

## APPLYING TRAUMA-INFORMED PRINCIPLES WHEN CONDUCTING PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

Conducting performance appraisals or evaluations can cause undue stress for both supervisors and employees. Using **trauma-informed principles** can alleviate some of that stress while fostering the professional relationship between supervisors and employees.

### AS A SUPERVISOR OR MANAGER...

#### STRIVE FOR A TRANSPARENT AND SAFE PROCESS

- Supervisors can communicate what the process will entail so employees know what to expect well in advance of the actual performance appraisal

#### EXPLAIN THE SCOPE OF THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AHEAD OF TIME

- Supervisors and employees have a shared understanding of what the possible outcomes of the review process are for the employee (e.g., potential for termination, change in compensation, etc.)
  - ✓ Termination need not be part of the appraisal process unless the employee has already demonstrated behaviors or a worldview that is inconsistent with the goals or values of the organization prior to the scheduled appraisal meeting
- Given that the most stress for employees may come from fearing the outcome of the appraisal process, *how* the supervisor communicates the scope is hugely important
- Appraisals can be a time to strengthen the partnership between supervisor and employee, rather than function as a way to “rate” or criticize the employee

#### MOVE AWAY FROM A LENS OF DIRECTING TO COLLABORATION BETWEEN SUPERVISOR & EMPLOYEE

- Center the relationship between supervisor and employee
- Understand that there is shared responsibility for the employee’s goals
- Consistent supervision meetings can facilitate building the relationship and supporting professional growth

#### COMMUNICATE NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR JOB PERFORMANCE

- However, supervisor can allow for flexibility in addressing individual employee goals

#### BE MINDFUL OF LANGUAGE USED TO DESCRIBE THE REVIEW PROCESS

- Appraisal could also be called team development or professional growth
- Use language that is affirming, validating, and recognizes strengths

#### QUESTIONS FOR THE SUPERVISOR TO ASK DURING THE APPRAISAL PROCESS:

- ✓ How can the supervisor help the employee grow?
- ✓ What strengths does the employee bring to the table?
- ✓ What can the supervisor do to help employee feel safe and supported?
- ✓ How can the supervisor get out of the way of the employee’s power while maintaining what the supervisor needs to maintain?

#### FURTHER READING...

[Trauma Informed Oregon Practices to Support Trauma Informed Care in Your Organization](#)  
[National Council on Behavioral Health Trauma Informed Primary Care HR Policy Templates](#)

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