

# The Dispatch

June 2023

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The Dispatch is for informational purposes. Unit Safety Officers are encouraged to use the articles in The Dispatch as topics for their monthly safety briefings and discussions. Members may go [eServices - Learning Management System](#), click on "Go to AXIS," search for this month's The Dispatch, take the quiz, and receive safety education credit.

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*The theme for this month's Dispatch is psychological safety. The Dispatch is a partnership between Safety, Health Services, and the Chaplaincy. This collaboration is a great opportunity to support the teamwork between the three departments, providing beneficial information and support to our members.*

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## The Psychology of Safety

Michael Nunemaker, Chief of Safety

In Civil Air Patrol's safety culture, safety is a mindset that leads to ideal behaviors that increase the likelihood that no one will get seriously injured or ill or that equipment will not be damaged by error or from working around established requirements. For those ideal behaviors to be embraced and demonstrated openly, members must experience a sense of belonging in an environment where mistakes and setbacks are met with compassion and coaching, not with criticism, retribution, and judgment.

### **What is psychological safety?**

CAP's safety risk management process includes evaluating the effectiveness of risk controls. An important part of that process is assigning supervision roles to members to monitor how well controls are working and to intervene when things aren't working as expected. It's

important to remember that these supervisors are not “enforcers” of safety but are “safeguards” who recognize that unsafe situations must be stopped *and* treated as an opportunity to coach and learn.

Safety “enforcement” creates stress. When people encounter stressful situations such as public ridicule for thinking or behaving “differently”, the brain's flight or fight mode is engaged which severely impacts learning. The concept of psychological safety means engaging the person in a way that frees up attention to focus on learning and creativity.

According to Dr. Timothy Clark, writer and founder of Leader Factor, there are four stages of psychological safety:

- **Inclusion safety** — You are a welcome participant. You belong here. Leaders must ensure that members can show up and be welcomed as they are and not face rejection or ridicule.
- **Learner safety** — You are free to engage in activities to learn, ask questions, try new things, give and receive constructive feedback, and learn from your experiences. Leaders must help members feel confident that their learning and growth is more important than getting it perfectly right. Leaders must also treat differences of opinion as opportunities to coach, teach, and mentor in ways that lead to collective change, rather than reprimanding.
- **Contributor safety** — You are encouraged to share your ideas without fear of retribution and to respect the contributions of others. Your skills and abilities are welcomed and can make a difference in support of our mission-vision. Leaders must maximize cooperation and sharing in activities rather than competition and cliquishness, so members are encouraged to offer their best abilities.
- **Challenger safety** — You are safe to question the status quo, raise concerns, and provide dissenting opinions aimed at continuous improvement. Leaders must encourage members to speak up even if what is said isn't popular or challenges established practices.

To create psychological safety, every leader needs to **introduce, measure, and maintain** the concept in their teams, by providing a welcoming and diverse culture, encouraging learning and feedback, allowing for interpersonal risks and creativity, resolving conflicts and misunderstandings, and asking for honest and non-judgmental feedback.



Check out this link for more information:

[Psychological Safety: What Is It & Why Is It Important In The Workplace \(goalcast.com\)](https://www.goalcast.com/psychological-safety-what-is-it-why-is-it-important-in-the-workplace)

What psychological safety isn't.

Psychological safety isn't the absence of accountability. According to an article on [Leaders.com](https://www.leaders.com), accountability is one of the top 10 common issues leaders cite as problems in their organizations due to "too much shame and blame" and "not enough learning." Instead, having honest, vulnerable conversations around owning issues helps people hold themselves and others accountable. CAP Safety's **Fairness** principle states:

*"We all make mistakes – humans are complex, and the factors that lead us to err are a complicated mix of emotion, experience, and day-to-day wear and tear. Impartial and just treatment is not devoid of compassion. When we make mistakes, we need to avoid defaulting to blame, which will impede learning. In combining fairness and compassion, we accept that everyone is susceptible to an honest error and, when treated fairly and compassionately, they will be open to learning and change. In every situation, fairness can be tied to CAP's core value of RESPECT where we listen openly to others and 'seek to understand before being understood' and before deciding what actions to take."*

All members must embrace personal accountability to behave in ways that reflect CAP's core values. Leaders must be accountable to act in the interest of both the individual and CAP's mission-vision. Sometimes when we make mistakes or don't get it perfectly right, being "held accountable" by someone can lead to feelings of shame, remorse, or guilt, but helping members focus on improvement rather than making them feel worse is a challenge good leaders work hard to embrace and practice. CAP Safety's **Accountability** principles states:

*"Having compassion for others is not a reason to ignore accountability. When someone does not accept responsibility for being accountable, then 'holding' accountable may be necessary – however, this is not the ideal in an effective safety culture. Striving to model personal accountability is the responsibility of all leaders across CAP. The accountability principle can be tied to CAP's core value of VOLUNTEER SERVICE where "service before self" means, in part, that I am not only willing to account publicly for my contribution to safety errors, but also to be held to account by others when they see an unsafe condition. When members embrace this core value and its accompanying safety principle, they see themselves as part of a team in service to each other as well as America's communities."*

[Harvard Business Review](https://hbr.org) suggests that the first step leaders can take in an accountability conversation is to be crystal clear about what you expect. This means being clear about the outcome you're looking for, how you'll measure success, and how people should go about achieving the outcome. Do everything you can to focus on expectations and how you will support their success and avoid judgments and criticisms aimed at "shaming and blaming." Then, you should follow up regularly to ensure that members are on track and provide feedback along the way.

Lastly, it's important to understand that the degree to which members feel psychologically safe impacts how openly they are willing to share critical information. For example, conducting an after-action review following a mission, activity, or other event is significantly better in a non-judgmental, "no blame or shame" environment. Members are more likely to reflect on what they can do individually and collectively to improve operational and safety performance – and, ultimately, success.

## Wingmanship and Psychological Safety

Ch, Major Michael Morison DMin

How does *Wingmanship* contribute to personal and physical safety?

The Oxford Dictionary defines a wingman as "a person who helps or supports another man; a friend or close associate." The dictionary provides an example for this definition: "I thought he might need a wingman – he was quite tired and emotional."

Being a wingman promotes safety and resilience for the individual and the team. Therefore, wingmanship is the art of caring for myself and others. There are two characteristics of a wingman. First, you are there for your wingman and, second, your wingman is there for you. The strength of a wingman is knowing when to let your wingman be there for you. Being a wingman is my commitment to having your "six" and knowing that you have mine.



A wingman is not only there to protect you from physical danger, but they are also there to support you when the turbulence of life is buffeting you around. The wingman can bolster resilience through a caring and supportive presence. I may not agree with you, but I will stand by you.

Wingmanship promotes teamwork and *Esprit de Corps*. Respect for self and for others. It is the recognition that *everyone is mission critical*. Only when we authentically care for each other's physical, emotional, and spiritual safety can we function safely and resiliently in our mission. A sense of psychological safety, one's sense of belonging to the team, promotes deeper interdependence, within the team. It contributes to enhance individual and team performance allowing for more creative problem solving, more effective communication, consensus building, and flexibility in mission accomplishment.

Wingmanship is not about uniformity (looking the same and doing things together), wingmanship is about unity (being one). This can only happen in a physically and psychologically safe environment. In a team, everyone is a wingman, and everyone needs a wingman to grow and thrive.

## Psychological Safety

Lt Col Jill Silverman, PhD

According to the Harvard Business School (02/15/23), Team Psychological Safety is a shared belief held by members of a team that it's ok to take risks, to express their ideas and concerns, to speak up with questions, and to admit mistakes - all without fear of negative consequences. It is a theory first put forth by Professor Amy Edmondson in "*The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in The Workplace For Learning, Innovation, and Growth*."

The importance of this belief is that it allows for learning, for making mistakes, and to test new theories. Most importantly, though, in terms of an organization such as CAP, it supports the concept of team solidarity under stressful situations, especially those that involve "thinking outside of the box," **knowing that your team has your "6"**.

Essential to this concept is that the focus is group behavior, not that of an individual per se. It is this component of psychological safety that creates a cohesive environment that both perpetuates itself and reinforces its function. If members of a group feel psychologically safe, then the group will be more apt to demonstrate cohesion, be comfortable troubleshooting new solutions, and attempting new behaviors.

Although it initially appears in the literature that groups that do not demonstrate psychologically safe behaviors have better short-term results (i.e., higher scores) on routine tests of behaviors and performance, it is actually the opposite situation. The groups that test better on assessments of psychological safety demonstrate more flexibility, more spontaneity, and more resilience as they do not perceive themselves as taking unnecessary risk, in terms of group standing.

Humans are social beings, and often function within teams. It is the group's ability to develop a sense of psychological safety that will significantly enhance the resiliency of the team.

## Do you Have a Hard Time Saying No?

Maj. Catherine J. Scantlan, RN, CAP

Does it make you feel guilty to say no to somebody asking you to do something? According to Cheryl Richardson, the author of "The Art of Extreme Self-Care," try first to rename that guilt to discomfort. Face that discomfort. First, especially in the beginning, buy yourself some time. If a friend asks you to help them move, say, "I'll get back to you." During that time, check in with your gut, your inner guide. Is this something you really want to do? Is it something you can do, or will you feel resentful or frustrated about it if you say yes? Then don't say yes; say NO. It is the most loving way to care for yourself and your friendship. Just say the honest reason, let the other person deal with how that makes them feel. That issue is theirs, not yours. In our example, just tell your friend the reason you do not choose to help them move. "I have not had a weekend off in three months; I need this time for myself," or whatever your truth is.

If this is going to be a difficult saying *NO*, which most will be in the beginning, call a support person before and after you share your decision. It gets easier with practice. Again, it's not about you; any discomfort they may feel is their issue.

Not sure what are the most important things to say yes to? Review one of Stephen Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, a well-known personal development course. The course is a must if you ever have the opportunity. There are books and YouTube Videos about all the habits. The one to practice today is called "Big Rocks," it is part of his lesson called "Put First Things First."

Big Rocks represent the important things in your life, those things that inspire and motivate you. Those things that real money cannot buy: Health, Family, Friends, Fulfillment, Personal Joy, Devotion, whatever are *your* big rocks. Pebbles represent the less important but time-consuming things such as school and work, and the small, unimportant things, like material possessions, mind-numbing game playing, and watching TV aimlessly.

The big rocks should be your priority. If you had a jar, sand, pebbles, and big rocks, how would you fill this limited amount of space? If you filled it with sand and pebbles first, there would be no room for the big rocks, and they would not fit. Is that how you spend your time? Try to first fill in your space (your time) by prioritizing the big rocks, the ones that really matter. Put them in first, then fill the remaining space with pebbles.

View this clip of Stephen Covey teaching "Big Rocks": <https://youtu.be/zV3qMTOEWt8>

View this longer version from Cheryl Richardson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

Major Catherine Scantlan is a Holistic Certified Registered Nurse. She has been a Certified 7 Habits of Highly Effective People Facilitator for Stephen Covey and has used the Art of Extreme Self Care as a textbook teaching BSN nursing students at Florida Atlantic University to teach new nurses the art of Self Care.

## **Offering Grace Through Qualitative Data**

MSgt Damen Therkildsen, ID-098

The safety and health path has evolved over the years in ways that have often challenged our thinking and our ways of making safer and healthier environments for everyone. We are attempting to push the blame and shame culture aside to one of embracing learning and improving our safety and health outcomes through clear data and conversations that respect one another. When you read the updated safety regulations within Civil Air Patrol, you see language that has shifted and has hopefully taken a tone that invokes trust.

View the entire article here: [Offering Grace Through Qualitative Data \(gocivilairpatrol.com\)](https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com)