

Planting the Seeds of Effective Trauma Informed Supervision



PRESENTER

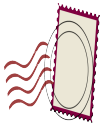
MARYCLAIRE MULLEN MSW LSW

Which Agency/Program or Role Fits You Best



What Is Your Personal Knowledge or Experience with Trauma Informed Supervision ?

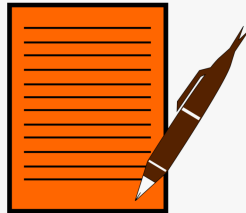
I could fit my knowledge and experience about trauma informed supervision on a:



Stamp ?



Postcard ?



Letter ?



Book ?



An introductory overview to trauma informed supervision

What it is and what it is not

The importance of supervision, functions of supervision and the role of the supervisor through a trauma informed lens

Challenges to providing effective trauma informed supervision

Strategies to address these challenges



What does it mean to be trauma informed

Having an understanding of the experiences of trauma survivors, including the prevalence and physical, social, and emotional impact of trauma.

Recognizing signs of trauma in staff, service recipients and others. With staff this relates not only to individual trauma histories but to the signs and symptoms of vicarious trauma.

Trauma-informed approaches place priority on restoring the survivor's feelings of safety, choice, and control.

What does it mean to be trauma informed



Supporting a resilient workforce that is well equipped to respond to the needs of those who have experienced trauma.

Creating a culture of self-care within organizations, one that supports self-care in a way that demonstrates its importance to the professional workforce.

Integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings.

TRAUMA INFORMED SUPERVISION

Is just one component of trauma informed care (TIC), a system wide approach to providing services that recognizes trauma is pervasive and works to mitigate some of the impact.

The SAMHSA model of TIC has ten domains and supervision is just one part of the seventh domain, Training and Workforce Development.

This domain includes the organization's human resource system and incorporates a trauma informed approach in all decisions, including, hiring, **supervision**, and staff evaluation.

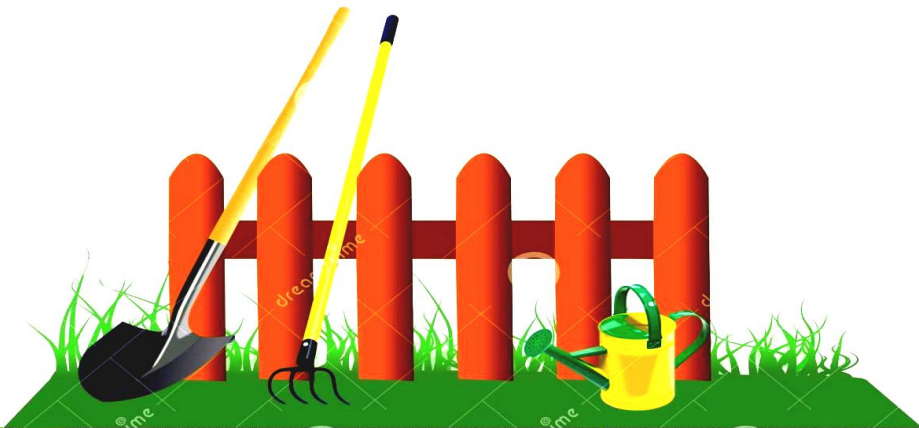
Policies need to be in place to support staff with a trauma history as well as address vicarious trauma.



TRAUMA INFORMED SUPERVISION

In contrast to historical models of deficit-based supervision which focus on identifying and rectifying problem areas, trauma-informed supervision is an effective approach that supports staff, provides opportunities for learning, and can prevent further trauma from occurring.

This type of supervision model, and trauma-informed care in general, deemphasizes hierarchy and power differentials, and puts self-disclosure and the sharing of emotional responses/reactions on the part of supervisors in a new light.



TRAUMA

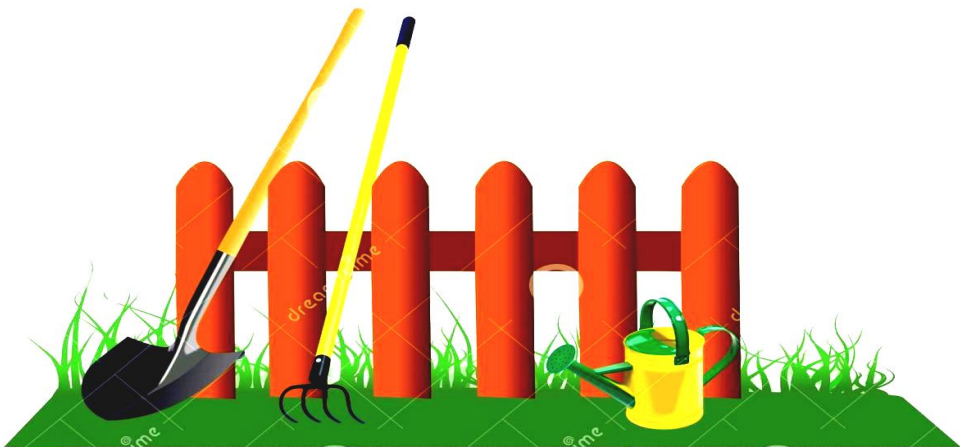
INFORMED

SUPERVISION

The parallel process means that many of the skills used with clients can also be used with supervisees, including problem-solving and crisis resolution.

In a trauma informed approach it is our role to be sure clients have enough information about their options and resources, and are supported in their decisions.

Similarly, supervisors make sure staff have the resources necessary to do their job and understand the importance of providing support and encouraging staff in their professional development and self care plan.



TRAUMA

INFORMED

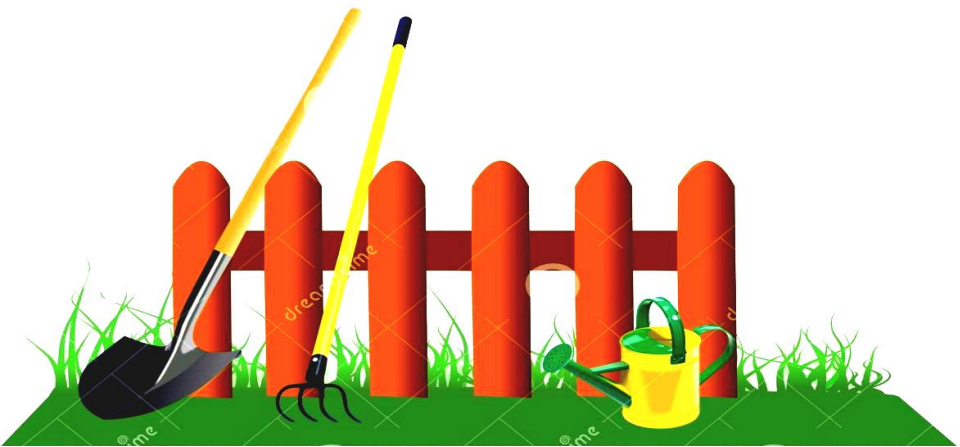
SUPERVISION

In a TIC approach, we ask front-line staff to look at service recipients behaviors as adaptations or coping skills.

As supervisors dealing with employee behavior in a trauma-informed organization, we are challenged to do the same thing.

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Viewing behaviors as coping strategies and symptoms as adaptations when considering how to address issues is a central aspect to being trauma informed in supervision.



IMPORTANCE OF SUPERVISION

Protective factor



Supervision and having a supportive work environment are key factors in preventing work stress and fatigue, which are contributing factors to burnout.

Vicarious trauma (VT) is the transformative effect of working with trauma survivors over time that can alter a staff person's identity and perspective on the world.

Trauma informed supervision is a protective factor in preventing VT.

IMPORTANCE OF SUPERVISION

Quality care

Service recipients deserve consistent, quality care. Supervision and feeling supported are important elements to help staff be mentally and emotionally healthy in the work setting. Supervision creates an atmosphere where staff can ask for support and guidance on challenging situations.



Mentoring

Supervision also provides an opportunity to model professional behavior. Supervisors who model respect for clients and other staff contribute positively to their supervisee's growth and professional development.

IMPORTANCE OF SUPERVISION

Liability

When support and resources are not available, staff may make mistakes that can result in the organization being legally liable for any wrongdoing.

Cost savings

Hiring and training staff takes time and money.

The cost of supervision as a form of prevention could be well worth the savings that result from reduced employee turnover and/or reduced ineffectiveness because of staff experiencing vicarious trauma.



IMPORTANCE OF SUPERVISION



Including supervision as a normal work routine can make it a tool to increase knowledge and skills, more effectively help survivors, and improve employee wellness and morale.

Organizations can break down prior stigmas about supervision by normalizing it, and by clearly explaining its purpose(s) and benefit(s).

PRINCIPLES



Trauma-Informed Care Principle Meaning: Safety

Ensure physical and psychological safety in the environment and relationships.
Persons served (not the organization) determine whether safety is achieved.

How It Applies to the Supervisory Relationship:

Focus on a sense of safety for staff. Defer to supervisees to define it.

Trauma-Informed Care Principle Meaning: Trustworthiness and Transparency

Make decisions transparently to ensure survivors feel included in the process.

How It Applies to the Supervisory Relationship:

Share transparently with staff about why and how decisions are made. Communicate regularly, openly, and honestly.

PRINCIPLES



Trauma-Informed Care Principle Meaning: Peer Support

Other individuals with lived experiences of trauma are valuable resources for support and hope.

How It Applies to the Supervisory Relationship:

Create opportunities for peer support and connection. Make time and space for staff members experiencing traumatic stress to support each other.

Trauma-Informed Care Principle Meaning: Collaboration and Mutuality

Level power differences between staff and clients AND among different staff members

How It Applies to the Supervisory Relationship:

Rather than tell supervisees what to do, collaborate with them to determine and meet goals. Recognize that there are power differences between supervisors and supervisee and work to level those power differences.

PRINCIPLES



Trauma-Informed Care Principle Meaning: Empowerment, Voice, and Choice

Acknowledge trauma survivors' strengths by ensuring they have a voice within the organization and treatment plan.

How It Applies to the Supervisory Relationship:

Listen to feedback from supervisees. Individuals' strengths and experiences are recognized and built upon. Encourage shared decision-making, choice, and goal setting to determine the plan of action. Facilitate rather than dictate.

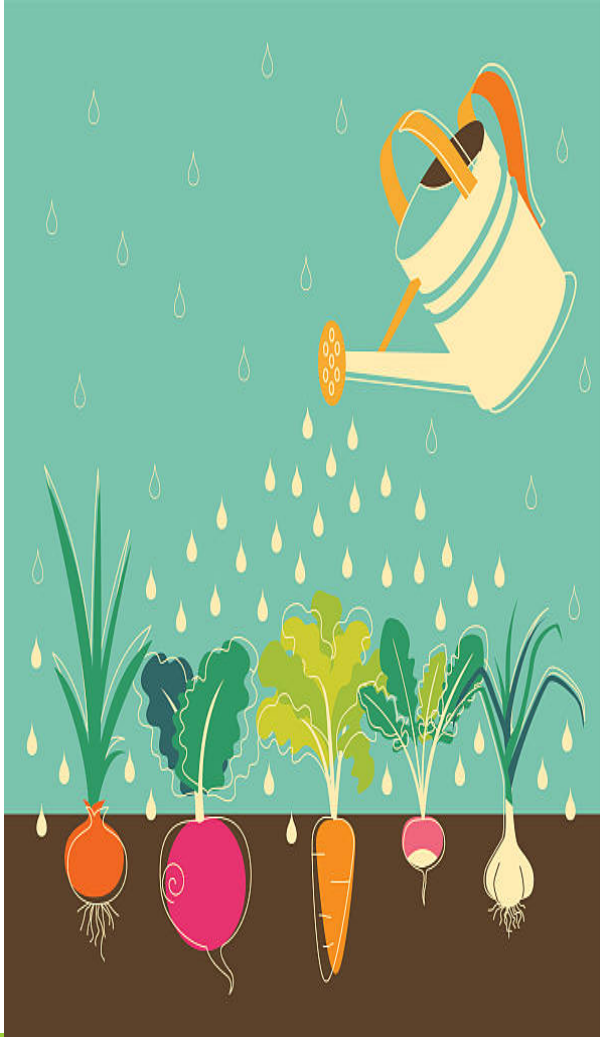
Trauma-Informed Care Principle Meaning: Cultural, Historic, and Gender Issues

Recognize and address biases. Ensure policies and practices respond to the unique cultural, racial, and ethnic needs of the community you serve.

How It Applies to the Supervisory Relationship:

Recognize how factors such as historical trauma, racial trauma, discrimination, and culture impact supervisees' experiences of their work. Recognize and actively move past stereotypes and biases.

FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION



ADMINISTRATIVE/ MANAGING STAFF

To ensure competent staff and accountable service delivery.

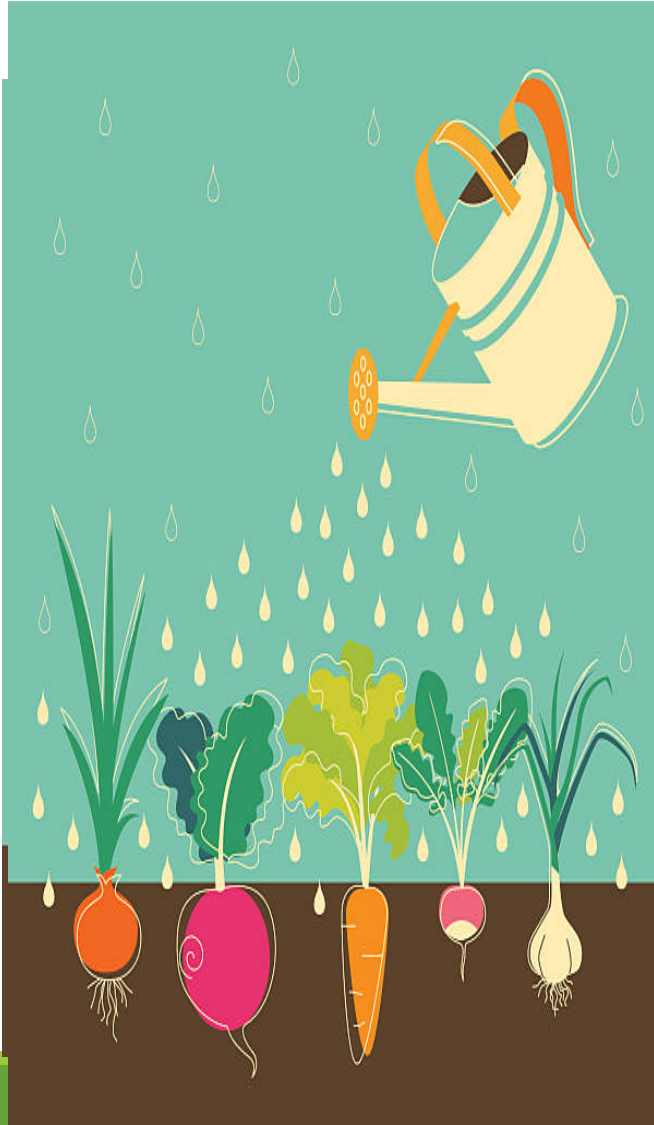
Requires the supervisor to provide supervisees with the structure and resources needed to do their jobs well.

There is a focus on productivity, time and attendance, workload, job performance, and quality of service.

There should be discussion of current cases and projects, as well as policies and procedures of the organization.

Administrative supervision may also connect to the organization's strategic plan or goals.

FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION



EDUCATING STAFF

To ensure staff are continually updating their knowledge and skills and applying them to their daily work.

Job specific knowledge as well as skills and abilities.

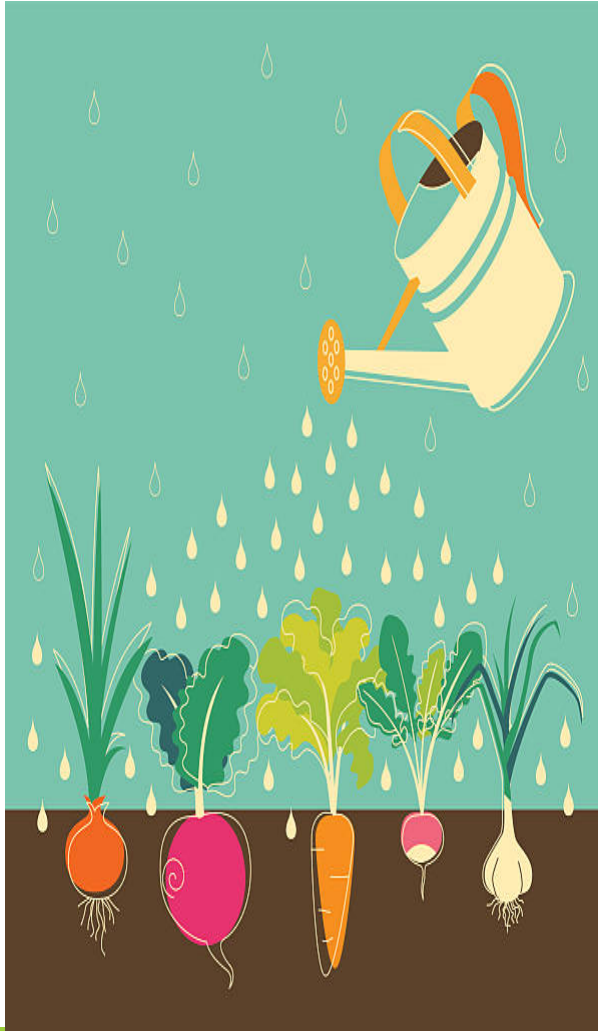
Organizational Policies, Procedures and Practices related to Best Practices and Standards of Care.

Helps staff to develop skills and knowledge, and grow as a professional.

Supervisors should provide staff with strategies and skills needed to do their job well, and provide opportunities for developing expertise in related areas that interest them.

Supervisors should use their own experience to give advice, guidance, and feedback that will help the advocate develop professionally.

FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION



SUPPORTING STAFF

To ensure the emotional and psychological wellbeing of staff

Offering support and resources to help staff manage the difficult work they face related to working with clients impacted by trauma.

Aims to reduce job-related stress and provide staff with resources for their emotional health.

It also aims to increase staff motivation, satisfaction, and commitment to their job.

Supervisors should recognize staff achievements, show their appreciation for the individual and validate their feelings.

What Trauma Informed Supervision is Not

Supervision is not therapy.

TIC requires an understanding of the vulnerabilities and experiences of trauma survivors, including the prevalence and physical, social, and emotional impact of trauma and how it may impact the workplace.

In many work settings we also need to be aware of how the nature of the work contributes to staff experiencing VT.

While it is important for supervisors to set boundaries around discussion of advocate's personal lives, it may be appropriate for staff to bring personal issues, challenges, or barriers into a discussion about how it affects their work.

Navigating the balance between the two is important.

Supervisors can refer the advocate to an outside counselor or to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if necessary.



What Trauma informed Supervision is Not



Supervision is not only case management.

Supervision will inherently focus on service recipients and projects.

However, there needs to be room for the staff to grow and learn professionally and holistically.

Supervisors should make sure there are opportunities for staff to enhance or learn skills and strategies to more effectively do their jobs.

What Trauma Informed Supervision is Not

Supervision is not only a performance evaluation.

Supervisors are typically responsible for evaluating job performance through a formal evaluation.

Evaluations should contribute to professional growth and development, though may also be connected to pay increases, promotions, and/or termination of employment.

This may impact how much a staff person shares with their supervisor because they are afraid it will have a negative effect on their evaluation.

Supervisors should encourage staff to share their challenges and mistakes; and should make it clear that they want the staff to learn by discussing missteps during supervision.

If possible, keep supervision and evaluation separate by using a 360-degree evaluation, where the staff is evaluated not just by their supervisor, but by peers, subordinates, and through a self evaluations.





Supervision Challenges

Supervisors are in unique positions in that they are expected to advocate for their supervisees while still representing management.

Most times, they wear multiple hats. They must make sure their supervisees are supported while still having to enforce organizational standards.

They hold positional authority, but still want staff to open up to them.



Supervision Challenges

A supervisor's main responsibility is to ensure quality care for service recipients.

Supervisors are responsible for the work getting done in a way that meets the standards, ethics, policies and procedures of the program.

Supervisors have the authority to discipline supervisees if they are not meeting performance expectations.

Balancing the roles of both enforcer and supporter can be a struggle. It is important to find and maintain a balance between these roles.

For newer supervisors, it may not be that long ago that they were working alongside colleagues they now supervise. Setting clear boundaries when a friend supervises another friend is essential in order to be effective.

Supervision Challenges

Organization is not aligned regarding efforts to become Trauma Informed.

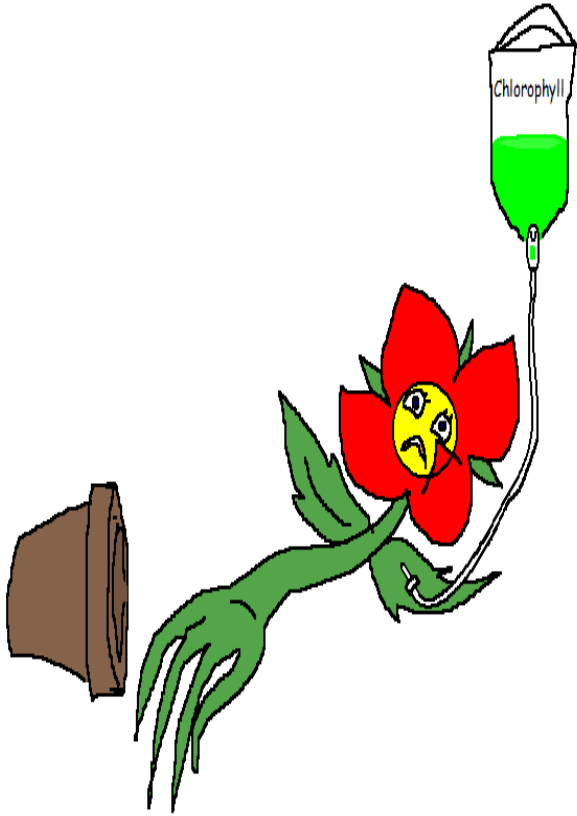
Supervision is not normalized and/or still carries a stigma.

Resources are stretched ... not enough staff ... not enough money ... not enough time.

Expectations and rules are changing in the post Covid work place.

Supervisors are not provided the support needed to consistently work within a TIC approach.

Supervisors are not provided the training needed to become skilled in all the different functions of being an effective supervisor.



Trauma-informed motivational interviewing

Is a tool for building an authentic connection by understanding their circumstances and way of thinking, and creating a non-judgmental space for critical thinking and problem-solving.



The fundamentals of motivational interviewing are:

- reflective listening
- objective feedback
- the individual is responsible for the decision to change
- rolling with resistance
- supporting self-efficacy and optimism for change

The unification of trauma-informed care and motivational interviewing principles create a climate of safety and trust, and effectively elicit and strengthen the motivation for change.

Reflective supervision

The supervisor and supervisee relationship is one designed for learning.

The process of examining, with someone else, the thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions evoked in the course of working closely with the programs service recipients.

A parallel process in which the supervisor interacts with the supervisee in a way that models for the supervisee what he or she should do with his or her service recipients.

Three Building Blocks: Reflection, Collaboration and Regularity



The Situational Leadership Model



Allows for maximum flexibility with employees across many fields.

Situational leaders adopt different leadership styles (Directive, Coaching, Supportive, Delegating) depending on the situation. There is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Leadership style is determined by the amount of direction and support that the supervisor gives to their supervisee.

Important considerations include the readiness level of the supervisee, their developmental level (new, intermediate, or advanced), how their experience relates to their position, and their abilities.

The ABC Model for Self Care

Awareness: Be Attuned to your own needs, limits, emotions and resources.

Balance: Maintain a healthy Balance among your activities- work, life, family, rest and leisure.

Connect: Maintain supportive relationships, and ensure opportunities to connect with co-workers, family members and friends.





FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION PROCESS

- Establish a regular schedule of meetings for supervision
- Create meeting agenda together and topics for discussion
- Document content and key decisions of meeting in a supervisory log
- Evaluation of how supervisory relationship is working, including feedback from supervisee



FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION ROUTINELY

- Check-in regarding general wellbeing of supervisee - take "vital signs"
- Development of meeting priorities
- Ongoing monitoring of job responsibilities/work plan:
- Update on progress of work activities
- Identification and resolution of concerns/obstacles
- Prioritization of tasks and activities
- Coordination of logistical issues: work schedule, meetings, time off, etc.



FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION

ROUTINELY

- Discussion of self-care issues - e.g. attention to workload, potential for burnout, self-care practices, staff interactions, healthy balance between work and personal life.
- Identification of opportunities to collaborate with other staff or outside resources.
- Follow-up regarding supervisee's professional/job-related education and development activities.
- Feedback about individual performance of supervisee.



FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION

Topics to be covered when necessary, at least annually:

- Develop long-term work plan
- Create plan for supervisee's continued development and education
- Review job description to assure its consistency with actual work and organizational needs
- Complete annual evaluation and related forms by supervisee's annual date



