

GUIDELINES FOR STRENGTHS-BASED SUPERVISORS

A key component to creating a strengths-based workplace is to ensure that all supervisory staff are providing supervision with the following guidelines.

- 1) **Establish a Positive, Respectful Relationship** with supervisees (utilize a humanistic approach).
- 2) **Meet Regularly** and give supervisees your undivided attention (no computer or phone distractions).
- 3) Emphasize supervisee's **Skill Development- Teach, Model, Coach, and Support.**
- 4) Emphasize supervisee's **Strengths** (highlight what they are doing well).
- 5) Utilize at least a **4:1 ratio of Positive Feedback** vs. constructive criticism/ opportunities for growth.
- 6) Have discussions about supervisee's **Professional Development and Career Goals.**
- 7) Attend to supervisee's **Self-Care** and strategies to **Prevent Burnout.**
- 8) Utilize **Reflective Practice** to explore thoughts, feelings, and meaning-making about Human Service challenges
- 9) **Promote Hope about Clients.** Educate supervisees about the many reasons for Hope and Self-Efficacy (e.g., Maturation of the brain's prefrontal cortex; Neuroplasticity; Life-span wisdom model; Resilience; Post-traumatic growth).
- 10) **Intervene when/if supervisees slip into negative, deficit-based orientation** and/or are experiencing learned helplessness. Heighten their awareness about how a deficit-based orientation will impede effectiveness and increase their risk of burnout.
- 11) Educate supervisees about the **Foundational Principles** of the workplace- Ensure that supervisees understand the "big picture" of human services (e.g., Strengths-based, Relationship-based, Skills-based, Holistic principles).
- 12) Educate supervisees about **Character Strengths** that are required for effective, competent staff (e.g., Positive, Kind; Optimistic; Honest; Integrity; Interpersonally-skilled; good Emotional Regulation; strong Work Ethic; Team Player; Open to Learning from Others; Humble; Open to Learning from Own Mistakes).
- 13) Utilize a **Balanced/ Democratic/ Authoritative** supervisory style (as opposed to a 'Permissive' or 'Authoritarian' style). Maintain moderate to high expectations, exhibit a caring/ supportive attitude, and provide supervisees with a rationale for job expectations (explaining why it is important).
- 14) Educate supervisees about **Key Policies and Procedures.**
- 15) Communicate **Clear and Consistent Expectations** about job performance.
- 16) Hold supervisees accountable to job expectations. **Utilize Progressive Discipline to address problem behaviors and document well.** *Note:* Ignoring supervisee's problem behaviors leads to bad outcomes.
- 17) Do NOT expect perfection from supervisees but **DO Expect Responsiveness to Feedback.**
- 18) Periodically conduct **Quality Assurance checks** to ensure supervisee's compliance with job duties. But do NOT micro-manage supervisees.
- 19) Use Supervisee's **Mistakes as 'Teachable Moments'.**
- 20) Empower Supervisees by having them **take on (champion) job duties associated with their personal interests and skills.** This provides opportunities for supervisees to express their passions and share it in the workplace.