
The Directive Supervision Employee Handbook

Agency Name

Patricia Miles

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Introduction: This handbook was written for staff who are employees of agencies implementing the Directive Supervision System. The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint those employees who are being managed by Directive Supervisors with the concepts associated with the Directive Supervision system as well as acquainting those employees with the policies, procedures and practices that are in use with the system.

History of the Directive Supervision System: Directive Supervision was created to provide tools for Supervisors to use to actively coach staff to desired skills that tie to values and clarify expectations. In the early nineties, many agencies embarked on a change process to review their existing services, the local funding and political climate and, most importantly, the needs of people seeking help. As a result of this change process, many agencies began to pursue contracts and programs that were delivered in the community, built on relationships with the entire family and were flexibly delivered to directly meet needs. This change process moved many agencies from providing primarily facility based services to services in community settings. This has impacted employees in a variety of ways including:

1. Employees are being asked to perform their jobs in increasingly independent settings. Agencies have provided more services in locations where people are, rather than providing site based service. As employees have become more portable, Supervisors are not always readily accessible in the sites where the work is getting done. This flexibility in location can result in wide variances in how employees of practice which can, in turn, result in confusion for people who are served and their families.
2. Providers have hired a more diverse workforce in training, education and personal experience. As agencies continued to move towards a community based and consumer focus, different job roles have been built and recruited. Examples include direct care workers to provide direct support and supervision to children in their own homes and neighborhoods, parent partners to assure that the voice of the parent is heard and understood and resource developers designed to help people access supports and help in their own communities. When new roles were brought on it became clear that Managers and Supervisors needed to define unique tasks and duties for these roles. It is not helpful to simply overlay the expectations of traditional job roles on these “newer” positions. It was important that Supervisors have a system in place to help define responsibilities and tasks quickly so that people in new job roles get the guidance they deserve.
3. The increased focus on values based programming has resulted in a need to assure that the work done by employees really fits within those values. Mission and values statements are frequently published in brochures, but they really “live” with the

work done by staff with individual families. Agencies are often asked by families and funders to demonstrate how they are implementing actions that build on values statements. Because of this increased pressure, employees need supervisors to be direct and overt about how their work relates to the stated values base.

4. Finally, as agencies move towards a customer focused orientation, administrative employees are also impacted. Increased demand for accountability to the public and those who are served has resulted in increased emphasis on assuring that administrative departments such as Information Technology, Finance, Human Resources and other administrative departments identify their added value to the end user or customer. This focus on increased consumer focus results in increased input from the public and those being served. A demand for increased transparency from those departments that were once thought to be invisible to the public has resulted in the need for those departments to be more purposeful and mindful of their practices and how well they align with the customer focus.

Defining the Directive Supervision System

The Directive Supervision system is designed to be a total system process for supervisors and managers to provide staff with the detailed coaching they need to do their jobs well. The system utilizes three different skill areas that reflect six specifically focused skills. These three skill clusters include:

- *Linking Human Resource functions and the program values base:* Direct Supervisors connect values to the employee job description. Far too often, program values are not linked to staff roles or duties and it falls on individual supervisors or employees to make that connection. In the Directive Supervision system, the employee's job descriptions are directly tied to those stated values and supervisors are expected to tie duties and tasks to those values. This allows employees to become conversant in the application of stated values and makes those values more than mere words for families.
- *Using data in making supervisory decisions:* A major area of emphasis in the Directive Supervision model is using data to review and assist staff to improve their performance. In addition to soliciting feedback from employees and families, Directive Supervisors complete regular summaries of their perception on how the employee is doing. Directive Supervisors also look at programmatic measures including cost, outcome & satisfaction data. This ongoing data analysis allows the supervisor and employee to examine practices and help staff move towards competency.
- *Positively Stated Behaviorally Based Coaching Process:* Directive Supervisors are trained to provide very specific behavioral instructions to employees. Those instructions are designed to be strength based and be behaviorally specific. This behavioral approach helps take the guesswork out of expectations by insuring employees are clear about what their role and duties are in concrete terms.

How Does the Directive Supervision System Work?

Talent Reviews: Employees who are new to the Directive Supervision system will find that they are expected to use their job descriptions on a frequent basis. The first step in implementing the Directive Supervision system is utilize the employee job description as a means towards guiding employees towards competent performance. The Directive Supervisor will use this job description to gather information about the employee's performance by gathering perspectives from the following three sources:

- **Employee Self Confidence Rating:** Each employee will rate their confidence in their ability to perform each duty in their job description. This will occur at least three times during your probationary period. In our site, this will consist of an on-line application in which you receive a "Directive Supervision" email asking that you rate yourself. Simply follow the link and fairly rate how confident you are to do each of the actions listed. The actions identified are the duties in your job description.
- **Supervisor Competency Assessment:** Your Supervisor will rate your implementation of each of those job duties on a regular basis. Each time you self rate, your supervisor will also rate their perception of your ability to do the job. They will use the same on-line application and they will not be able to see your ratings until they have completed all of their ratings.
- **Third Party Feedback:** Supervisors will solicit feedback from end-users about their experience of the employee performance of their job duties. If the supervisor is responsible for administrative staff those end users may be internal as in the case of other employees who are responding to a supervisor from the HR department. If the supervisor directs employees who have contact with people or families being served, the supervisor will solicit feedback from those individuals. These are not satisfaction questions. For example, a family may be asked "Did this employee give you a chance to air your opinions in coming to a solution" rather than asking, "Are you satisfied that this employee listens to you?" The latter measures satisfaction while the first question addresses the issue of whether the person's experience of your practice fits with your supervisor's and your own sense of your performance. Please note that the supervisor will assign the number for rating based on conversation with the third party being surveyed. This takes pressure off of families but also allows your supervisor to make an assessment of how well you practice with your customers.

Talent Review Process: These three areas will be solicited, summarized and reviewed with you regularly. This is called the Talent Review Process. You and your supervisor will review the results from these three areas noting the areas where there is a common perspective and the areas that have variance. This will allow your supervisor to identify areas where you can use help, guidance and coaching as well as helping you figure out those areas to seek help. This should help staff become more confident your practice is consistent with your supervisor's expectations. Talent Reviews occur three times during your probationary period and will occur quarterly during the course of your employment.

Formal active coaching delivered in daily work settings: There are two coaching interactions used heavily in the Directive Supervision system. These are:

- **Proactive coaching:** This process consists of the supervisor identifying not only what they want done but how they want it done in specific behavioral terms including when to use the skill and with whom. These specific actions will be correlated to core values that have been prioritized by your supervisor and/or administration.
- **Intensive coaching:** Directive Supervisors are encouraged to provide direct, fair and active feedback to employees when mistakes are made. Intensive coaching interactions will follow a set of steps that identify what the behavior is that is causing concern or confusion as well as identifying specific behavioral alternatives. These steps will also be tied to the core values.

Both of these interactions will be documented by the Directive Supervisor in implementing the coaching tools during the initial months of implementation. This is to provide you and your supervisor with the opportunity to fully experience the coaching interaction. After the system has been implemented you will find that the Supervisor uses the proactive coaching form less as they become more confident that they are using that interaction while working with you.

Annual Appraisal: You have the right to receive an annual appraisal detailing your accomplishments as well as formally noting areas for improvement. Within our agency, the Annual Appraisal is tied to the Directive Supervision System. When your anniversary date or our annual review date occurs we will use the on-line system to complete your appraisal. This will consist of the supervisor running a report that details your regular Talent Review and averages the rating for the year. This means that instead of waiting until your anniversary date you will have an opportunity to dialogue about your performance for the year. The Annual Appraisal becomes more of a summary of a conversation that occurs throughout the year rather than reflecting an end of the year event. All comments documented by you and your supervisors in your regular Talent Reviews will be summarized on your appraisal.

What's Different about the Directive Supervision System from the point of view of the employee? The following table highlights some of the differences between the Directive Supervision System and other supervisory practices employees may have encountered.

Directive Supervision Differences to Employees	
Typical System	Directive Supervision System
Job description as a Human Resource function and used to hire employees	Job description is to be used by employee and supervisor on a frequent, regular basis to assure employees are practicing in a way that fits the job description
Annual Performance Reviews completed by the Supervisor	Ongoing employee review uses three perspectives including employee's sense of confidence, supervisor completing field based observations and surveying family members
Focus on task completion	Focus on skill and competency of employee through a variety of inputs and demonstrated abilities
Service consultation is often nested in a dialogue between staff & supervisor about how things are happening with the family.	Consultation is based on the employee's demonstration of skill or competency.

Questions & Answers for Employees in the Directive Supervision System

It sounds like my supervisor will be on my back all of the time. I'm a professional who is used to working independently. Why does the Supervisor need to be out in the field with me?

This system is about assuring that staff can demonstrate the skills based in a variety of circumstances. Supervisors are going into the field to make sure that employees are able to demonstrate the desired competency rather than to "simply check up on the worker." It is important to think about these field based observations as an opportunity for you to continue to refine your practice rather than simply as a monitoring exercise.

Asking families and other employees about how I'm doing sounds fine, but how do I know that the people who I work with will be able to answer?

We find when surveying consumers, families & other end users that they are not always able to answer the questions about whether staff demonstrated certain skills or followed certain actions. When that happens, it may be a signal that you need help communicating your actions to those end users. For example, a parent who has a developmental disability may struggle with the question of whether the employee behaved in a certain way. For that parent, it is also safe to assume that he/she will also struggle somewhat with the employee's action. This is probably a signal that you could use more assistance from your supervisor in communicating meaning to this parent.

What if a family or other employee is mad at me? Won't that affect my rating when the family is called?

It is important to remember that the end user survey part of the rating is not about satisfaction but instead about whether you did what was expected. Overall satisfaction ratings are solicited elsewhere in the agency. A family member or another employee could be very angry with you but the Directive Supervisor is asking instead whether you did certain things not soliciting a sense of the person's happiness with you.

It sounds like you're going to make me into some type of robot. What about relationships in my work with families and with my supervisor?

Directive Supervision is designed to assure that the employee has a wide range of tools needed to build good relationships with consumers, families and other end users. A relationship between a helper and consumer is more likely to be effective if the practitioner has a full complement of skills available to craft such a relationship. Competent and sensitive are not incompatible concepts in social services. This system is designed to make sure the employee can develop effective, helpful relationships with consumers, families and other end users in an intentional manner.

It sounds like it will take a lot of my time getting supervised. Where will the time come from?

A key principle in Directive Supervision involves implementing the system within current time allotments. Your supervisor will incorporate these tools into ongoing supervisory practices rather than creating new meetings or activities.

A Quick List of Directive Supervision Terms

Employee Confidence Rating	A formal monthly summary of the employee's impression of their capability to do the job, i.e. their confidence to implement the tasks on their job description. This will be done monthly during the employee's first six months in the Directive Supervision System.
Supervisor Rating	A formal monthly rating that captures the supervisor's sense of the employee's ability to implement the tasks in the employee job description. The supervisor rating is compared against the employee's confidence and summarizes the supervisor's sense of the employee's competence.
Third Party Summary	A formal summary that gathers impressions of those who are being served by the employee. Family questions will be asked by the supervisor across a sample of families. The purpose of the family summary is to identify precision of activities not the family's sense of satisfaction. This rating will be compared against the employee and the supervisor's rating.
Coaching	An active and purposeful interaction between the supervisor and employee. Coaching occurs either through proactive description of behavioral expectations that tie to values or through fair and concrete correction of employee behavior.
Monthly Talent Review	Monthly face to face interactions that occur between the supervisor and employee. The monthly Talent Review is designed to provide the employee with a concrete picture of how they see themselves, how the supervisor sees them and how the family experiences their ability to perform to expectations. The Talent Review occurs monthly during the first six month and also includes an agreement phase that allows the employee and supervisor to set goals for the next month's coaching activities.
Annual Appraisal	A summary process that reflects all of the regular Talent Reviews that have occurred throughout the appraisal period. What is different in this model is that your annual review will reflect a cumulative summary and rating of your ongoing conversation with your supervisor. Even with the best of intentions, many sites find that when doing an annual appraisal what gets rated is what gets remembered which is most often the past few weeks or months rather than the entire year.

Sample Third Party Questions

These questions reflect some of the questions that may be asked of your third party customers including families, other employees, secondary customers including partners from other agencies and, if you are a supervisor, employees you supervisor. **The questions listed below are just a sample provided as options through consultation with the Directive Supervision system.** All questions are not necessarily asked and the questions selected in your agency have been created, crafted and chosen based on what the agency's core values and sense of best known practice. You can talk with your supervisor to get more information about specific questions that will be matched for your position.

❖ For Families

- Does (staff) help you understand our program and staff roles?
- Does (staff) work with you and your family on developing common goals?
- Does (staff) use you and your family's expertise in solving problems around specific needs?
- Does (staff) provide a formal opportunity to celebrate and mark your accomplishments?
- Does (staff) listen to what you have to say?
- Does (staff) pay attention & demonstrate sensitivity to our family preferences?
- Does (staff) accommodate your schedule and adapt to our household life?
-

❖ For Employees about their Supervisors

- Does your supervisor let you know what is expected of you?
- Does your supervisor provide materials & information do your job well?
- Does your supervisor tie decision made and actions taken to core agency values?
- Does your supervisor implement policies and procedures consistently & fairly?
- Does your supervisor support you in your ability to perform your role?
- Does your supervisor fairly assess & summarize your strengths & areas for improvement?
- Does your supervisor identify how daily tasks relate to agency values?

❖ For "Others" which could be partners, other workers or secondary customers (funders, referrers etc.)

- Does this employee respond to your requests in a timely manner?
- Does this employee incorporate what our agency stands for in the work they do?
- Does this employee seek out feedback to improve process and outcome?
- Does this employee work towards solutions that are responsive to my concerns?
- Does this employee follow through on promises & commitments?
- Does the employee work with you to accomplish common goals?