PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

WORKSHEET 5: RED FLAG RETRO

Monthly Culture Health Check

SECTION 1: AVOIDED DISCUSSIONS

Prompt:
"What topics did we deliberately sidestep this month? Why?"

Examples:

- The missed sales target everyone noticed but no one mentioned
- Tension between marketing and product teams
- Leadership's inconsistent decision-making

Probe Deeper:

- "What would happen if we HAD discussed this?"
- "Who benefits from this silence?"

SECTION 2: PRIVATELY PUBLIC

Prompt:
"What feedback circulated in private messages/hallway chats that belonged in meetings?"

Examples:

- "Several people told me the new policy is unworkable, but no one said it in the meeting"
- "Multiple peers feel the promotion process is opaque"

Action:

- Identify 1 piece of private feedback to surface next meeting
- Assign a "truth-teller" to voice it

SECTION 3: UNDISCUSSABLES

Prompt:
"What's the elephant in the room we're all pretending not to see?"

Common Undiscussables:

- The founder's inconsistent involvement
- That one toxic high-performer who gets away with everything
- The upcoming layoffs everyone suspects but can't mention

Reflection:

- "What's the worst that could happen if we discussed this?"
- "What's the cost of NOT discussing it?"

SECTION 4: ACTION COMMITMENTS

Rule:
If an issue appears in 3+ retrospectives, it requires:

1. **Named Owner**: Who will drive change?
2. **Public Timeline**: "We'll resolve X by [date]"
3. **Progress Checks**: Monthly updates until resolved

Example:
"After 3 months of avoiding talk about burnout:

- COO owns implementing 'no after-hours emails' policy
- Deadline: Next payroll cycle
- Updates at weekly standups"

FACILITATOR NOTES

Before Meeting:

- Review last month's "undiscussables"
- Prepare examples to break the ice

During Meeting:

- Record answers verbatim (no sanitising)
- Push past vague answers ("What EXACTLY are we avoiding?")

After Meeting:

- Publish notes with assigned actions
- Display persistent issues publicly (e.g., "3 months undiscussed")

WHY THIS WORKS

1. Forces accountability: Repeated issues can't be ignored
2. Normalises discomfort: Makes "undiscussables" discussable