

GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR VOLUNTEER WELFARE

These guidance notes may be used as a checklist to help you audit your Volunteer welfare practice, and help you to get the best out of the session, both as a supervisor and a supervisee.

TO BE A GOOD VOLUNTEER WELFARE OFFICER YOU NEED TO:

- Plan a joint agenda (*eg:* review previous supervision notes before meeting and make a note of issues you wish to raise);
- Clarify tasks and areas of work that the manager expects of the employee or volunteer;
- Encourage honest and open discussion of real issues;
- Hold regular sessions at agreed dates and times and be on time;
- Ensure the session is uninterrupted and is comfortable;
- Praise work done well;
- Listen, summarise and check out;
- Be constructive, and offer balanced feedback, focusing on the positives first;
- Support employees & volunteers, and build on existing skills and knowledge;
- Set clear targets with action, and write these down;
- Anticipate problems and issues before they get serious;
- Do what you say you will do;
- Be specific in any comments you make relating to supervisee's performance;
- Whatever the supervisee's present levels of capability/competence, convey confidence that he/she can reach new levels. Try to stretch him/her towards them;
- Write down actions on either side;
- Record any disagreements;
- Make your own experience, knowledge and skills available to help the supervisee;
- Set the supervisee's work in the context of legislative and agency requirements, signposting to relevant statute, regulations and agency policy/procedure as appropriate;
- Acknowledge conflict and tensions openly, *eg:* as between 'ideal-case' actions and resource or budget constraints;
- Acknowledge that you haven't got 'all the answers';
- Think who else can help with the issue;
- Give yourself time to seek further information or seek advice, if you're not sure;

- Help employees & volunteers to reflect on their practice, *eg*: what worked, didn't work, why, and lessons for the future.

TO BE A GOOD SUPERVISEE YOU NEED TO:

- Plan a joint agenda (eg: review previous supervision notes before meeting and make a note of issues you wish to raise);
- Openly discuss real issues;
- Attend regular sessions at agreed dates and times and be on time;
- Raise problems and issues before they get serious;
- Do what you say you will do;
- Keep up to date with related reading around legislative changes, policy and procedures;
- Keep up to date with related reading around research and theory related to service user's needs;
- Use supervision to reflect on your understanding and application of knowledge, theory and your skills, and how this has an impact on outcomes for the service user;
- Use supervision to reflect on how you promote the values of anti-oppressive practice, and meaningful user involvement and participation.

COMMON BARRIERS TO THE DELIVERY OF EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION CAN INCLUDE:

- 'Dumping' – saving up criticisms and discussing them all at once;
- Unplanned, rushed agenda, and unfocussed sessions;
- Inadequate preparation by supervisor or supervisee;
- Unclear or unrealistic goals for employees & volunteers;
- Telling rather than listening;
- Failure to offer constructive commentary on performance;
- Misuse of power, eg: bullying, harassment, victimisation;
- Allowing interruptions;
- Running out of time;
- Poor recording of supervision;
- Emotional issues unaddressed;
- Case management rather than a developmental focus