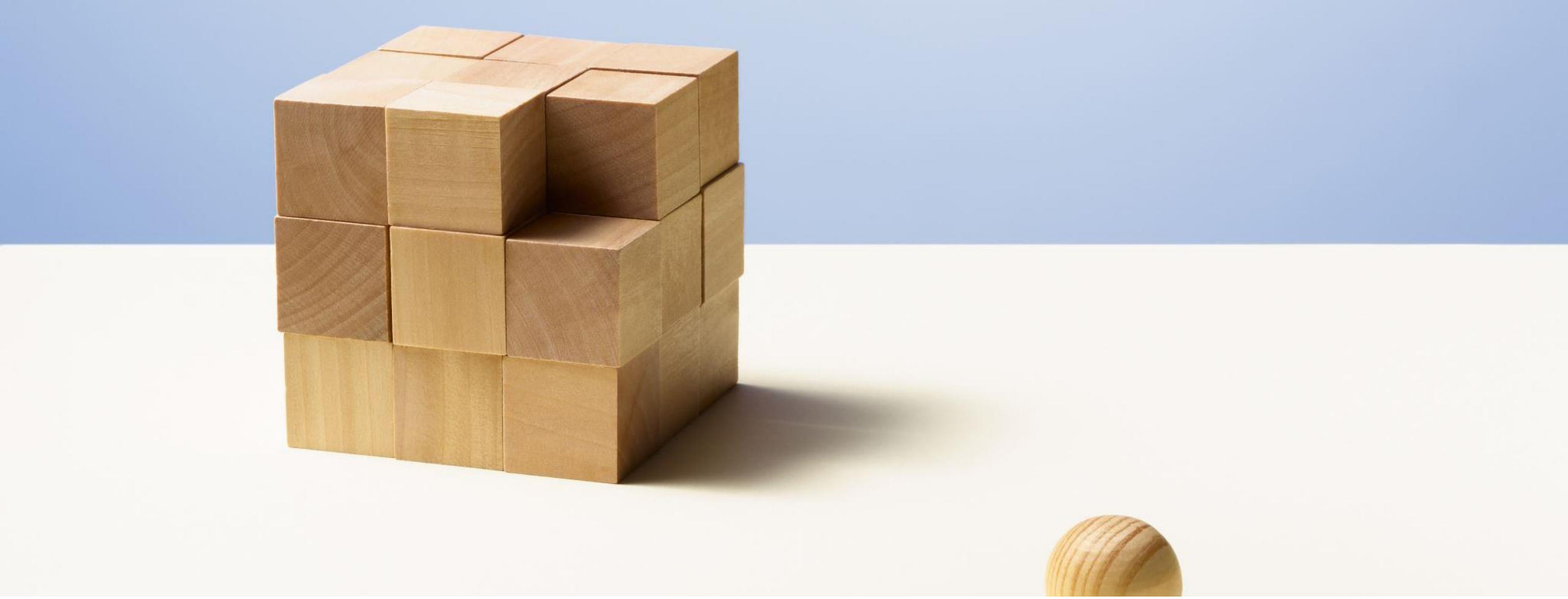
Cultivating a Team Culture of Accountability and Collaboration that Builds Trust

Dr. Chanel Phillips, Visiting Senior Evaluator, Illinois Department of Public Health (Region 5)

Today's Roadmap

- Why accountability should build trust
- What we've learned in Illinois
- Strategies that work
- Language and process shifts



Accountability Reframed

Traditional: Fear, compliance, checking boxes

Innovative: Trust, collaboration, shared learning

Why This Matters for PHIG

1. Supports workforce and system change
2. Improves data accuracy and timeliness
3. Builds long-term partnerships

SIPA REPORTING

COMMON CHALLENGES

APPROACH SHIFT

Illinois PHIG Context

Common Challenges

- Confusing guidance
- Technical barriers
- Fear of being judged
- Limited capacity

How We Changed the Conversation

- Plain-language guidance
- Success-focused seminars
- Feedback loops
- Flexible timelines

Creating Psychological Safety

Normalize challenges

Focus on systems, not blame

Be transparent

Communication Tips That Work

- Lead with curiosity
- Appreciate strengths first
- End with next steps

Language Shifts

Old: “Your report was late.”

New: “I noticed the report was submitted after the deadline. What challenges emerged?”

Process Adaptations

SUCCESS/CHALLENGE LOGS

MERGING STORIES WITH NUMBERS

PROGRESS VISUALS

How This Supports Equity

Meets staff members where they are

Avoids penalizing low-resource areas

Ensures all voices count

Key Takeaways

- Accountability can build trust
- Safety improves reporting
- Progress > perfection

Thank you!

PUBLIC HEALTH
CITY OF EL PASO

Empowering Teams Through Psychological Safety and Collaboration: Lessons from the PHIG Quarterly Calls

AUGUST 20, 2025
ANTONIO MARTINEZ, MS

MEETING REQUESTS

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

- Take 1 minute to silently reflect on your current role
- Consider one challenge you face related to team collaboration or psychological safety

CONTEXT MATTERS

- Located in the City of El Paso Department of Public Health, West Texas
- 251 full-time staff and mostly grant-funded
- Inclusive input from all staff levels
- Open to all staff to encourage engagement and collaboration

El Paso Times. (2025, June 10). El Paso named No. 2 best big city to live in the U.S. *El Paso Times*. https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/life/2025/06/10/el-paso-best-big-city-to-live-in-the-us-no-2-spot/84092191007/

WHY PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND COLLABORATION MATTER

- Psychological safety creates an environment where teams confidently learn from mistakes, take accountability, and drive innovative solutions
- Collaboration amplifies our ability to respond effectively and adapt quickly during public health emergencies
- The success of public health initiatives relies on cohesive teams working seamlessly toward common goals

Do not edit
How to change the design

How would you rate collaboration in your team over the past month?

The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

slido

PHIG QUARTERLY CALLS MODEL

- Interactive quarterly virtual convenings that connect and energize our public health teams
- Diverse facilitators and spotlighted teams sharing fresh perspectives and best practices
- Real-time anonymous polling to capture honest insights and drive meaningful dialogue
- Dynamic visual dashboards that promote transparency and keep everyone informed

EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

- Model inclusive leadership behaviors
- Use structured check-ins
- Encourage perspective-taking through prompts
- Promote informal social interactions
- Facilitate multiple channels for participation
- Define clear communication protocols and roles

OUTCOMES OF PHIG CALLS

- Increased morale and participation
- Enhanced cross-program collaboration
- Improved accountability of deliverables

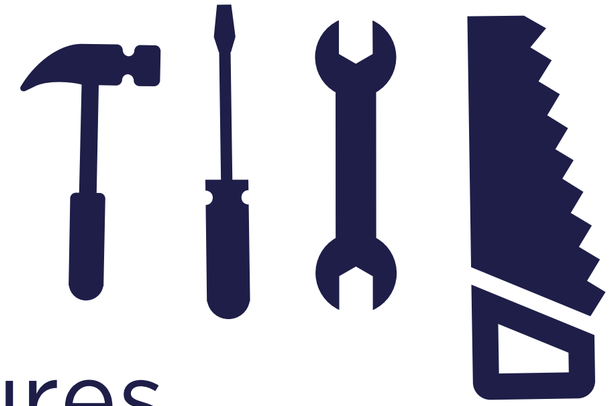
Cross, R., & Brekken, K. (2024, May 29). Looking to actually improve workplace productivity? Rethink how your teams collaborate. i4cp. https://www.i4cp.com/productivity-blog/looking-to-actually-improve-workplace-productivity-rethink-how-your-teams-collaborate

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

WHAT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES HAVE WORKED WELL IN YOUR TEAMS?

3:00

TOOLS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION



- Inclusive leadership: Teams (features, reactions)
- Structured check-ins: Slido polls
- Perspective-taking: Whiteboard prompts
- Informal socializing: Breakout rooms
- Multiple channels: Teams chat, audio, video
- Clear roles: Trello task tracking

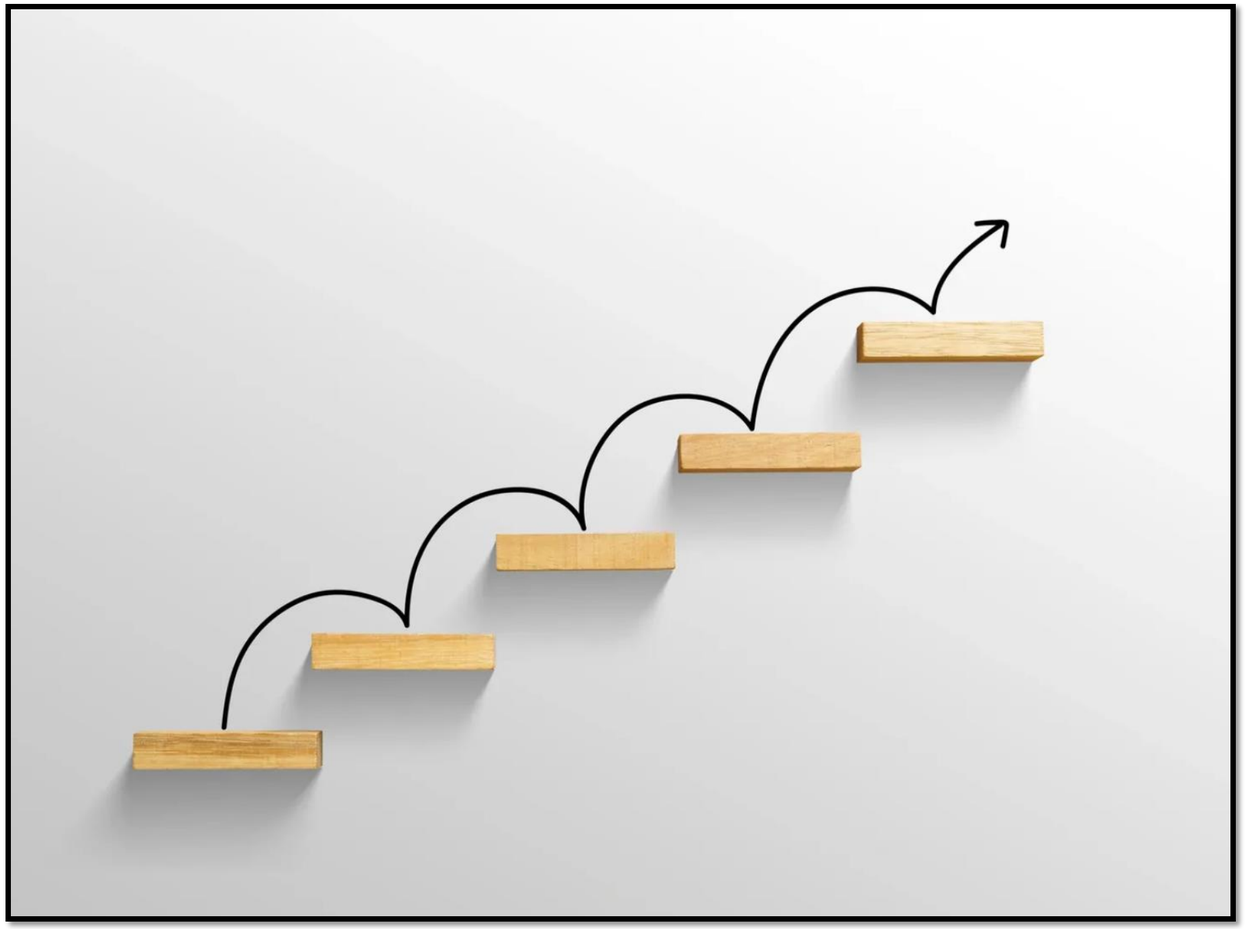
SCENARIO-BASED BRAINSTORM

- Scenario: A team member hesitates to speak up during meetings due to fear of judgment
- Question: What steps could you take to foster psychological safety in this situation?

2:00

CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS

- Reflecting on Leadership's Role in Creating Safe and Connected Teams
- Tools and Takeaways to Strengthen Everyday Practice
- Opportunities to Stay Engaged and Learn Together



Practical Next Steps. (n.d.). Practical Next Steps Consulting. https://practicalnextsteps.com/

RESOURCES

- Microsoft Teams
- Zoom
- Google Meet
- Slido
- Mentimeter
- Poll Everywhere
- Microsoft Whiteboard
- Miro
- Lucidspark
- Breakout Rooms in Teams
- Zoom Breakout Rooms
- Webex Breakout Sessions
- Slack
- Trello
- Asana
- Microsoft Planner

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRESENCE!

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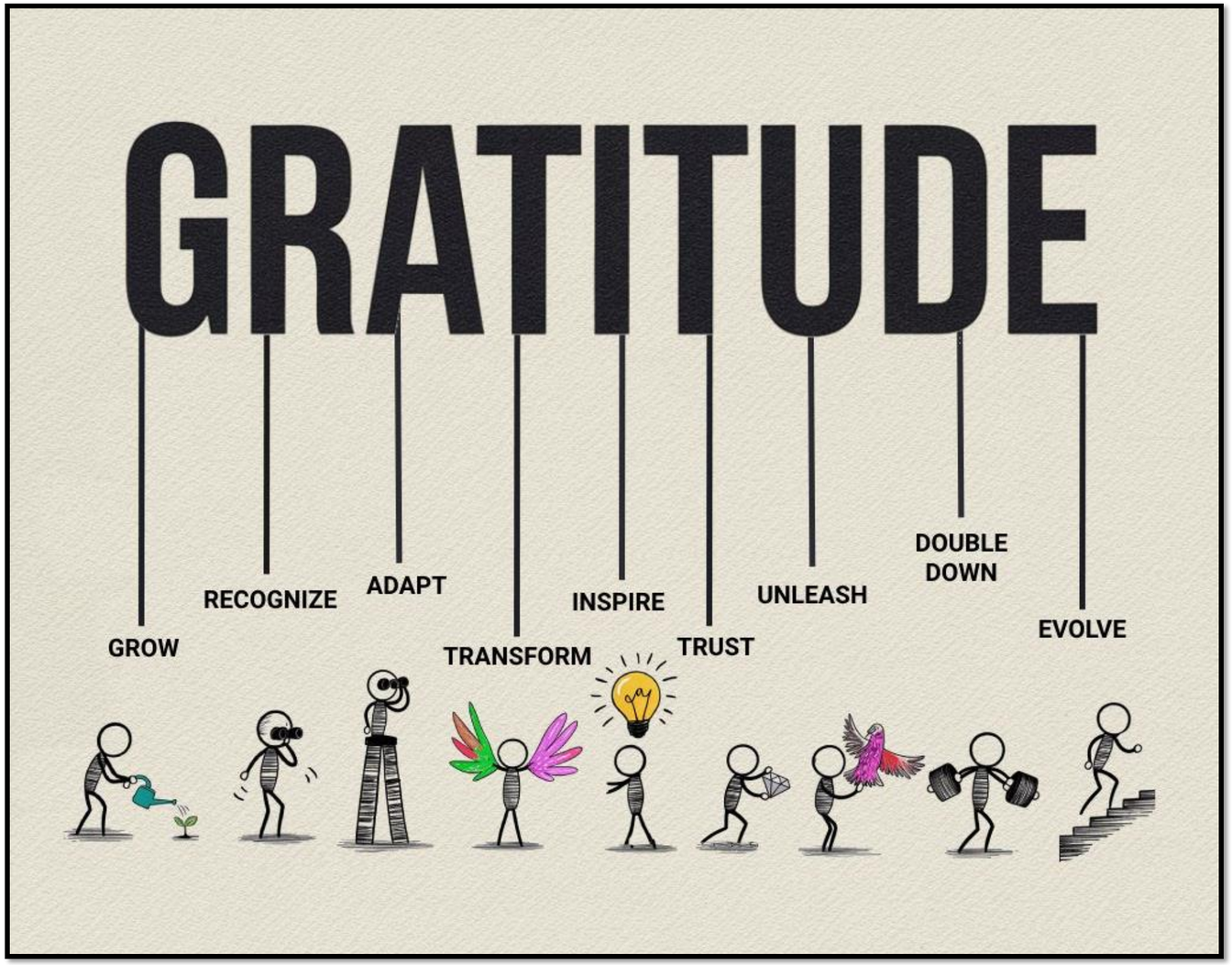

VHTC. (2025, January). Gratitude. https://www.vhtc.org/2025/01/gratitude.html