

Supervision

Using the 'praise and trouble' tool in supervision

Supervision provides an opportunity for employees to receive feedback and feel supported in their role. However, depending on people's previous experiences, supervision can create negative images and feelings for some staff members. Even if you do not want people to think about these sessions negatively, they are often the only time that managers or supervisors get the opportunity to address issues within the workplace.



Technique

'Praise and trouble' is a framework to manage and positively reflect on different types of feedback. It provides the opportunity to discuss when and how an individual staff member wants to receive feedback and how they can act on it.

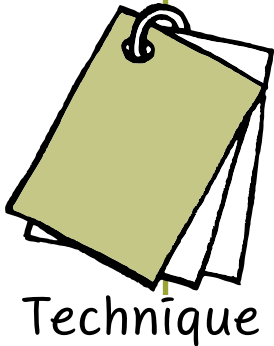
As a manager or supervisor, it is important to raise actual or perceived negative issues, particularly those that impact on the staff member's performance. However, using the 'praise and trouble' tool during supervision in a person-centred way can make even the more challenging conversations easier to manage constructively.

Starting out - make sure that there is a shared understanding of the concept of 'praise and trouble'. Discuss individual understandings of what both of the terms mean, and agree on a definition.

Praise – often thought of as positive feedback for something done well, something as a manager or supervisor you would like to see more of, and generally ideal workplace behaviour. When talking about praise in the context of work, it can come from different stakeholders or sources within the staff member's workplace. This could be feedback from you as the manager or supervisor, from colleagues or from individuals supported by the staff member.

Trouble – often thought of as negative feedback or constructive criticism. This could be a task that needs to be done differently in future, a response to a situation that could have been different, or a behaviour that as a manager or supervisor you would like to see less of (or not at all). As with praise, this feedback can come from different stakeholders or sources.

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Using this concept within supervision:

1. Either before or during the supervision session, ask the staff member to think about their most recent experiences and identify examples of feedback they have received. Using the 'praise and trouble' template, ask the staff member to note down examples of their work where they have received praise/positive feedback and examples of trouble/negative feedback.

Simply capturing this gives you an immediate indication of the appreciation to criticism ratio within supervision. Research indicates that the optimum ratio is 5 appreciations to every criticism. If the criticism score is higher, you might need to consider carefully what approach to take.

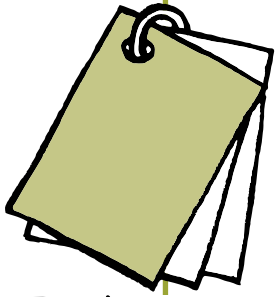
Based on the type of feedback you have previously provided during supervision sessions, you will be able to get a better idea of what staff members perceive as priorities in their work. It is important to think how the staff member receives this feedback and how this reflects the priorities and values of the organisation.

If, for example, your feedback is mainly focused on compliance issues, it is easy to see why staff may end up not prioritising other areas of their work as much.

Using a position description and performance measures developed using the **Workforce Capability Framework** will assist in ensuring a 'whole of job' approach, and in actively looking to provide feedback to the staff member on all areas of their work.

2. The next step is to give the staff member the opportunity to nominate some areas of their work they would like to receive more feedback on, whether this is praise or constructive criticism.

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3. The final part of the discussion is agreeing how a staff member will best respond to feedback, both positive and negative, within supervision.

Asking someone how they would like to receive feedback will give you, as their manager or supervisor, insight into how best to have this type of conversation and know how the message will most successfully be received.

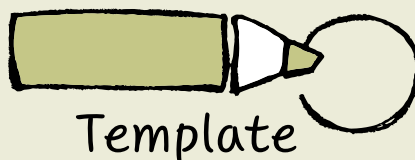
Sometimes people may not immediately know how they want to receive feedback, so you may need to support them to think about feedback they have received in the past and **what's worked** and **not worked** for them.

This exercise also acknowledges that we may not be able to avoid conversations that are perceived as 'negative', but the way we hold those conversations can be negotiated and improved upon to create the best possible outcome.

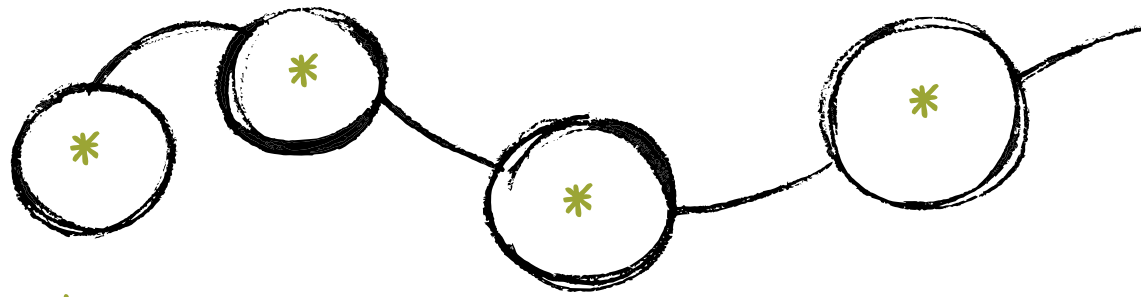
This information can be agreed upon and built into the staff member's **one-page profile**.

Praise and trouble

<p>Praise</p> <p>Areas of my work that I have received positive feedback for</p>	<p>Trouble</p> <p>Areas of work that I have received criticism for/have been asked to change or do differently]</p>
<p>What I would like to receive feedback on</p>	
<p>The most effective way to provide me with feedback</p>	



Supervision



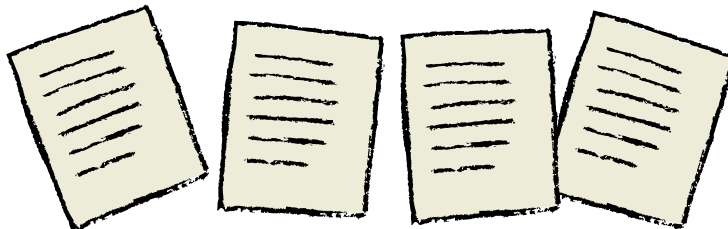
Additional resources

- * The Workforce Capability Framework
- * The disability career planner and capability framework implementation guide
- * Tips and technique – a person-centred approach to supervision
- * Tips – building on a one-page profile through performance planning, support and supervision
- * Tips – using ‘what’s working/not working’ in performance planning, support and supervision
- * Tool and template – using the ‘stress and support’ tool in supervision
- * Tips – agreeing performance expectations

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.



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