# Human Centered Agile Embedding Values into SAFe and Projects

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**By Kimberly Wiethoff**

Agile frameworks like SAFe, Scrum, and Kanban have brought structure to iterative delivery and scaled collaboration—but are we leaving behind the **human side** of agility?

In today’s digital workplaces, Agile leaders must do more than manage backlogs and velocity. We must create spaces where **empathy, equity, and ethics** are embedded into how we work.

This is the essence of **Human-Centered Agile**—a values-first approach that aligns team behavior, stakeholder engagement, and delivery practices with people, not just process.

## 🧍‍♀️ 1. Why Human Values Must Scale with the Framework

When SAFe or other scaled Agile models are implemented, there's a risk of:

* Focusing too much on tooling and ceremony
* Prioritizing delivery speed over team health
* Overlooking inclusivity and emotional safety

**Agility without humanity becomes robotic.** To drive sustainable outcomes, we need to bring back the people-first perspective—even at scale.

## 🌍 2. Practical Ways to Embed Human Values into SAFe

Here are tangible ways to integrate human-centered principles into SAFe without compromising business agility:

**• Add a “Values Champion” role to each Agile Release Train**

Someone responsible for surfacing ethical, diversity, or psychological safety concerns during PI Planning and Inspect & Adapt events.

**• Use team working agreements that prioritize empathy**

Include norms like “Assume positive intent,” “Encourage all voices,” and “Call out burnout.”

**• Refactor PI Objectives to Reflect Human Outcomes**

Go beyond “deliver X” and include goals like “reduce support load by 20% to free up team capacity” or “improve accessibility for visually impaired users.”

**• Encourage story mapping from personas, not just stakeholders**

This shifts the conversation from “what does the business want?” to “what does the user need?”—an important reframing.

## 🛠️ 3. Tools and Techniques to Reinforce Human-Centered Practices

* **Empathy Maps** during backlog refinement
* **Accessibility audits** as part of Definition of Done
* **Team health checks** as a recurring retrospective input
* **Equity-focused user stories** (“As a neurodivergent user, I want…”)

These tools are simple to implement, but powerful in impact.

## 🎯 4. Leadership Actions That Make a Difference

Agile leaders set the tone. Here’s how to lead human-first:

* **Model vulnerability in retrospectives**
* **Celebrate inclusive behavior, not just technical wins**
* **Make space for hard conversations around bias, ethics, and burnout**
* **Partner with HR, DEI, and legal to bridge Agile and cultural goals**

## 🤲 Final Thought: Frameworks Evolve—Values Endure

Human-Centered Agile doesn’t compete with SAFe—it **completes it**. By embedding empathy, inclusivity, and ethical reflection into the structure, we create resilient teams and responsible products.

**Great Agile isn’t just fast—it’s fair, thoughtful, and human.**

**#HumanCenteredAgile #AgileLeadership #SAFeFramework #EmpathyInTech #InclusiveTeams #ValuesDrivenDelivery #ManagingProjectsTheAgileWay**