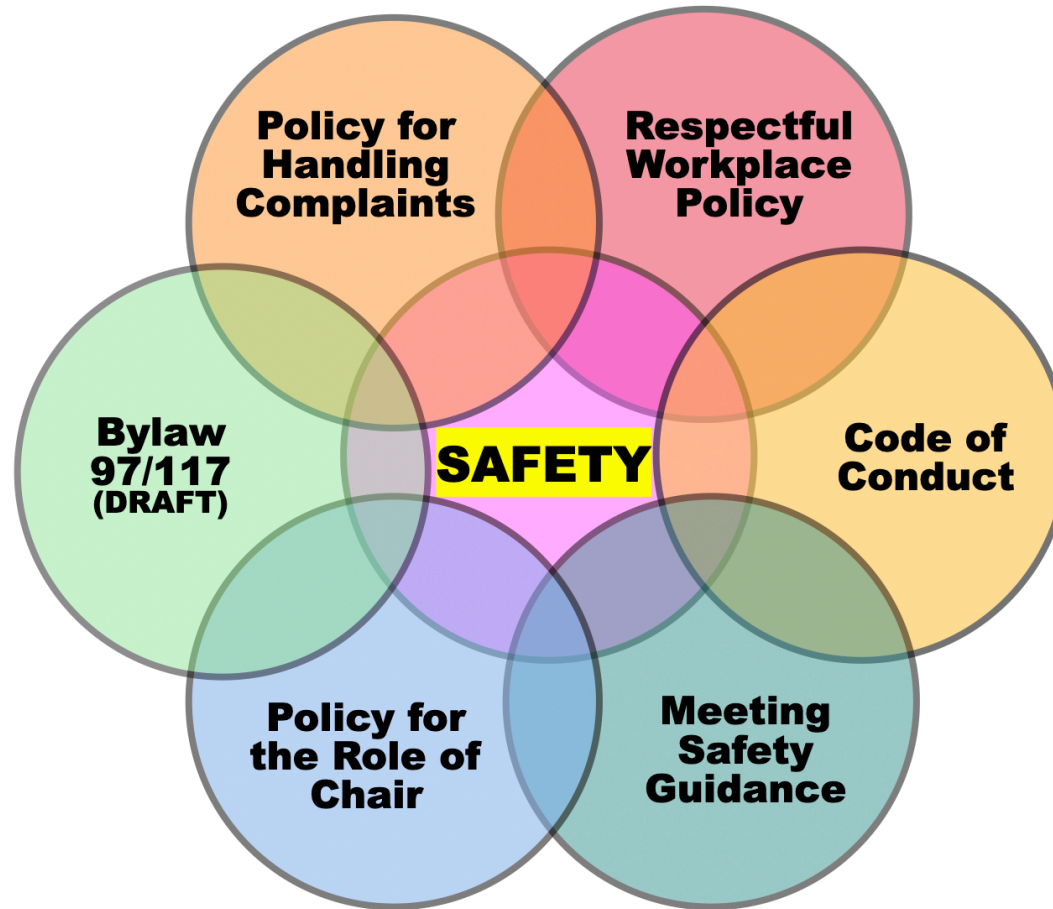


Meeting Safety Guidance

Key Idea	Before	During	After	Non-Compliance Examples*
Psychological Safety	Think about framing questions, concerns, and different points of view around the <i>issue</i> rather than <i>individuals</i> . This helps keep discussion constructive and makes it easier for everyone to participate openly.	Psychological safety means trustees and/or staff can disagree respectfully and challenge ideas without fear of ridicule or retaliation. <i>(Eldridge, 2025)</i>	<i>Did the discussion feel safe enough for honest input for both trustees and staff?</i>	Dismissiveness or subtle pressure that discourages participation. Silence becoming the norm.
Preparation & Structure	Review agenda package and background reports so discussion can focus on decisions rather than catching up on information. Clear structure and predictable processes support open conversation for all at the table. <i>(Beer, 2021)</i>	Preparation allows the board and/or staff to spend time clarifying risks, assumptions, and options rather than absorbing information for the first time.	<i>Did the agenda and preparation help the board and/or staff focus on the real issue? What information would have helped earlier?</i>	Decisions effectively made before the meeting. Agenda used as a formality. Missing or incomplete agenda packages.
Speaking Up	Think ahead about questions, risks, or uncertainties you may want to raise. Silence can hide important information that boards/ staff need to make good decisions. <i>(King, 2025)</i>	Raise questions and minority viewpoints early. Boards and staff make better decisions when different perspectives surface. <i>(King, 2025)</i>	<i>Did anyone hold back something that might have been useful for the board and/or staff to hear?</i>	Important concerns not raised. Informal discussions outside meetings replacing formal debate for both trustees and staff.
Shared Expectations	Clear processes reduce defensiveness and help tough questions feel routine rather than personal for both trustees and staff. <i>(Beer, 2021)</i>	Follow the meeting procedures and the Chair's guidance so discussion stays structured and fair for both trustees and staff.	<i>Did the process help keep the discussion constructive rather than personal?</i>	Ignoring procedures. Dominant voices overriding process.
Open Questioning	Come ready to ask questions about process, timing, risk, or assumptions.	Healthy organizations encourage questions, dissent, and uncomfortable issues when they are raised respectfully. <i>(Edmondson / Lau, 2025)</i>	<i>Did questions improve the board's and/or staff's understanding of the issue?</i>	Discouraging questions. Treating inquiry as disruption. Advancing issues without proper scrutiny.
Debate & Dissent	Preparation helps trustees and/or staff engage in thoughtful debate rather than reactive discussion.	Debate is normal and often a sign of engagement. Effective boards can look argumentative on the surface while still maintaining trust. <i>(Shekshnia, 2025)</i>	<i>Did disagreement stay focused on ideas rather than people?</i>	Shutting down dissent. Rushing decisions. Personalizing disagreement (ie., about character, competence, or intent), <i>Elmore, 2025</i>
Chair Facilitation	A clear agenda and expectations help the Chair guide discussion effectively.	The Chair helps keep the conversation focused, ensures all voices are heard for both trustees and staff, and slows discussion when needed. <i>(Shekshnia, 2025)</i>	<i>Did the Chair's facilitation help balance open discussion with forward progress?</i>	Chair dominating or allowing domination. Uneven participation. Skipping speakers.
Decision Making	Understand divisive topics before discussion begins. If there have been past voting issues, a statement at the beginning of the meeting can help set boundaries to adhere to.	During and after meetings, trustees and/or staff should never taunt or belittle another for how they vote, because doing so undermines respectful conduct required by the Board's own rules. (e.g. Bylaw 97/117)	<i>Did we reach a decision at the right time, with enough discussion? Were all votes, regardless of outcome, treated with equal respect during and after the meeting?</i>	Voting without enough discussion. Publicly questioning a trustee's competence or motives because of their vote.
Learning & Improvement	Consider what information might help the board and/or staff improve its understanding of the issue.	Notice how discussion unfolds and whether certain voices are missing.	<i>What did we learn about how we work together? What might we try differently next time? (Elmore, 2025)</i>	No reflection or follow-up. Repeating the same issues. Ignoring patterns or feedback.

* These are just a few examples for starting discussion.

Submitted by Trustee Appel, March 2026



Citations in the chart are analyzed in the Literature Review:

Psychological Safety: The Board's Ultimate Risk-Management Asset. Elizabeth King. n.p., 2025.

To Change Your Company's Culture, Don't Start by Trying to Change the Culture. Beer, Michael. *Harvard Business School Working Knowledge*, December 14, 2021.

When Psychological Safety Has a Seat on the Board. Stanislav Shekshnia. *INSEAD Knowledge*, 19 March 2025.

Debunking Misconceptions About Workplace Psychological Safety. Jay Lau. *Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health News*, June 26, 2025. Based on research by Amy C. Edmondson and Michaela J. Kerrissey, originally published in *Harvard Business Review*.

When Psychological Safety Gets Weaponized. Elizabeth Eldridge. *Arpeggio Health Services Blog*, January 22, 2025.

The Dark Side of Psychological Safety. Elmore, Tim. *Psychology Today*, October 9, 2025.