CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL UPDATE (B CASE): SAFETY - "THE WAY WE DO THINGS AROUND HERE"

- Safety is seen as part of the DNA of the hospital
- Leadership changes at the top – all with safety record/focus
- Training in safety expanded -- including all new hires
- Safety learning reports rise as do focused reviews
- Chain of Command instituted to ensure assistance always available for safety
- Rapid Response Teams implemented
- Family Advisory Council
- Safety Awards
- New Technology
  - Electronic Medical Records
  - Smart Pumps
  - Bar Coding
- Disclosure expanded (with no increase in legal action, in frequency or magnitude)

Q: HOW DO YOU BECOME A LEARNING ORGANIZATION?

(a) You declare yourself a learning organization

(b) You humbly embark on a long journey of

- building collective learning capabilities,
- identifying performance and opportunity gaps, and
- systematically tracking results…

THE LEADER'S JOB

Creating shared urgency about an opportunity or performance gap

+

Creating a climate of psychological safety

+

Building and supporting a team-based infrastructure for experimentation and learning

JULIE MORATH & CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

- **Creating shared urgency**
  - A compelling vision: 100% patient safety
  - The power of inquiry

- **Building psychological safety**
  - Institute "blamefree reporting"
  - Anticipate the "worse before better" effect

- **Empowering a team-based learning infrastructure**
  - Patient Safety Steering Committee
  - Safety action teams
  - Good catch logs

Psychological Safety

- **Defined**

  - <u>A shared, tacit belief held by group members that well-intentioned actions will not lead to punishment or rejection by others</u>

  - Usually a *taken-for-granted* perception of the "way it is" in this work environment – a part of culture

- **The Process**

  - People tacitly assess interpersonal risk associated with a given behavior such as asking for help or admitting error

  - Shapes interactions, even in contexts where technical considerations should dominate

Consequences for Performance

When psychological safety is low

- **Speaking up about concerns does not occur**

- **Relevant data are not surfaced**

- **Innovative solutions are less likely to emerge**

- *Collective learning* **does not occur.**

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IS CREATED BY *LOCAL* LEADERSHIP

- Being accessible
  - "He can always take five minutes to explain something, and he never makes you feel stupid."

- Inviting input
  - "[the team leader] gave us a talk about what [the change] is about, the kind of communication he wanted, what results he hoped for, and told us to immediately let him know of [any ideas or concerns we had]"

- Modeling fallibility
  - "The team leader has created an atmosphere where that happens. He'll say, 'I screwed up. My judgement was bad in that case'."
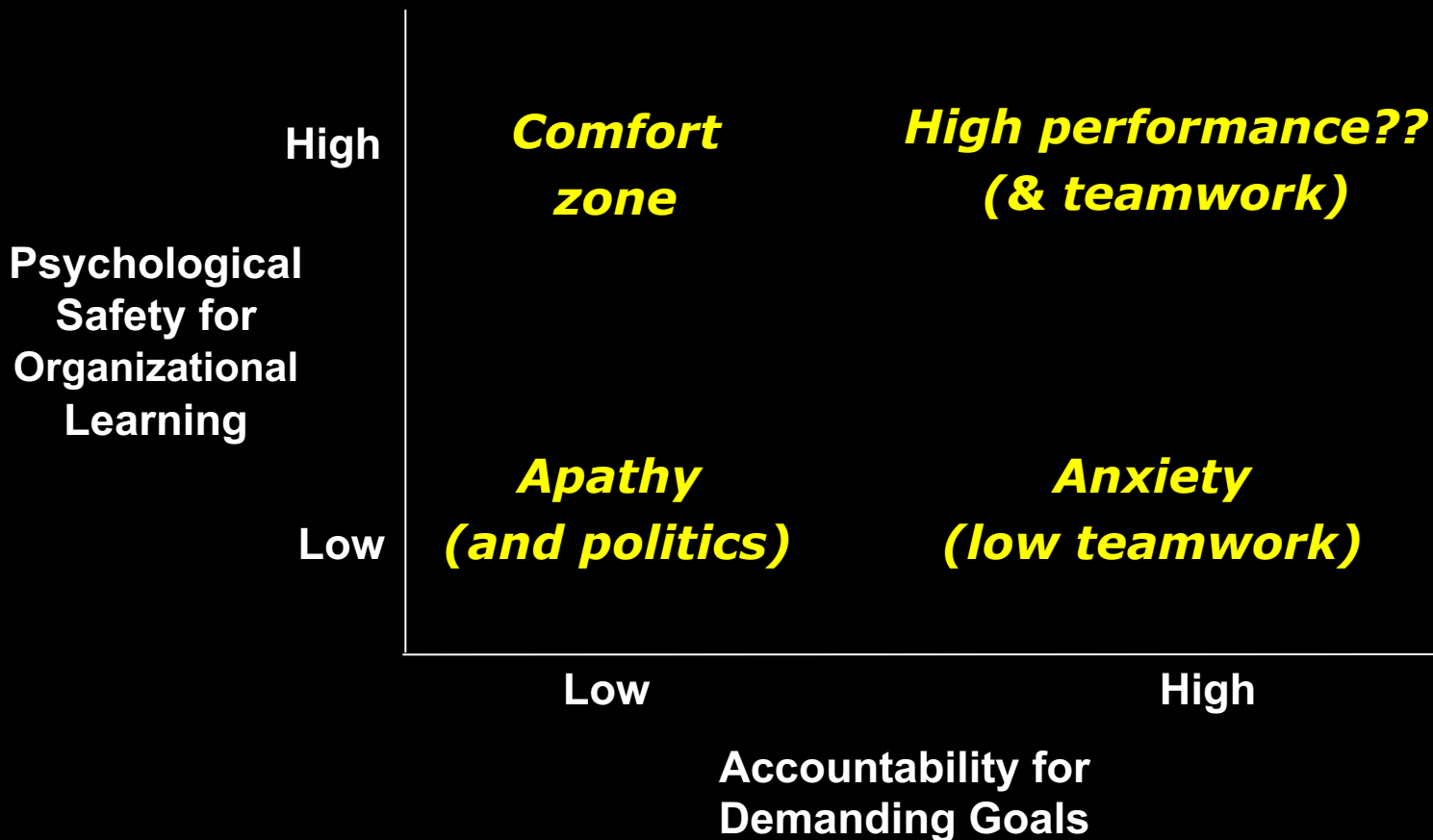
- Clarity about boundaries

PARADOX: CLARITY ABOUT PUNISHMENT CREATES SAFETY

Julie Morath's "Blameworthy Acts"

- Reckless behavior
- Disruptive behavior
- Disrespectful behavior
- Knowingly violating standards
- Working way beyond your boundaries
- Failure to learn over time

Psychological Safety and Accountability

Consider what it's like to work in each quadrant:

	Low	**High**
High	**Comfort zone**	**High performance?? (& teamwork)**
Low	**Apathy (and politics)**	**Anxiety (low teamwork)**

Psychological Safety for Organizational Learning (vertical axis)

Accountability for Demanding Goals (horizontal axis)

See Amy Edmondson's *Harvard Business Review* article, "The Competitive Imperative of Learning" (July-August, 2008)

RESEARCH: NYC SCHOOLS*

- Sample
  - NYCDOE Learning Environment Survey – 20,000 teachers across three years, 545 schools

- Measures
  - Dependent measure: improvement in student performance (AYP)
  - Independent measures: psychological safety, accountability
  - Controls: physical safety, prior performance, student demographics (FRL, ELL, IEP, race), school characteristics

- Method
  - Longitudinal, multi-level modeling

*Research collaborators: S. Dobrow, J. Weiner, H. Liu and S. Childress, A. Ishimaru, S. Takahashi, S. Leung

Both accountability and psychological safety matter...*

- H1:
  - ✓ The greater the felt accountability reported by teachers, the greater the school's performance over time

- H2:
  - The greater the psychological safety reported by teachers, the greater the school's performance over time

- H3:
  - ✓ Psychological safety and accountability will, together, over time, enhance school performance
    - ◆ *Psychological safety had an accelerating effect on the positive impact of felt accountability on performance over time*

AND... work conditions for teachers impact learning conditions for students**

- ✓ When adults feel psychologically safe, students are more engaged in their academic work

* Higgins, M., Dobrow, R., Weiner, J., & Liu, H. (forthcoming). When is psychological safety helpful in organizations? A longitudinal study. *Academy of Management Discoveries.*

** Weiner, J., & Higgins, J. (2017). Where the two shall meet: Exploring the relationship between teacher culture and student culture. *Journal of Educational Change*, 18(1): 21-48.

LEARNING VS. ACCOUNTABILITY

- Organizational change requires both psychological safety & accountability, especially during times of crisis when the pathway forward is not clear (i.e., you can't benchmark your way out!)
- However, creating the conditions for both is very difficult
- Requires close attention to several critical management processes:
  - Managing teams effectively
  - Being intentional about building culture
  - Organize to learn AND organize to executive

Back to you….

▪ **Have you ever worked in an environment that was not psychologically safe? One in which there was high accountability but low psychological safety? What did you do to help? What may have you done to contribute to this?**

▪ **Think about your current work environments and your own teams. How can you help create both accountability and psychological safety in the teams you lead?**

▪ **Think about your own leadership style - what's your preference/focus: organizing to learn or organizing to execute? What needs to change?**