



Team support: the Secure Base model

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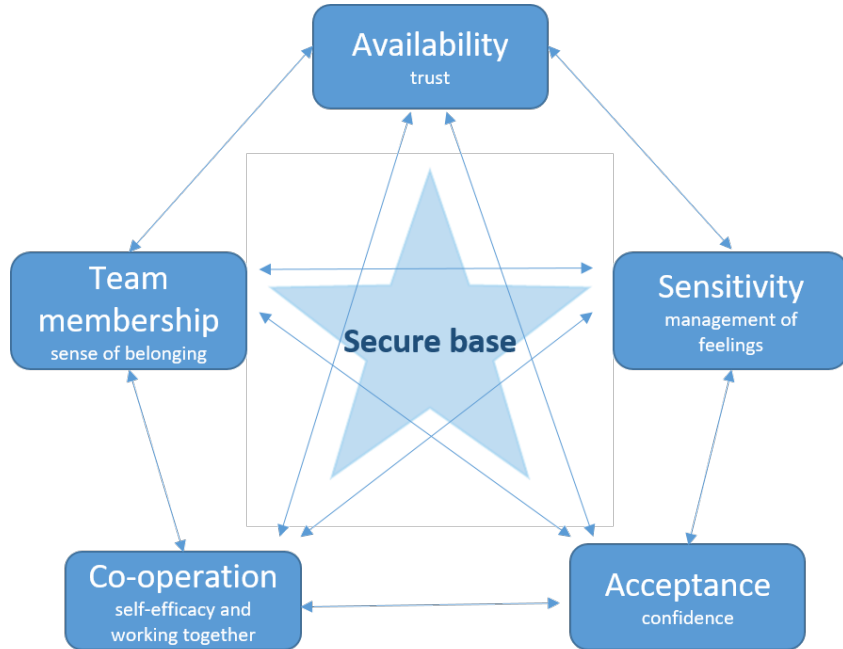
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Coping strategies

- We all have individual coping strategies to manage pressure in our lives (intrapersonal strategies)
- At work, it is also important to have trusting relationships within the team in order to manage the emotional demands of the work (interpersonal strategies)
- The Secure Base model can provide a helpful framework for thinking about building a strong, supportive team environment

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The team as a secure base



- A framework, not 'reality'
- Not 'new' - building on existing good management practice
- Aim to enhance competence which feeds into better outcomes at work

Biggart et al., (2017)

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ESRC Study 2012-15

8 Local Authorities

209
Child and family
social workers

Foster care
Adoption
Child protection
Looked after children
Family centres
Children in need

Quantitative and qualitative data over 12 months

Biggart et al, (2016)

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What is the Secure Base model?

- Developed as a framework for therapeutic caregiving in foster care, adoption and residential care (Schofield and Beek, 2006, 2014)
- Based in attachment and resilience theory
- Outlines five dimensions of caregiving and their developmental benefit for children
- Can helpfully be adapted to become a framework for team support

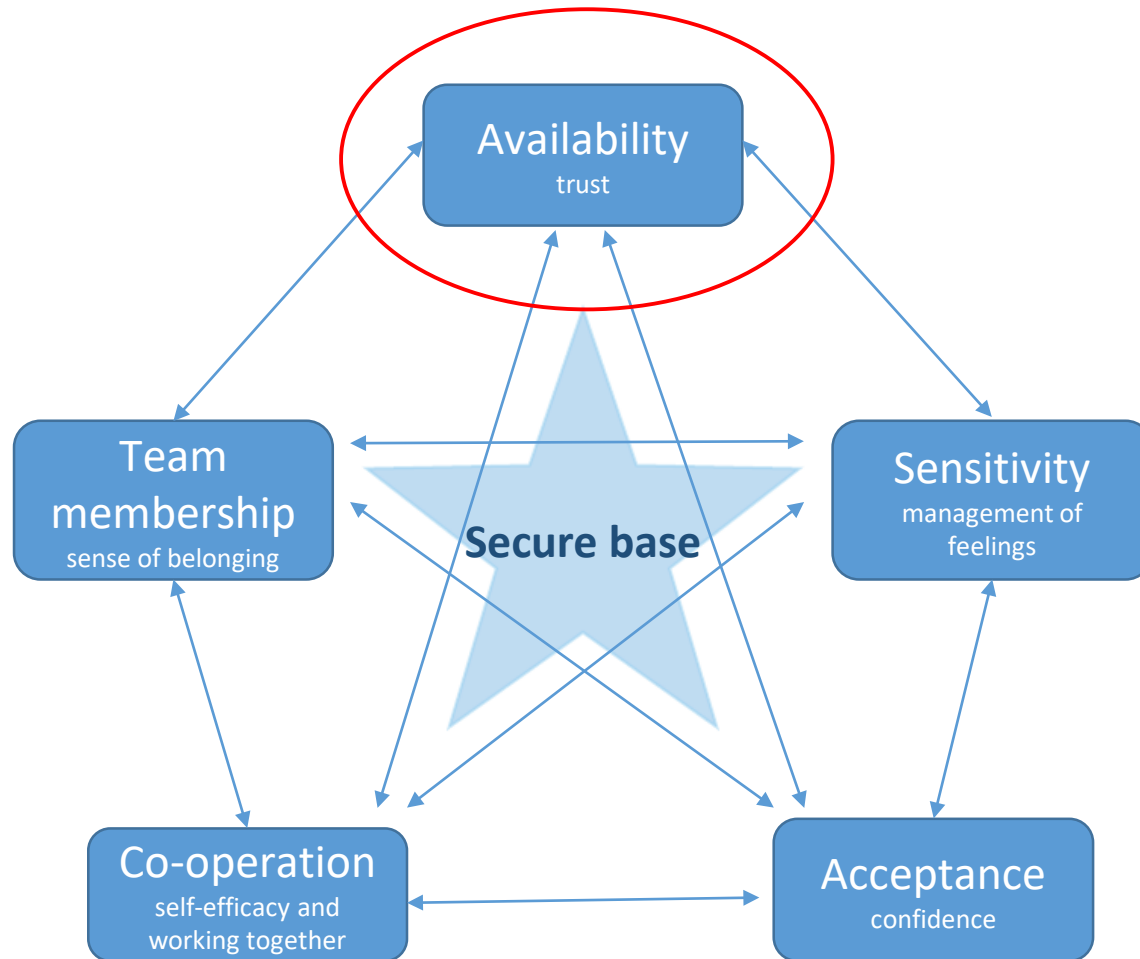
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What are the functions of secure base relationships?

- Provide a psychological 'safe haven', reassurance, affirmation when life is stressful/pressured
- This helps to reduce anxiety - which, in turn, **promotes exploration, competence and confidence**
- Children and adults are more likely to reach their full potential when supported by secure base relationships

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Availability

The needs of team members

- To know that their manager/supervisor is **physically** and **emotionally** available to provide support
- To trust that this person/or a reliable substitute will be readily available in times of need
- To be supported to work independently, and to develop as a professional

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Availability - Builds trust

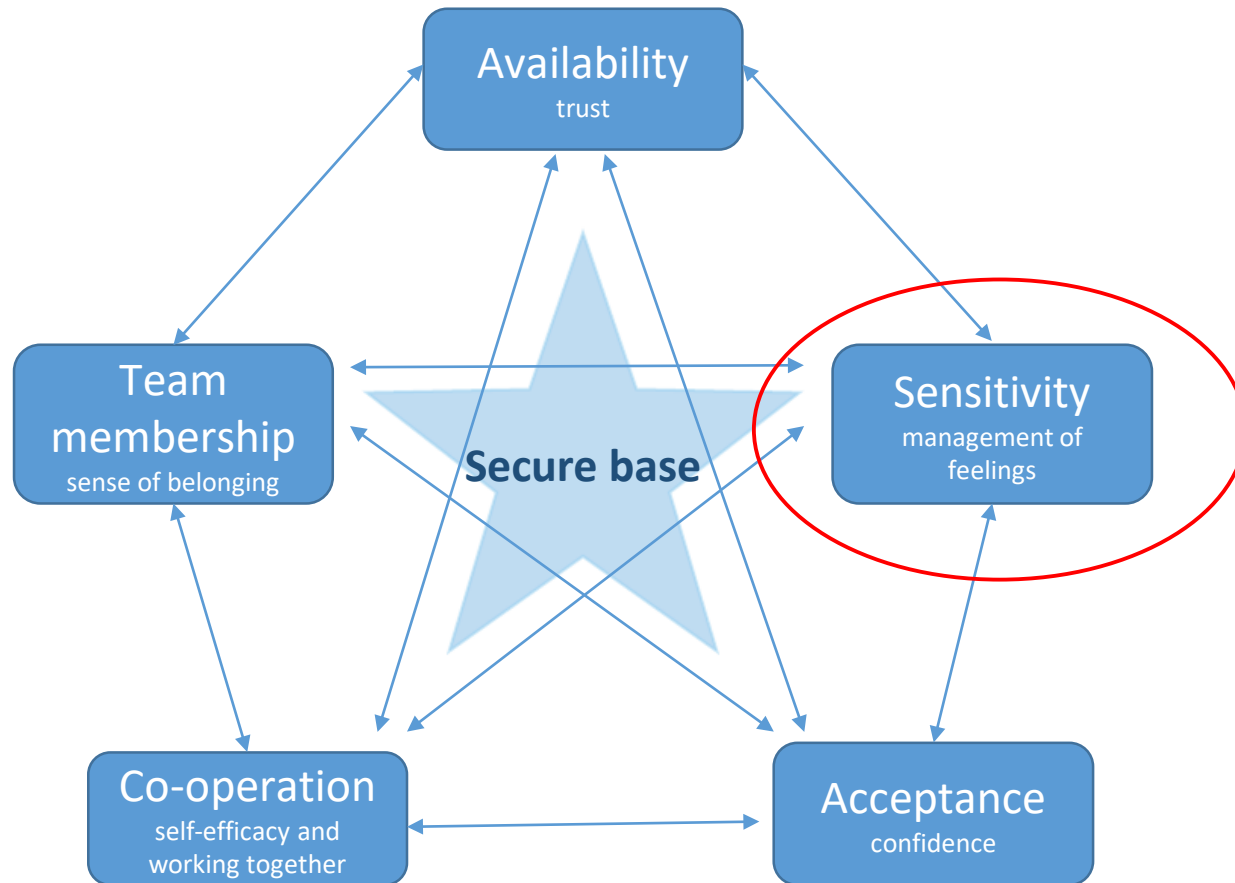
It's very open because the team manager, generally, comes and sits with us ...in the team room. Even though he's got his own office, he likes to come and sit with us and see what we're having a chat about and he'll participate in having a giggle about this, that or the other.

I wouldn't say frequently, but I ... know that if I need to call on her that I *can* call on her.

People are there for me

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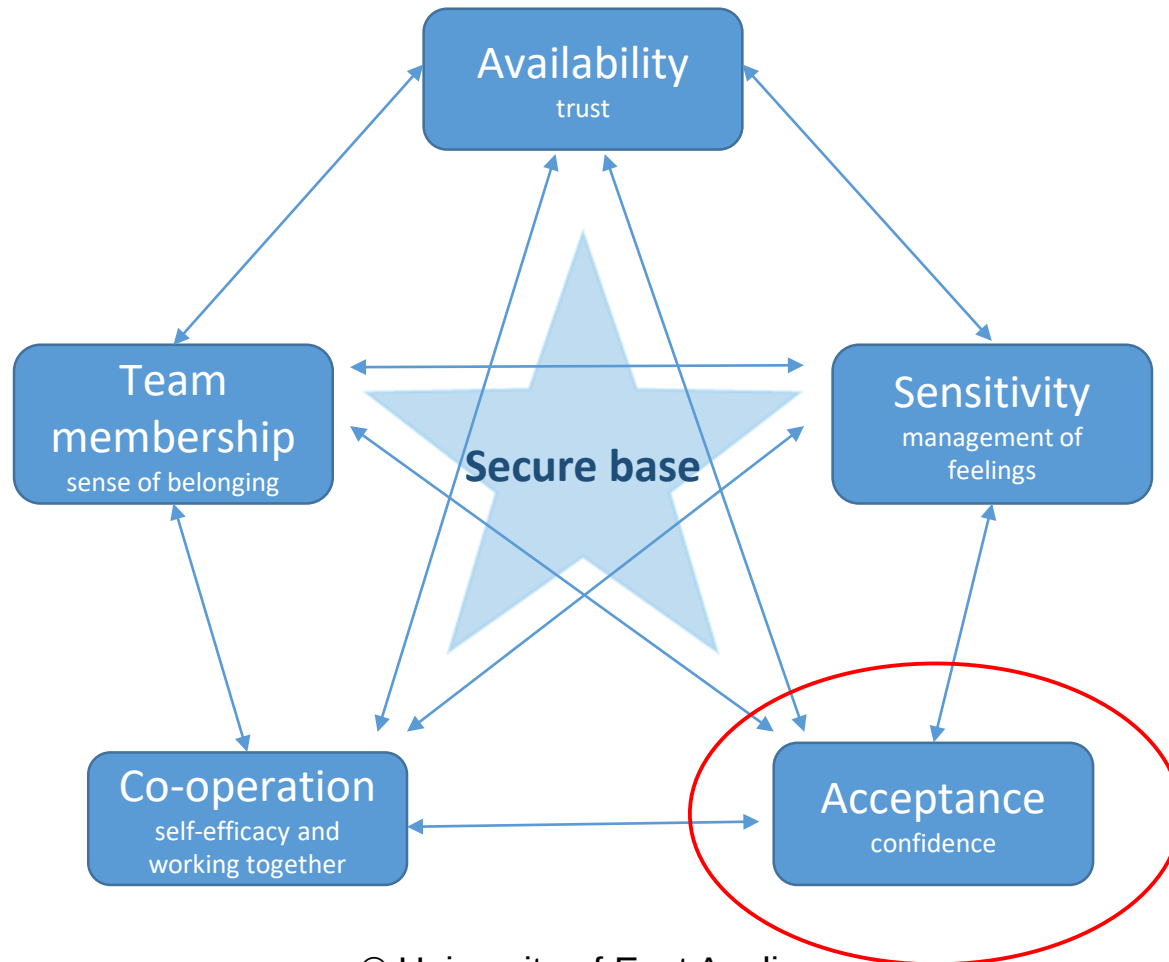
Sensitivity:

The needs of team members

- When work involves emotional stress, it's important to have the opportunity to express a range of feelings, to have them acknowledged and accepted
- To know that the supervisor can help them to 'make sense' of their feelings
- To be helped to think about thinking and feeling of clients and to shape their practice accordingly

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Acceptance:

The needs of team members

- Workers need to feel their individual contributions are recognised and valued
- To recognise and enjoy success of team/service
- To be open to reflection on setbacks and learning from them in order to improve practice

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Acceptance - building confidence

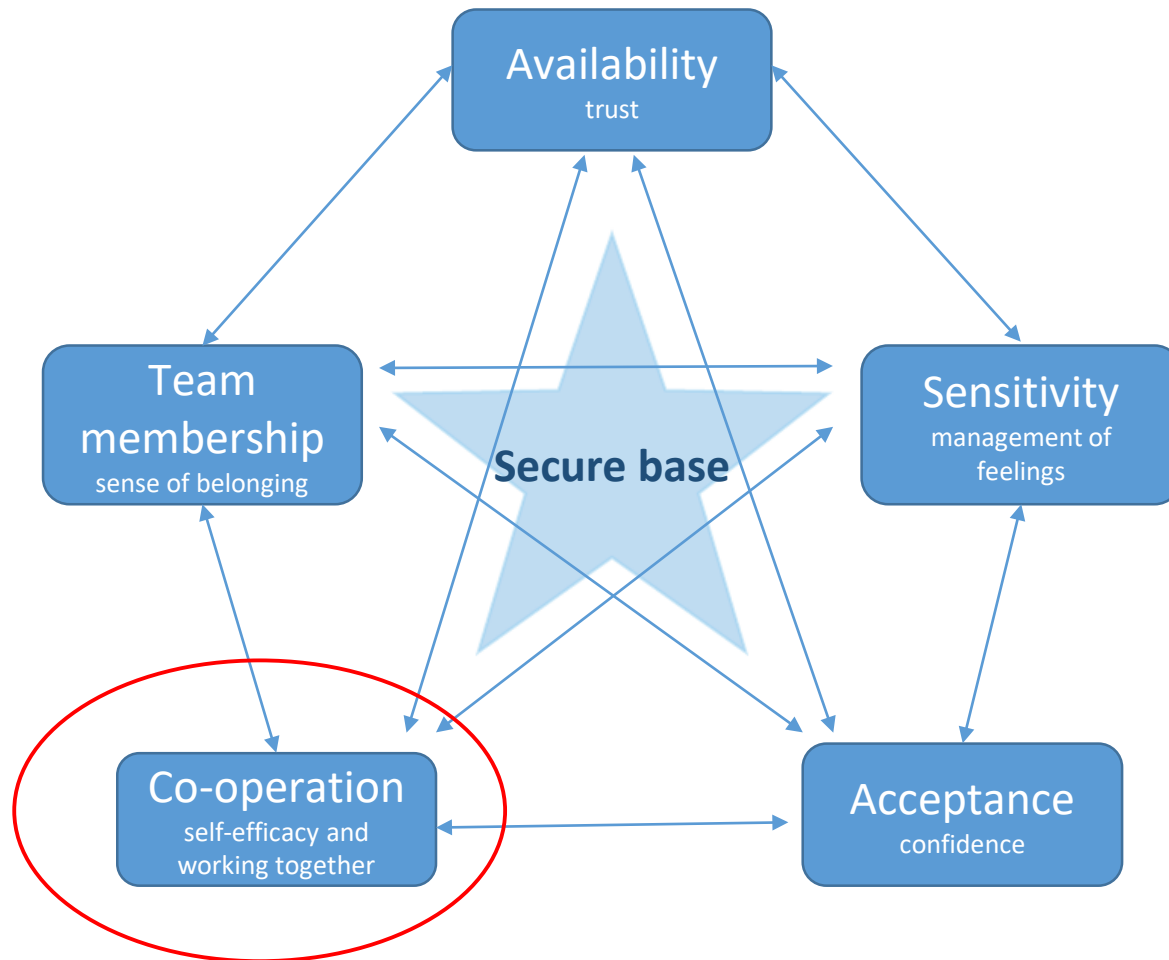
When you've done something good or when someone's been pleased with something you've done, praise is really, really important.

..She's very accommodating, she's very fair. Um, if you're not getting the work through on time, you know, she will let you know... but again ... she's just very, very constructive with any sort of feedback that she gives me.

**I feel competent but it's also
okay to be vulnerable
I don't have to be perfect in order
to be a good professional**

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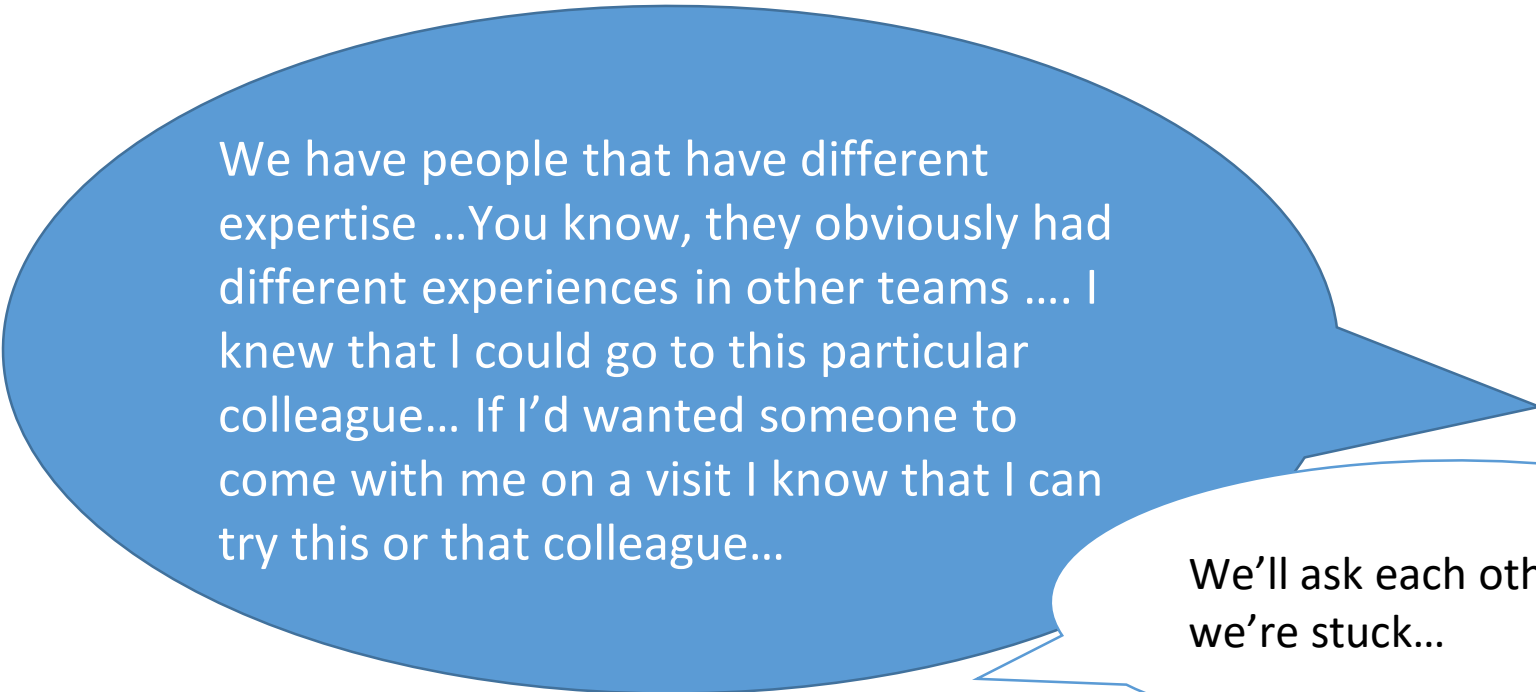
Co-operation - Self efficacy and working together:

Needs of team members

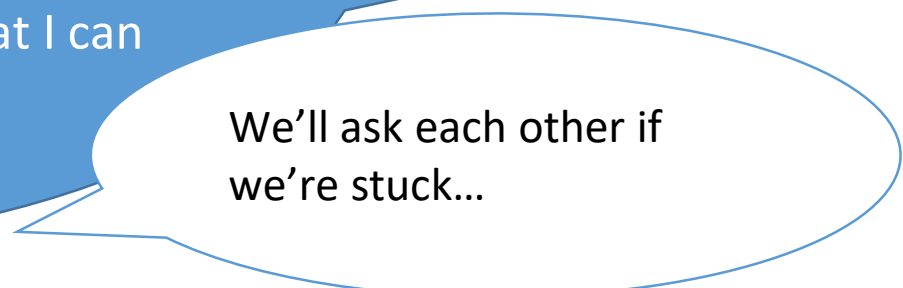
- To have a sense of working together with manager and team members to achieve shared goals
- To have a degree of choice and influence over events and decisions that affect team members

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Co-operation - promotes self efficacy and team work



We have people that have different expertise ...You know, they obviously had different experiences in other teams I knew that I could go to this particular colleague... If I'd wanted someone to come with me on a visit I know that I can try this or that colleague...

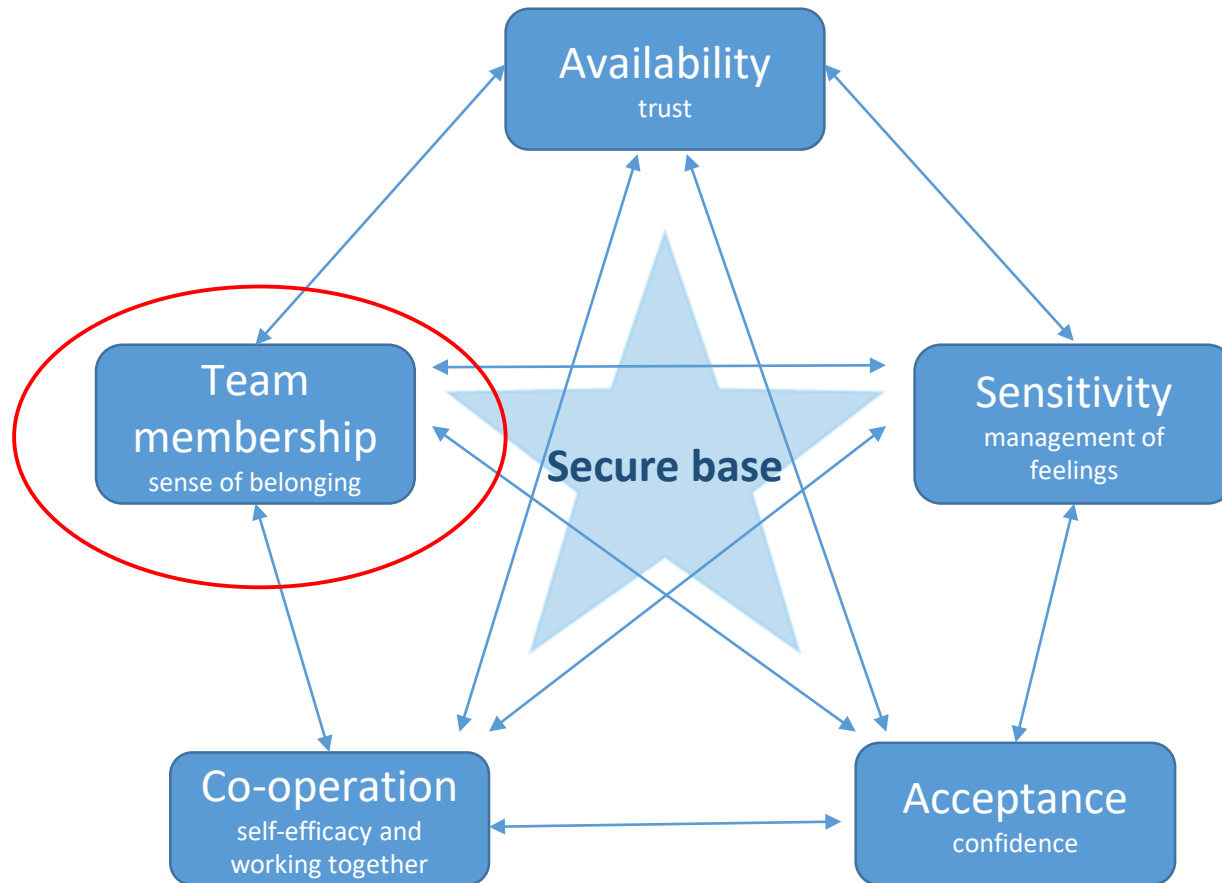


We'll ask each other if we're stuck...

I can work autonomously but also work with others to find solutions

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Team membership: The needs of team members

- A recognisable team culture and professional identity
- A sense of solidarity and support for each other
- Shared goals and values

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Team membership - promotes a sense of belonging

She always asks what's going on in our lives and how we're feeling and kind of what's going on personally. Not in an intrusive way... but just to give us a chance to offload anything that's maybe not great or that we're struggling with at home.

**I am valued and
'belong' within my
team as a person and
a professional**

People in the team refer to it as being ... a family at times... I'd say, yeah, we're close-knit ... we do have an idea of what's going on in each other's personal lives, anything that might be interfering with work.

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Team as Secure Base in HE?

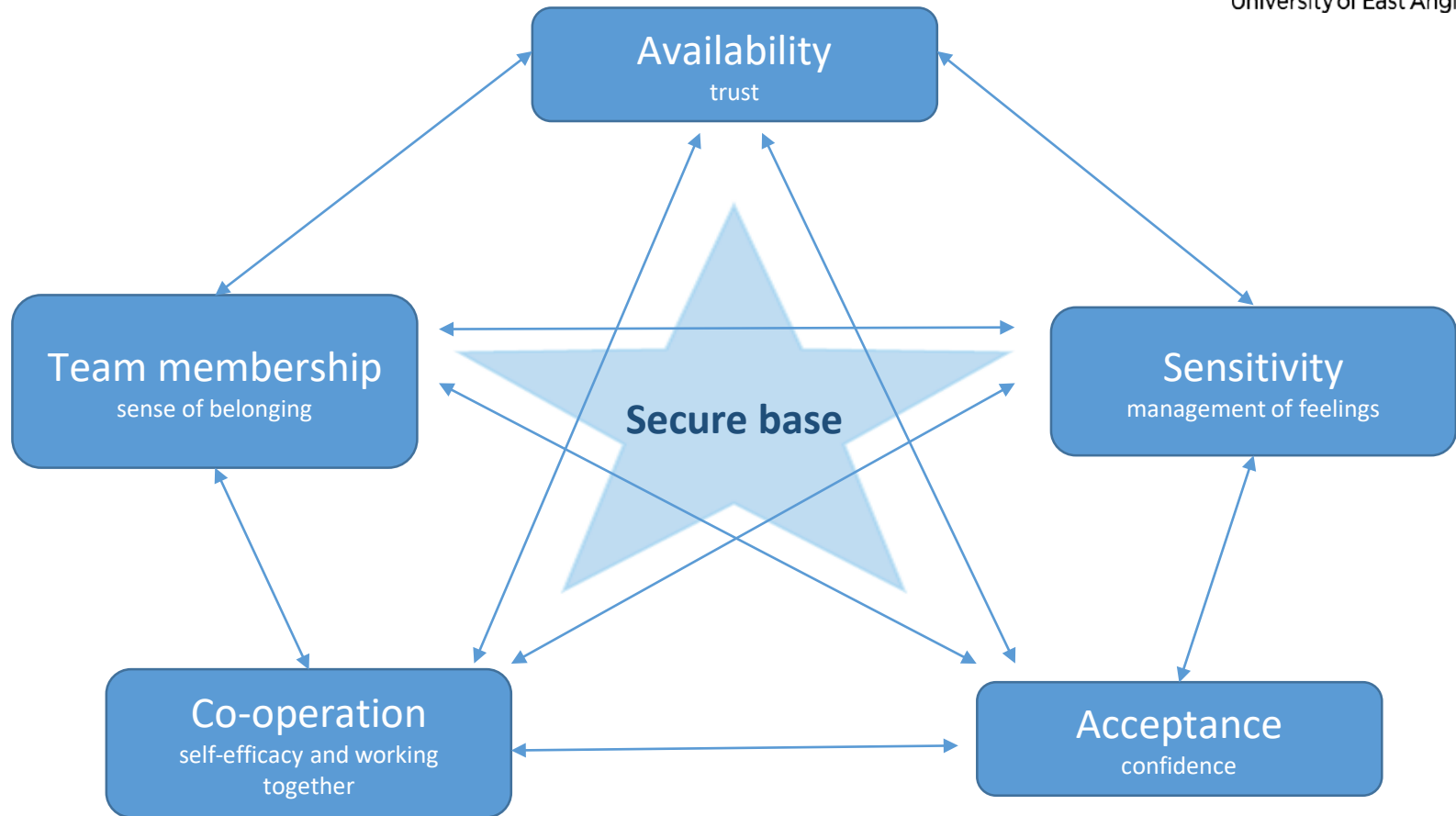
Some challenges

- Autonomy associated with academic roles
- Membership of multiple teams
- Large teams across different disciplines
- High levels of uncertainty
- Administrative - academic divide

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Developing the Team as a Secure Base

Half day introduction session available



For more information please contact Dr Laura Biggart
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References

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