Supervision

Tips

Creating an ongoing agenda and establishing expectations around supervision ensures that both the staff member and their manager or supervisor are clear of the purpose of supervision. They also balance the needs of both parties within the process. Supervision discussions can be aligned with the capability requirements for the role (as set out in the **Workforce Capability Framework**), the position description and key performance measures that have been established. Supervision is also a key component of keeping performance on track.

Consider a range of different options of where and how an effective supervision session can take place. This may involve meeting in a café or another community location, talking on the phone, using a computer application offering visual contact - such as FaceTime, Skype, or GoToMeeting, meeting a staff member when they are on-shift to observe how they work and/or to support them in managing challenging or difficult situations.

Identify if it is appropriate to conduct supervision on a one-to-one or a group basis, or a combination of both.

It is important to strike a balance in when, where and how supervision takes place. You might agree to use the phone or other technology monthly, but at least once a quarter you agree to meet with the staff member face-to-face.

Applying a person-centred approach in supervision and setting a clear structure, will allow for a balance between appreciation, feedback, information and discussion. Use a range of person-centred tools (as necessary) during supervision. These may include:

* The **'what's working/not working'** tool to look at information from different perspectives.
* The **'good day and bad day'** tool to support the staff member to build on their one-page profile.
* The **'praise and trouble'** tool to facilitate feedback discussions i.e. exploring how a staff member wants to receive both positive feedback and constructive criticism. This information can then be built into their one-page profile.

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* The **‘stress and support’** tool to assist staff members to reflect on stress within the workplace and create some practical strategies to manage this.
* The **‘4+1 questions’** tools to focus on specific ongoing issues and reflect on previous efforts related to this before creating actions.

Keep a record of the outcomes from regular supervision sessions and use this information in performance review discussions. Performance review discussions generally occur less frequently, for example, once every six or twelve months, depending on your organisation’s policy. Input from supervisions sessions ensure that all aspects of a staff member’s performance are taken into consideration for the whole period.

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The headings along the top of the supervision template provide clarity around the topics to be covered, time spent on each area and any expectations - while also allowing space to capture outcomes and actions.

Question or topic – document the questions and topics to be covered during supervision. The template provides the process and structure, but the content dependents on what needs to be covered as outlined in the steps below.

A good practice to get into when developing agenda items is to think about any issues and pose them as a question as it has a positive impact on how people approach the issue. A question implies that an answer exists.

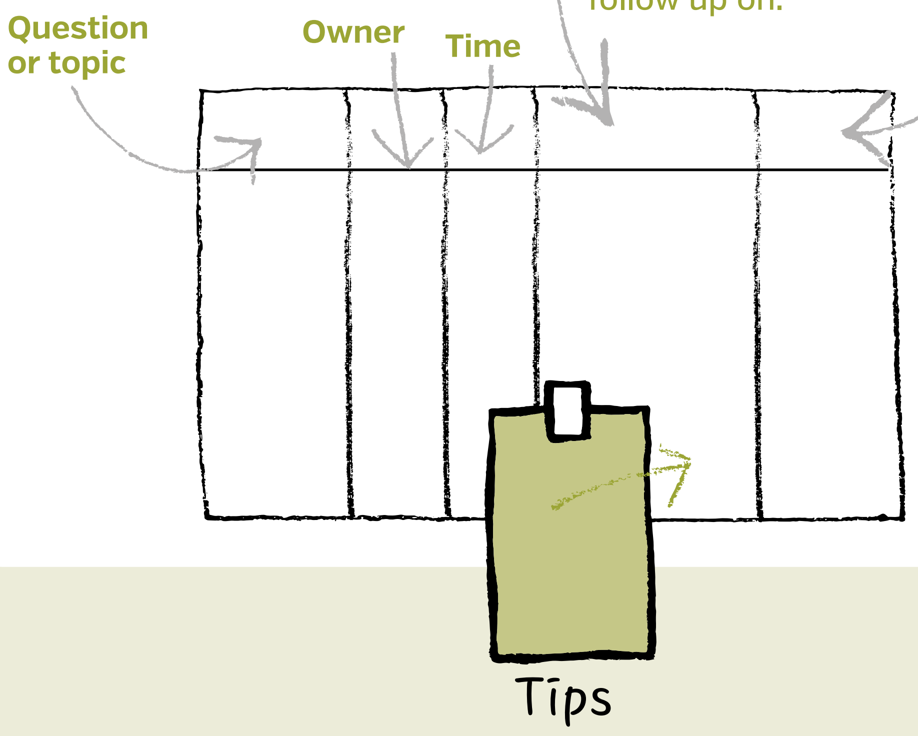
For example 'how can we support Don so that he is safe within the community and his staff feel confidant without feeling that they are imposing?' rather than just saying 'we need to talk about the issue with Don being unsafe while he is out.'

Owner – is the person who is responsible for leading the discussion. This links to whoever has put the item on the agenda.

Time – the owner of the topic nominates an amount of time that the item will require. Setting clear timelines within an agenda that fits within the overall supervision session will ensure that all items are covered. Even items that seemingly take minimal time will need to be allocated a slot; otherwise you may end up not having time to cover everything and continually carry items over to the next meeting.

Decision/information - provide clarity within the agenda as to whether the item requires a decision to be made, or whether it is solely one person providing information to other person.

Outcome – rather than capturing the entire conversation this section of the agenda provides space to record outcomes and actions to follow up on.



Suggested process/areas to cover:

The areas to cover listed below provide process and structure to a supervision sessions. The detail under each heading will be filled in by the staff member and their manager or supervisor.

Providing a process and structure allows both parties to come to supervision knowing what is going to happen and what's expected from them. It can also provide prompts that assist in ensuring everything is covered.

A regular agenda template can be sent back and forth between people or put in a shared supervision folder that enables both the staff member and their supervisor to add items as they think of them between sessions.

Developing an agenda before supervision also provides people with the information they need to come to the session informed and prepared.

Step 1: Opening round

An opening round within supervision or a meeting is simply where one person speaks at a time without being interrupted, having the opportunity to share their thoughts, ideas or opinions with the other person/people giving them their undivided attention.

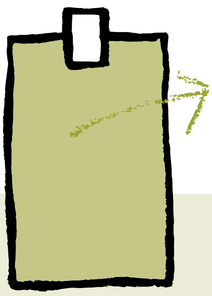
Within the process of supervision, the use of rounds builds on a culture of appreciation by starting the session with one thing that's working well for each person right now at work or at home, rather than jumping in with issues or negatives.

Step 2: Items for information

Place 'items for information' that need to be shared at the beginning of the agenda, as they generally do not require discussion. This then allows for time to move onto items that require more discussion but ensures that these quick items do not get forgotten.

Step 3: Items for discussion

These are the items that require discussion either because there is a decision needed or because either the staff member or the manager or supervisor has a point they wish dedicate time to during the supervision session. The following headings provide a good prompt when developing a supervision agenda:



Tips

Responsibilities: this relates to specific areas of a person's role that their supervisor would like to hear about or issues that the staff member is having that relate to their role.

Performance: this involves providing positive feedback on things done well and constructive feedback on any performance related issues.

This could relate to specific performance measures developed with the staff member on commencing their role or during their performance review meeting.

It could also be feedback in relation to the key requirements of their role as described in their position description, or feedback about developing capabilities in terms of the relevant job level and job family in the Workforce Capability Framework.

Supports: this provides the opportunity for the staff member to discuss any supports they want or need from their manager, supervisor or the organisation.

Learning: here both parties can discuss any learning and development opportunities or goals, particularly those matters linked to earlier discussions on responsibilities and performance.

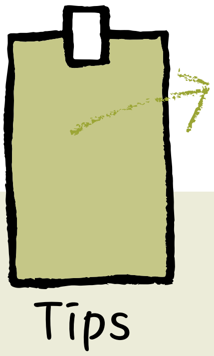
Step 4: When will we meet next?

Set a date and time (or timeframe) for the next supervision session. If possible establish a meeting schedule in advance i.e. for a 3-month timeframe. This may not need an owner although it is good practice to make sure someone is responsible for it.

Even though it may only take a couple of minutes, it is important to allocate the time for this activity otherwise there is a risk that you run out of time and that action doesn't take place.

Step 5: Appreciation

Use a 'closing round' to complete supervision where each person within the session shares one thing they have appreciated about their time together. Remember to allocate time to this point so that it does not get overlooked and be viewed as not important.



Supervision

Name of staff member Date

Name of supervisor

Question/topic	Owner	Time	Decision/information	Outcome
Opening round				
Items for information				
Items for discussion				
Responsibilities				
Performance				
Supports				
Learning				
When will we meet next?				
Appreciation				

Template

Additional resources

* The Workforce Capability Framework
* The disability career planner and capability framework implementation guide
* Technique and Tips - a person-centred approach to supervision
* Technique, Tips and Template - building on a one-page profile through performance planning, support and supervision
* Tips - Keeping performance on track
* Technique – using 'what's working/not working' in performance planning, support and supervision
* Tips – using the 'good day and bad day' tool to keep performance on track
* Tips – using the 'praise and trouble' tool in supervision
* Tips – using the 'stress and support' tool in supervision

Definitions

The term **individual(s)** refers to an individual with a disability and their family and/or circle of support.

The terms **staff/employee(s)** refer to paid or unpaid members of the workforce regardless of their employment relationship with their employer i.e. permanent, casual, full-time, volunteer, etc.