

Confiding in AI about work: Where to draw the line

Adaptive module

~20 min

The top reason people use generative AI is no longer productivity but therapy and companionship (Harvard Business Review, 2025), and what they confide is often about work. This module strikes a balance: recognizing what this kind of listening offers, naming its three blind spots (flattery, dependence, and confidentiality), then setting out the right stance, with AI as a rehearsal room, never a substitute, and managers who notice the signal rather than moralize.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 01 Understand why AI appeals as a confidant (available, nonjudgmental) and what it really offers.
- 02 Identify the three blind spots: flattery that validates, dependence that isolates, and confidentiality that exposes the company.
- 03 Keep the right stance: AI as a mirror and a rehearsal room, never a substitute for real conversations.
- 04 Notice, as a manager, the sign that communication isn't flowing well, restore psychological safety, and restate the AI rules.

WHO IT'S FOR

Daily AI users who want to use it as a good mirror, and managers who pay attention to communication in their team.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

- 1 **Self-assessment:** on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
- 2 **Expert video:** 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
- 3 **Practice scenarios:** the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
- 4 **Dated commitment:** one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
- 5 **Memo to download:** key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

A SAMPLE PRACTICE SCENARIO

Matteo, a graphic designer, changed a brochure layout that Ivana had approved with the client, without telling her. That evening, Ivana tells her AI assistant about it; it judges that Matteo overstepped his role and suggests a firm message to the team. Ivana doesn't know Matteo's reasons. What does Ivana do?

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Psychological safety – Amy Edmondson (Harvard Business School)
- Synthetic intimacy – term used in the Harvard Business Review analysis (2025) of how people use generative AI
- GDPR and company AI use policy – regulatory and organizational framework

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Harvard Business Review, "How People Are Really Using Gen AI in 2025" (2025) – the top use of generative AI has become therapy and companionship, ahead of productivity
- MIT Media Lab and OpenAI – 2025 study of nearly 40 million conversations: the heaviest ChatGPT users report more loneliness and dependence
- Julian De Freitas (Harvard Business School), "AI Companions Reduce Loneliness," Journal of Consumer Research (2025) – 15 minutes with an AI companion reduce loneliness as much as a conversation with a person
- Amy Edmondson (Harvard Business School) – the concept of psychological safety