



# Nurturing an Inclusive Community At Ontario Tech

Promoting Psychological Safety & Inclusive Leadership

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging  
Ruth Nyaamine



# Agenda

1. Can we sever our personal and professional identities?
2. Ontario Tech's DIB Position Statement
3. Intellectual vs. Social Friction
4. Opportunities introduced by Intellectual & Social Friction
5. Psychological Safety Framework
6. Microaggressions
7. Inclusive Leadership Strategies



What if we were able to sever our professional and personal identities?





# Severance

An AppleTV+ show about a group of employees who agree to have their memories surgically divided between their professional and personal selves, plays on the what it would be like to separate who you are from what you do.



# Severance

 tv+

We are unable to sever our full identities. Our collective well-being is dependent on our recognition and nurture of both our professional and personal selves.





**Equitable, barrier-free access** and participation in education is a foundational human right that supports the **advancement of knowledge and innovation**. Ontario Tech University stands firm against all forms of discrimination, racism and hate.

We are committed to our leadership in advancing **respectful, inclusive and collaborative exchange** of knowledge that **champions diversity, celebrates the identities**, achievements and **well-being** of all, and **empowers us** to make society a better place for our campus community and our planet.



Equitable, barrier-free access

advancement of knowledge and innovation

collaborative exchange  
identities

well-being

respectful, inclusive  
champions diversity, celebrates  
empowers us

 professional identity

 personal identity





**We must maintain a balance between Intellectual & Social Friction in order to effectively demonstrate inclusive leadership, ensure the well-being of our community, while advancing knowledge and innovation.**

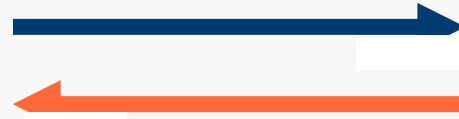


# Introducing the Intellectual vs. Social Friction



## Intellectual Friction

Intellectual friction is productive disagreement among individuals with diverse perspectives, fostering deeper understanding and critical thinking.




## Social Friction

Social friction is the tension and conflict arising from interpersonal differences, leading to increased misunderstanding or unrest.

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Only through intellectual friction do we solve problems. However a challenge arises as intellectual friction increases, so does social friction alongside it.

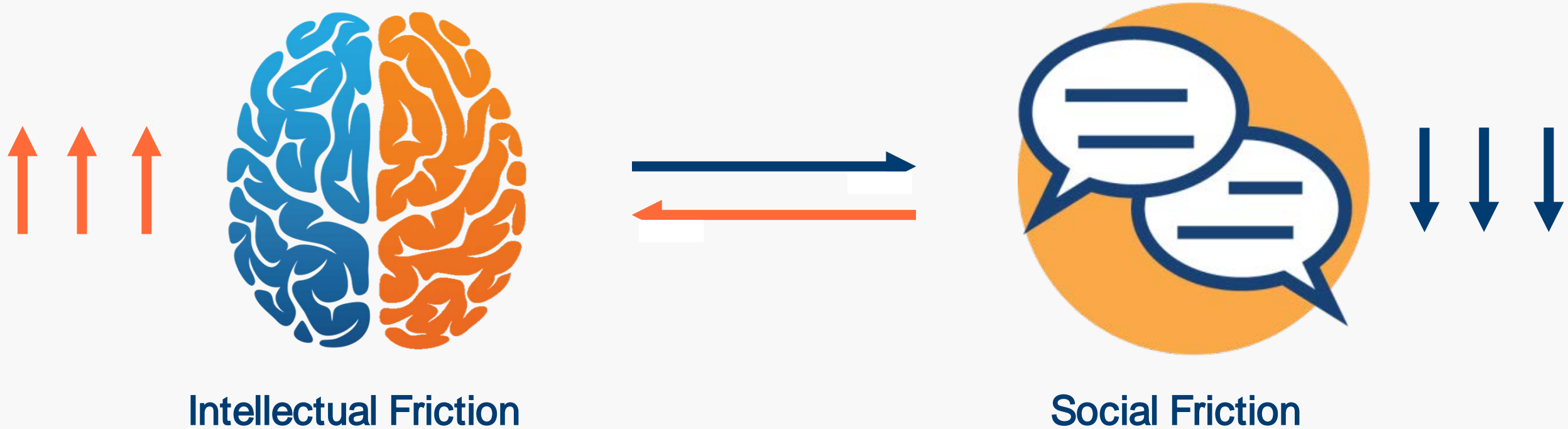




Our commitment to the principles of diversity, inclusion, and belonging go lock-in-step with the goal of advancing knowledge and innovation by *reducing* social friction, thereby enabling Ontario Tech to promote healthy intellectual friction and the well-being of all.



# Encouraging Intellectual Friction Introduces Inclusion Opportunities



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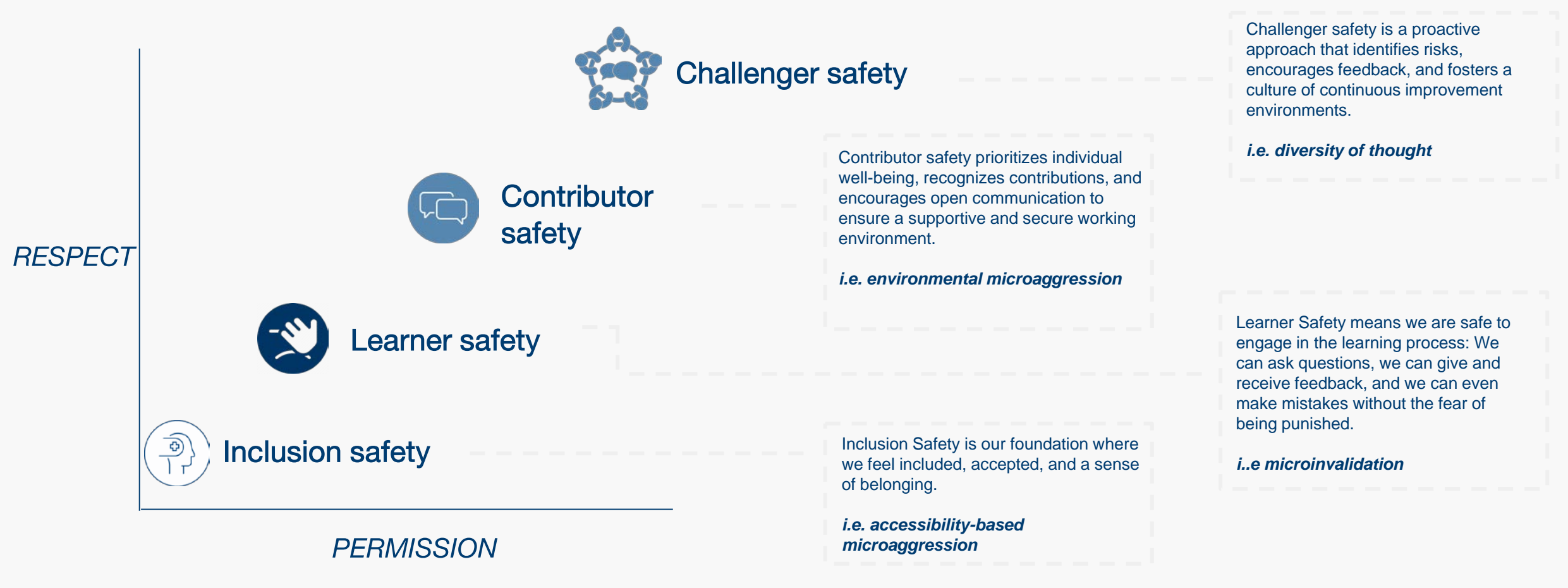
We each play a pivotal role in creating cultures that patrol the boundaries of respectful engagement. This is because if left unaddressed, social friction has the ability to effectively 'shut down' intellectual friction.



In order to achieve healthy levels of intellectual friction, we must promote psychological safety in all aspects of our interactions with one another.



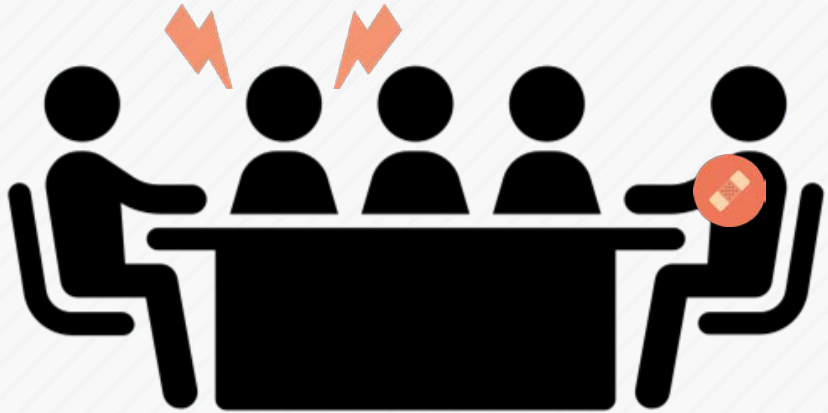
# Employing a Psychological Safety Framework to Reduce Social Friction



Hearing the perspectives and voices of all is critical to advancing knowledge and enabling pathways to innovation.



# Microaggressions Inhibit Diversity of Thought & Reduce Innovation



## Microaggressions

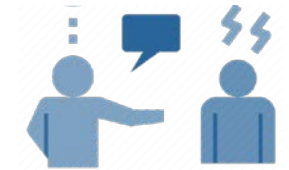
Everyday, subtle put-downs directed towards a marginalized group or person which may be verbal or nonverbal and are typically automatic.



Microinvalidations



Microassaults



Microinsults



Gender



Racist



Heterosexist




Environmental



Accessibility-based



Adopting an inclusive mindset can reduce harm towards others and ensure cognisance to collective wellbeing.



Now armed with the concepts of Intellectual vs. Social Friction, the tools with which to create Psychological Safety and avoid the aspects that threaten it (i.e. microaggressions), how can we bring these together to demonstrate inclusive leadership?





# Demonstrating Your Inclusive Leadership

Our individual actions contribute to an inclusive culture and community at Ontario Tech. As we learn & grow, being mindful & intentionally creating psychological safety for everyone will ensure we can continue to advance knowledge and innovation while centering on the well-being of our people.

## Here are a few strategies to keep in mind:



Know that everyone has something valuable to contribute irrespective of their job title, degree, or designations.



Be mindful microaggressions that personally target and question other people's intellect or credibility

- Does not advance respectful discourse and increases social friction
- Adopt the 'Yes AND' approach. Do not dismiss the thoughts and perspectives of any individual



Make a commitment to 'call each other in'



Change can only come from active allyship



Demonstrate courage and speak up when needed



Be respectful and create room for others to speak



We can all demonstrate principles of inclusive leadership by promoting and contributing to healthy intellectual friction, while creating a culture and environment of psychological safety for our community.



