



Great Lakes (HHS Region 5)

PTTC

Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Beyond Oversight:

Unleashing the Potential of Prevention Professionals Through Effective Supervision

March 2025

Disclaimer

Published in March 2025 by the Great Lakes Prevention Technology Transfer Center
1513 University Avenue, Suite 4127
Madison, WI 53705

This resource was prepared for the Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) Network under cooperative agreement #1H79SP084318-01 with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). All material appearing in this publication, except that taken directly from copyrighted sources, is in the public domain. Do not reproduce or distribute this publication for a fee without specific, written authorization from the Great Lakes PTTC and other contributors. For more information on the dissemination of this resource, email events@chess.wisc.edu.

The opinions expressed herein are the views of the speakers and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement by DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this resource is intended or should be inferred.

Table of Contents



Objectives.....	4
Understanding the IC&RC Prevention Specialist Job Domains	5
Why Supervision Matters in Prevention.....	6
Primary Goals of Supervision.....	6
Understanding the IC&RC Prevention Specialist Job Domains.....	7
Planning & Evaluation.....	8
Prevention Education & Service Delivery.....	8
Communication.....	9
Community Organization.....	9
Public Policy & Environmental Change.....	10
Community Organization.....	10
Fostering Professional Development.....	12
What is Professional Development?.....	13
What is the Supervisor Role?.....	13
Strategies for Mentoring & Coaching.....	14
Discovering Your Supervision Style.....	15
Supervision Style Quiz.....	16
Scoring the Quiz.....	18
Practical Exercise: Developing a Supervision Plan.....	18
Activity Overview.....	19
Tips for Success.....	19
Employee Case Study.....	20
Reflection.....	22
Promoting Ethical & Competent Practice	23
Promoting Professional.....	24
The 6 Principles.....	24
The Non-Discrimination Principle.....	25
Competence Principle.....	25
Integrity Principle.....	26
Nature of Services Principle.....	26
Confidentiality Principle.....	27
Ethical Obligation for Community & Society.....	27
Acting Ethically.....	28
The Ethical Decision-Making Process (SAMHSA).....	28
Reflection.....	29



Table of Contents

Implementing Effective Feedback Mechanisms.....30

The Power of Constructive Feedback.....31

Tips for Providing Constructive Feedback.....31

Leveraging Performance Metrics.....32

Techniques for Promoting.....33

Activity: Providing Effective Feedback.....34

Tips for Success.....35

Debrief & Reflection.....35

Creating Supportive Work Environments.....36

What are the Features of a Supportive Work Environment.....37

Fostering Open Communication.....37

Prioritizing Well-being.....38

Encouraging Growth & Development.....38

Recognizing & Appreciating Contributions.....39

What are the Features of a Supportive Work Environment.....39

Case Study: Implementing Supportive Feedback Sessions.....41

Tips for Success.....43

Reflection.....43

Closing & Review.....44

Bringing It All Together: The Role of Supervision in Prevention.....45

Reflection.....46

This workbook was designed to provide supervisors of substance misuse prevention professionals with tools and guidance on effective supervision.

Objectives



Understand the IC&RC Prevention Specialist Job Domains:

Gain a comprehensive understanding of the six IC&RC Prevention Specialist Job Domains and their relevance to effective supervision.



Enhance Supervisory Skills:

Develop and refine supervisory skills tailored to the unique needs of prevention specialists, including communication, feedback, and performance evaluation.



Foster Professional Development:

Learn strategies to support the ongoing professional development and growth of prevention specialists through mentoring, coaching, and continuous learning opportunities.



Promote Ethical and Competent Practice:

Understand the ethical considerations and standards that guide prevention specialists and how to ensure these are upheld in supervisory practices.



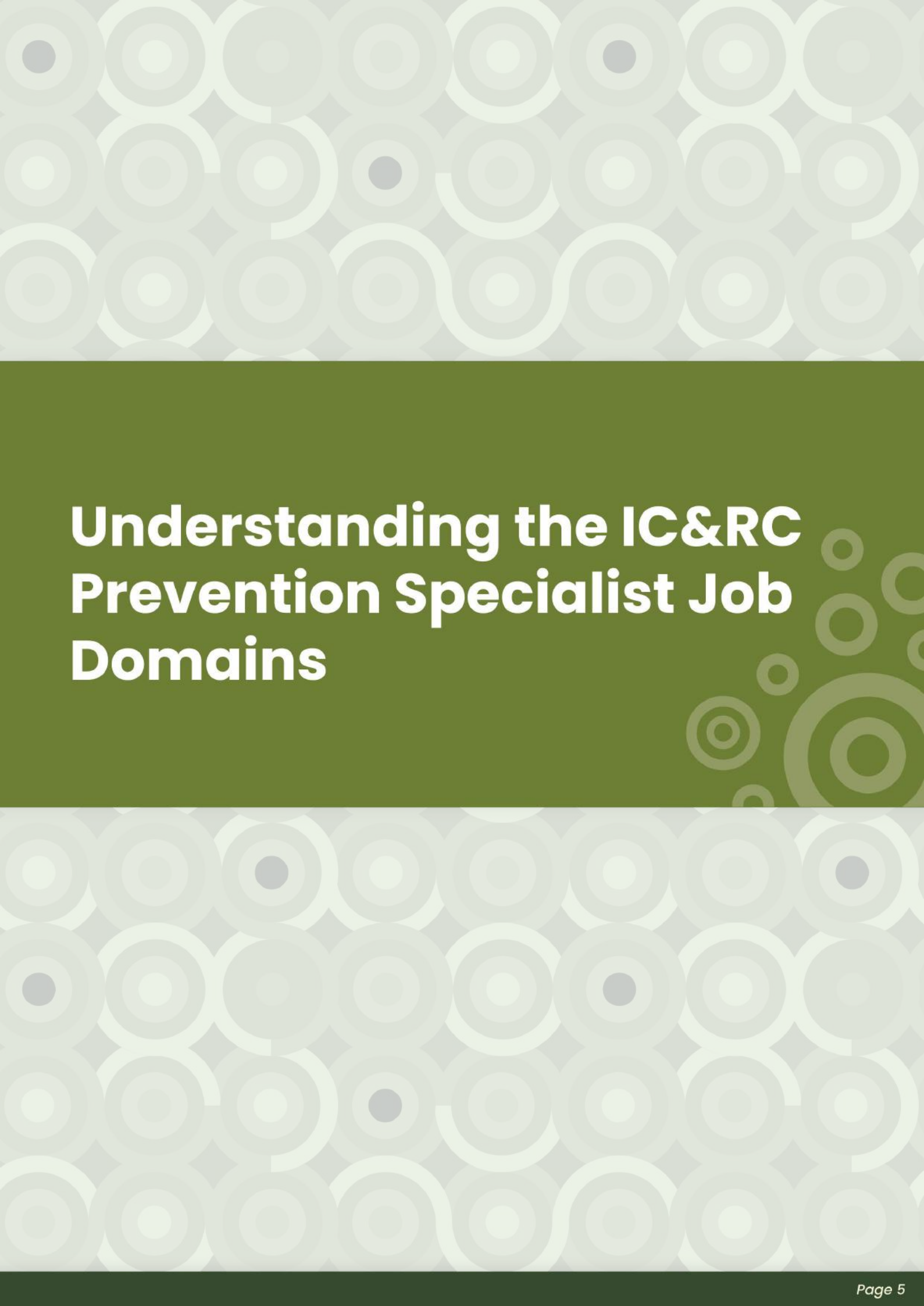
Implement Effective Feedback Mechanisms:

Master the art of providing constructive and actionable feedback that promotes improvement and professional excellence among prevention specialists.



Create a Supportive Work Environment:

Develop techniques for building a positive and empowering work environment that fosters collaboration, motivation, and high performance within prevention teams.



Understanding the IC&RC Prevention Specialist Job Domains

Why Supervision Matters in Prevention

Supervision is more than just overseeing work; it's about fostering professional growth, ensuring that prevention specialists adhere to standards, and supporting ethical practice.



Effective supervision is foundational to the growth and sustainability of the prevention workforce. When done well, supervision fosters **motivation** by affirming strengths and helping professionals see their impact. It provides **training** through intentional skill-building, modeling, and coaching. It lays the groundwork for **success** by offering clear expectations, ongoing feedback, and opportunities for reflection. Most importantly, it offers **support**—emotional, professional, and structural—to help prevention professionals thrive in challenging and evolving environments.

Supervisors are not just managers; they are **key partners in professional development**. They help shape how preventionists show up in the field, navigate complex systems, and make ethical decisions that impact communities. The roles of coach, mentor, advocate, and evaluator all converge in the supervisory space, where professionals are both guided and empowered.

To help supervisors anchor their approach in recognized standards, the next section introduces the **IC&RC Prevention Specialist Job Domains**. These domains outline the core competencies required for credentialing and effective practice. Understanding these areas allows supervisors to structure their guidance, identify growth opportunities, and ensure alignment with the broader field of prevention.



Planning & Evaluation

This domain involves the ability to use data to assess needs, plan effective prevention strategies, and evaluate outcomes. It is the backbone of effective prevention practice, ensuring that work is grounded in evidence and aligned with community needs.

Prevention specialists are expected to think critically about what works, for whom, and in what contexts. They must be able to conduct needs assessments, set measurable objectives, select appropriate interventions, and continuously monitor and refine their work. Supervisors can support this domain by encouraging reflective practice, guiding staff through logic models, and offering feedback on planning documents and data interpretation.

Key Competencies:

- Conduct a community-level needs assessment
- Determine priorities based on comprehensive community needs
- Conduct information gathering and data review/interpretation
- Use prevention theory
- Develop comprehensive prevention plan
- Identify prevention program evaluation strategies
- Conduct evaluation activities, and identify opportunities to improve outcomes
- Use strategies to enhance sustainability of prevention program outcomes



Prevention Education & Service Delivery

Prevention education and service delivery involve engaging individuals and groups in learning experiences that build knowledge, change attitudes, and influence behaviors around substance misuse. This domain centers on the ability to design, tailor, and deliver relevant content that resonates with diverse audiences.

Prevention professionals must be skilled facilitators—capable of adjusting to different learning styles, cultural contexts, and community norms. Supervisors play a key role in helping staff build confidence in public speaking, improve content delivery, and ensure sessions are inclusive and impactful.

Key Competencies:

- Coordinate prevention activities
- Implement prevention education and skills development activities
- Use strategies for maintaining program fidelity



Communication

Communication in prevention work is not just about delivering information—it's about **building trust, fostering collaboration, and ensuring clarity** across diverse audiences. This includes public speaking, interpersonal interactions, persuasive writing, and digital communication.

Strong communication skills help prevention professionals represent the field with credibility and authenticity. Supervisors can support growth in this domain by modeling clear communication, providing feedback on written and verbal work, and coaching professionals on active listening and message tailoring.

Key Competencies:

- Demonstrate method for promoting the science of prevention
- Use marketing techniques for prevention programs
- Apply principles of effective listening
- Apply principles of public speaking
- Employ effective facilitation skills
- Demonstrate interpersonal communication competency



Community Organization

This domain involves **mobilizing and empowering communities** to take action on shared goals related to substance misuse prevention. It includes coalition building, stakeholder engagement, and fostering collective ownership of strategies and outcomes.

Supervisors can strengthen this competency by helping professionals navigate local dynamics, connect with key players, and understand the role of power and influence in community systems. They can also coach supervisees on facilitation techniques and managing group processes effectively.

Key Competencies:

- Identify community demographics and norms
- Use strategies to recruit and engage diverse groups
- Use strategies to build community ownership and provide technical assistance
- Use negotiation and collaboration strategies to build and sustain alliances with other providers
- Integrate prevention strategies into physical and behavioral health planning and activities



Public Policy & Environmental Change

Prevention professionals must understand how policy and environmental factors shape health behaviors. This domain focuses on advocating for structural changes—such as laws, regulations, and systems—that support healthy choices and limit risk.

Supervisors can guide staff in identifying policy levers, crafting compelling advocacy messages, and forming partnerships with public officials or local leaders. They also help preventionists stay grounded in ethics and community voice when working in the policy space.

Key Competencies:

- Use strategies and resources to promote environmental change
- Demonstrate advocacy skills in public health promotion and prevention



Professional Growth and Responsibility

This domain emphasizes the ongoing development of professional identity, ethical practice, and accountability in the field. Prevention specialists are expected to commit to lifelong learning, uphold high standards, and model integrity.

Supervisors are critical in setting expectations, modeling ethical behavior, and creating a safe space for reflection and growth. They should encourage participation in professional development opportunities and reinforce the importance of cultural humility and self-awareness.

Key Competencies:

- Demonstrate adherence to legal, professional, and ethical principles
- Incorporate cultural responsiveness and health equity into prevention processes
- Demonstrate healthy behaviors and self-care
- Recognize importance of participation in professional associations
- Demonstrate knowledge of the science of substance use/misuse
- Demonstrate knowledge of mental, emotional, behavioral health issues
- Prepare and maintain reports, records, and documents

What are your thoughts on the 6 domains? What areas are you confident about? Do you have an area you would like to focus on more?



Planning &
Evaluation



Community
Organization



Prevention
Education & Service
Delivery



Public Policy &
Environmental Change



Communication



Professional Growth
& Responsibility

To maximize the effectiveness of supervision, we recommend that supervisors encourage their supervisees to reflect on three key questions for each domain:

- 1 What am I doing well?**
- 2 Where are my opportunities to learn and grow?**
- 3 What is the latest research in this domain that can enhance my practice?**

By incorporating these reflective prompts into supervision discussions, supervisors can foster continuous learning and professional development, ensuring that prevention specialists are well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of the field.



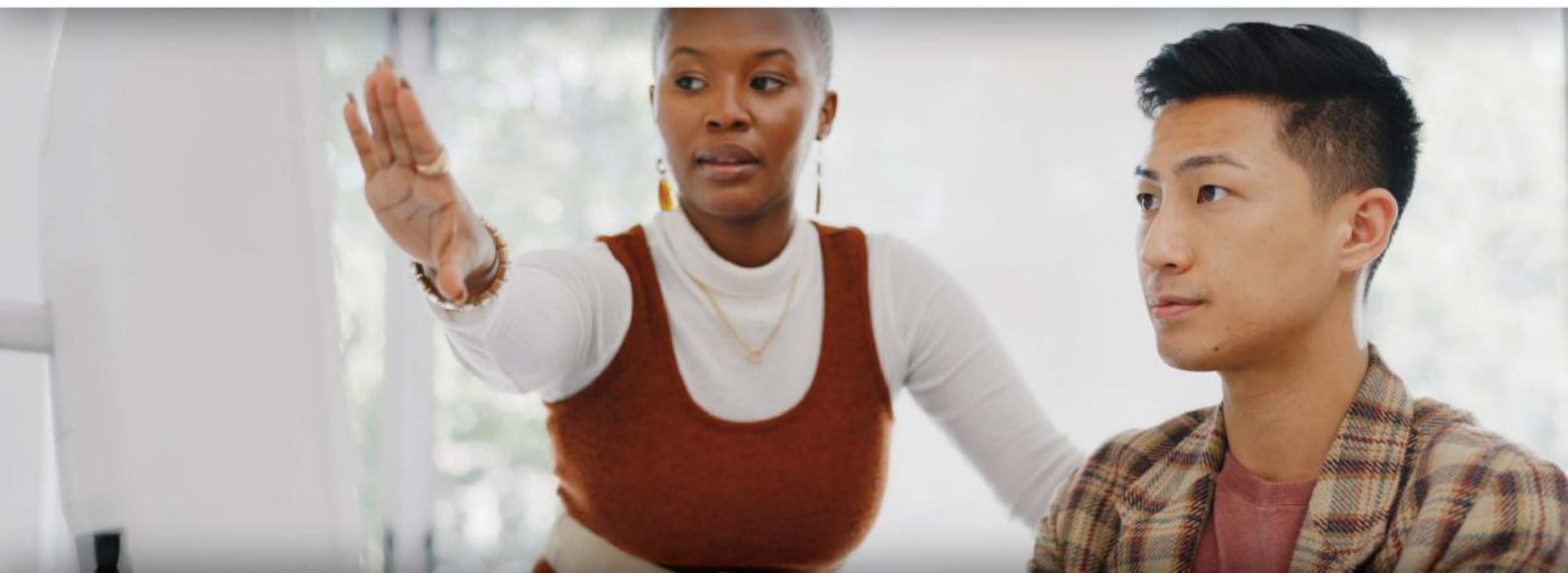
Fostering Professional Development



What is Professional Development?

Professional development is an ongoing process of learning and improvement. It's about gaining new skills, knowledge, and competencies that help us perform better in our roles. In the context of prevention work, professional development is crucial because it ensures that we are using the most effective and up-to-date methods to serve our communities.

We need to think of professional development as a journey rather than a destination. It's about continuous growth and adapting to new challenges and opportunities.



What is the Supervisor Role?

As supervisors, we play a pivotal role in fostering the professional development of our team members. This goes beyond just managing tasks; it involves being a mentor, coach, and supporter.

Supervisors should create an environment that encourages learning and growth. This means being approachable, offering constructive feedback, and providing opportunities for staff to enhance their skills.

It's also important to tailor our approach to the individual needs of the people we supervise. Some might need more guidance, while others thrive with a bit more independence.

Remember, effective supervision isn't about micromanaging. It's about empowering people to take initiative and responsibility for their own development.

Strategies for Mentoring & Coaching

Let's talk about some practical strategies for mentoring and coaching:



First, build trust and maintain open communication. Those you supervise should feel safe to share their challenges and aspirations with you.



Set clear and achievable goals. Working towards these goals gives people a sense of purpose and direction.



Encourage self-reflection. Ask questions that help people think critically about their experiences and how they can improve.



Provide regular and constructive feedback. This doesn't just mean pointing out what needs to be improved, but also recognizing and celebrating successes.



Use real-world scenarios and role-playing to develop skills. This hands-on approach can be very effective in helping people apply what they've learned.

Discovering Your Supervision Style



Each supervisor has a unique style that reflects their personality, values, and experiences. Understanding your style can help you be more effective in your role, and can also help you see areas where you might need to adjust your approach to meet the needs of your team better.

This quiz on the next page is designed to help you discover your supervision style. This isn't about labeling you, but rather giving insights into how you naturally operate as a supervisor.

Supervision Style Quiz

Question 1

When someone makes a mistake, how do you respond?

A

Focus mainly on what needs to be improved, being clear and direct.

B

Balance between positives and areas of improvement, using a constructive approach.

C

Emphasize what was done well and suggest improvements as recommendations.

Question 2

How do you manage someone who is underperforming?

A

Outline clear performance expectations and monitor their progress closely.

B

Work with the person to develop an improvement plan, offering regular coaching sessions.

C

Have an open conversation about their challenges and encourage them to find solutions.

Question 3

How do you handle decision-making?

A

Make decisions yourself and communicate them clearly.

B

Involve others in the decision-making process, valuing their input.

C

Delegate decision-making to others, trusting their judgment.

Supervision Style Quiz

Question 4

How do you encourage professional development?

A

Assign specific training programs and courses for others to complete.

B

Discuss career goals with individuals and help them find relevant development opportunities.

C

Encourage people to take initiative in their own professional development.

Question 5

During meetings, what is your role?

A

Lead the discussion and ensure the agenda is followed strictly.

B

Facilitate the meeting, encouraging participation from everyone.

C

Emphasize what was done well and suggest improvements as recommendations.

Question 6

How do you celebrate successes?

A

Acknowledge the success and move on to the next task.

B

Celebrate with a meeting or acknowledgment in a way that recognizes everyone's contributions.

C

Encourage people to celebrate among themselves, giving them autonomy.

Scoring the Quiz

Now that you've completed the leadership style self-assessment, take a moment to review your responses. The summary below is designed to help you **interpret your results based on the answer you selected most frequently** (mostly A's, B's, or C's). Each letter corresponds to a different supervisory style, with a brief explanation of the key characteristics and values associated with that style.

These descriptions are not meant to label or limit you, but rather to offer insight into your current preferences and tendencies as a supervisor. Use this as a

Mostly A's:

Directive Style

You tend to take a hands-on approach, providing clear instructions and closely monitoring progress. This style is effective for ensuring tasks are completed correctly and for managing less experienced individuals who need more guidance.

Mostly B's:

Collaborative Style

You prefer to work alongside others, involving them in decision-making and goal-setting processes. This style fosters a supportive environment and encourages engagement, making it effective for developing strong cohesion and ownership of projects.

Mostly C's:

Laissez-faire Style

You trust others to manage their own work and make decisions, stepping in only when necessary. This style can be effective with highly skilled and independent individuals, promoting innovation and autonomy. However, it may require adjustments when closer supervision is needed.

Reflection

As you read through the style that matches your most frequent response:

Would you say that this reflects your actual supervision style in practice?

Does the definition align with how you currently approach supervision, or are there aspects that feel aspirational—or perhaps misaligned? Is it accurate? Is your supervision style meeting the needs of your team?



Promoting Ethical & Competent Practice

Promoting Professional Development & Creating Supportive Work Environments

Supervision in the field of prevention is more than just oversight; it is a critical function that ensures prevention professionals uphold the highest standards of ethical practice. Ethics provide a framework for decision-making, guiding professionals in maintaining integrity, delivering competent services, and safeguarding the well-being of the communities they serve.

Supervisors play a vital role in reinforcing ethical standards by ensuring that the professionals they oversee not only understand but also embody the principles of prevention ethics in their daily work.

For prevention specialists, ethical dilemmas can arise in situations where policies, cultural expectations, and personal values intersect. While some decisions are straightforward, others require careful consideration and consultation. A well-informed supervisor can provide critical guidance in navigating these dilemmas, fostering ethical decision-making, and ensuring that services remain equitable, professional, and effective.

By integrating ethical principles into supervision, leaders in prevention can:

- **Support sound decision-making** in complex situations
- **Promote accountability** in professional practice
- **Enhance service delivery** to diverse communities
- **Model ethical leadership** to the professionals they mentor

In the following section, we will explore the six principles of prevention ethics and how they should inform both individual practice and supervisory responsibilities.

The 6 Principles



Non-Discrimination



Nature of Services



Competence



Confidentiality



Integrity



Ethical Obligations for
Community & Society



The Non-Discrimination Principle

Prevention professionals must respect and advocate for the rights of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ability, age, or socioeconomic status. This principle requires practicing cultural humility.

Key Competencies:

- Create prevention strategies that reflect population of focus.
- Ensure access to services and resources.
- Promote safe spaces where community voices are heard.
- Monitor for language, policies, or practices that may unintentionally cause harm.



Competence Principle

Competence involves maintaining high standards of knowledge and skill, and committing to ongoing learning. Prevention professionals should only provide services within their area of training and expertise.

Key Competencies:

- Pursue relevant training, certification, and continuing education.
- Stay informed about emerging research and best practices in prevention.
- Know when to refer to others with specialized expertise.
- Encourage supervisees to reflect on their growth areas and training needs.
- Model professional boundaries and ethical limitations in service delivery.



Integrity Principle

Integrity requires honesty, transparency, and fairness in all professional interactions. Prevention professionals must avoid conflicts of interest, honor commitments, and represent their work truthfully.

Key Competencies:

- Communicate clearly about program goals and outcomes.
- Disclose potential conflicts of interest appropriately.
- Uphold confidentiality and informed consent.
- Follow through on responsibilities and timelines.



Nature of Services Principle

Prevention services should be evidence-informed, culturally relevant, and tailored to the needs of the populations they serve. This principle emphasizes quality and intentionality in program design and delivery.

Key Competencies:

- Use data to inform program planning and decisions.
- Select evidence-based or evidence-informed strategies.
- Adapt services with cultural relevance and humility.
- Monitor service outcomes to ensure they align with community needs.
- Guide supervisees in designing impactful, ethical interventions.



Confidentiality Principle

Confidentiality is the duty to protect sensitive information shared during prevention activities or supervision. Professionals must balance transparency with discretion, respecting privacy at all times.

Key Competencies:

- Clearly explain confidentiality limits and expectations.
- Secure and protect all records and sensitive data.
- Avoid disclosing identifiable information without consent.
- Reinforce the importance of confidentiality with supervisees.
- Know applicable legal and ethical guidelines regarding information sharing.



Ethical Obligation for Community & Society

Prevention professionals have a responsibility to promote the well-being of the entire community, not just individual participants. This includes advocating for just policies, reducing health inequities, and addressing root causes of substance misuse.

Key Competencies:

- Identify and challenge structural and social determinants of health.
- Advocate for prevention policies that advance equity and inclusion.
- Engage in community-level strategies that promote collective well-being.
- Support community empowerment and voice in decision-making.
- Encourage supervisees to view prevention as both service and advocacy.

The Ethical Decision-Making Process

Supervision in prevention often involves navigating complex situations that don't have clear-cut answers. Prevention professionals are regularly faced with decisions that require balancing ethical principles, professional responsibilities, and community needs. An **ethical decision-making model** provides a structured approach to help guide thoughtful, transparent, and values-based choices in those moments.

Rather than reacting impulsively or relying solely on intuition, this model invites professionals to pause, reflect, and systematically work through each element of the decision. It encourages the use of **critical thinking, consultation, documentation, and accountability**, all of which are foundational to ethical practice.

Supervisors can use this model both to guide their own decisions and to support their supervisees in ethical reflection. Over time, this process builds confidence, consistency, and a culture of integrity across your team or organization.

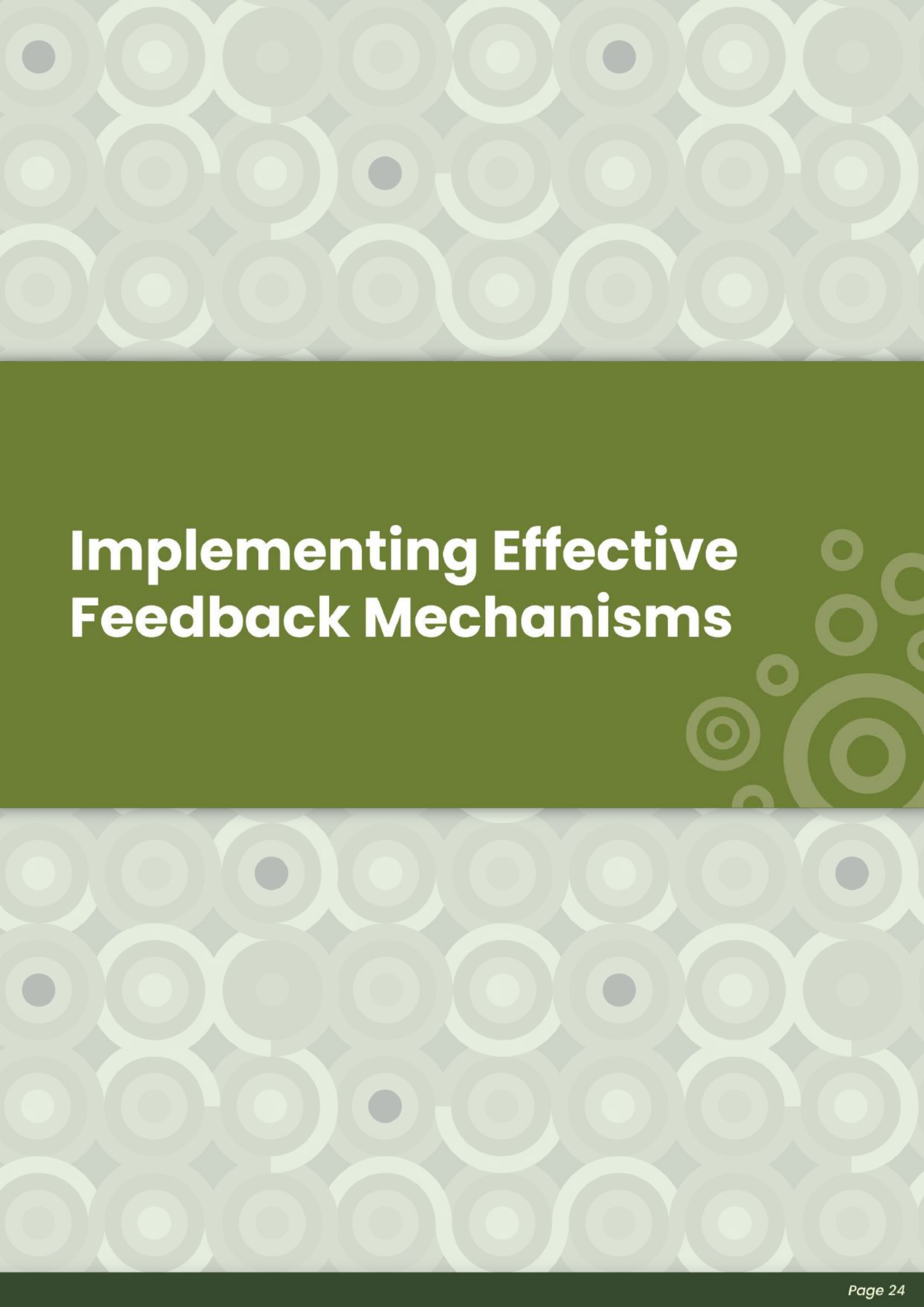
A careful decision-making process can help us:

- Respond ethically to challenging situations.
- Feel comfortable with the decisions that we make.
- Justify our decisions to others, as needed.

The Ethical Decision-Making Process

The process includes:





Implementing Effective Feedback Mechanisms

The Power of Constructive Feedback

So, what are the benefits of giving constructive feedback?

First, it increases self-awareness—people understand how their actions impact others and the overall team. It also fosters skill development, allowing individuals to improve specific areas of their work.

Moreover, constructive feedback can be highly motivating. When people see that their growth is noticed and valued, they're more likely to stay engaged and motivated. Lastly, it aligns everyone with the organization's goals, ensuring that we're all moving in the same direction.

Constructive feedback is one of the most powerful tools a supervisor has for supporting professional growth. When delivered with clarity and care, it can build confidence, reinforce strengths, and help prevention professionals continuously improve their practice. Effective feedback is specific, timely, and rooted in mutual respect—it's not just about correction, but about cultivating potential. As a supervisor, your ability to give meaningful feedback sets the tone for learning, trust, and accountability across your team.

Tips for Providing Constructive Feedback

- First, **be timely**—don't wait weeks to provide feedback. The closer it is to the event, the more relevant it is.
- Second, **be specific**—focus on particular behaviors or outcomes, not generalities.
- Third, **balance your feedback**. Start with something positive, then move to areas of improvement, and end on a positive note. This 'sandwich' method helps to soften the impact of critical feedback.
- Finally, **be objective**. Base your feedback on observable facts, not personal opinions. Remember, our goal is to help people grow, not to make them feel defensive.

Leveraging Performance Metrics

Supervision is not just about guiding professionals in their work — it's also about using data to support growth, accountability, and continuous improvement. Performance metrics provide a structured way to assess progress, identify areas for development, and celebrate successes. By grounding feedback in measurable data, supervisors can make informed decisions, set clear expectations, and ensure that their team's efforts align with organizational goals.

Metrics help transform feedback from being subjective to objective, making performance discussions more constructive and goal-oriented. When used effectively, performance metrics create a culture of continuous learning, where professionals feel supported in their development and motivated to excel.

Metrics don't have to be complicated or impersonal. When used thoughtfully, they provide supervisors with the language and structure to offer targeted feedback, celebrate growth, and identify opportunities for development.

Here are a few strategies to make metrics meaningful:

- **Use consistent criteria** – Create shared rubrics or expectations to ensure everyone understands what success looks like.
- **Track progress over time** – Use notes, observations, or self-assessments to monitor improvement and recurring challenges.
- **Align metrics with goals** – Tie performance indicators directly to role expectations, project milestones, or learning objectives.
- **Incorporate self-reflection** – Invite team members to assess their own progress using the same metrics you're tracking.
- **Discuss data together** – Use supervision meetings to explore what the numbers or observations mean—and what to do next.



Creating Supportive Work Environments

Features of a Supportive Work Environment

A supportive work environment is essential to the success and sustainability of any prevention team. When supervisors are intentional about shaping workplace culture, they create spaces where staff can grow, feel valued, and remain resilient in the face of challenging work. The following four features reflect key practices that foster such an environment. Each one represents a powerful lever that supervisors can activate to promote trust, accountability, and professional excellence:



Foster Open Communication



Promote Professional Growth



Prioritize Well-Being



Provide Recognition and Appreciation

Fostering Open Communication

Open communication is the foundation of a supportive and effective supervisory relationship. It creates an environment where prevention professionals feel heard, valued, and empowered to share their experiences, challenges, and ideas. When supervisors encourage honest dialogue, they cultivate trust, strengthen professional relationships, and enhance team collaboration.

- Encourage honest and transparent dialogue in supervision sessions.
- Ask open-ended questions that invite reflection and insight.
- Listen actively and without interruption to understand fully.
- Create a safe environment where concerns and challenges can be shared.
- Validate supervisees' perspectives while maintaining professional boundaries.
- Clarify expectations and follow through on communication agreements.

The key is to listen actively and respond constructively. Let's approach feedback with curiosity and a genuine desire to improve.

Prioritizing Well-Being



Prevention work can be emotionally demanding, and without proactive support, staff may struggle with burnout or compassion fatigue. Prioritizing well-being is not a luxury—it's a leadership responsibility that helps sustain both people and performance.

- Encourage team members to set healthy boundaries and take breaks.
- Acknowledge the emotional demands of prevention work.
- Offer flexible scheduling when possible to support work-life balance.
- Promote access to mental health resources and employee support tools.
- Normalize conversations about wellness and burnout prevention.

Promote Professional Growth

People want to know that they are growing in their careers. One of the best ways to create a supportive environment is to provide opportunities for professional development. This could be through training programs, mentorship, or providing access to conferences and seminars. Encourage people to set career goals and support them in achieving those goals. Offer constructive feedback, not just to correct but to coach and guide. Remember, when people see that their development is a priority, they feel more invested in their work and motivated to succeed

- Provide access to ongoing training and certification opportunities.
- Support attendance at conferences, webinars, and workshops.
- Encourage staff to set individual professional development goals.
- Offer mentorship and opportunities for leadership experience.
- Recognize and nurture emerging talents and strengths.

Recognizing & Appreciating

Recognition is a powerful motivator. It doesn't always have to be a big award or a formal ceremony. Sometimes, a simple thank you or a note of appreciation can make all the difference. Recognize the efforts and achievements of the people you supervise regularly.

Celebrate successes, both big and small. This can be done through team meetings, newsletters, or even a quick shout-out in an email. The goal is to create a culture of appreciation where people feel seen and valued for their contributions.

- Celebrate team accomplishments during supervision or team meetings.
- Offer specific praise for strengths and successes.
- Recognize behind-the-scenes efforts that contribute to outcomes.
- Incorporate staff appreciation into organizational culture.
- Encourage peer-to-peer recognition and gratitude practices.

Case Study: Implementing Supportive Feedback Sessions

Overview

A supportive work environment relies on open communication, a focus on well-being, opportunities for growth, and regular recognition of contributions. As supervisors, it is our responsibility to create a space where team members feel valued, supported, and empowered to do their best work. This case study is designed to provide hands-on experience in guiding professional development through structured supervision.

Case Study: Implementing Supportive Feedback Sessions

As a supervisor, you may encounter situations where a staff member's approach or communication style requires redirection. In this scenario, a prevention professional has been using outdated, stigmatizing language during presentations, and their facilitation skills are not effectively engaging the audience. This situation provides an opportunity to offer constructive feedback, reinforce professional standards, and support skill development in a respectful and growth-oriented manner.



Position: Prevention Specialist

Experience: The staff member has been with the organization for 2 years. They are passionate about their work but have recently been facing challenges.

Observations

- The prevention professional uses language that may be considered outdated or stigmatizing.
- The staff member's facilitation style is not effectively engaging the audience.
- The content may not reflect current best practices in culturally competent prevention messaging.

Objective

- Address the use of stigmatizing language in a way that encourages learning and growth.
- Offer constructive feedback on presentation and facilitation skills.
- Support the prevention professional in aligning their communication style with current standards in the field.
- Reinforce the importance of inclusive, person-first, and strengths-based language.

Case Study: Implementing Supportive Feedback Sessions

Step 1: Preparation

- **Review Specific Instances:** Identify specific examples where stigmatizing language was used, preparing to illustrate your points clearly.
- **Gather Resources:** Collect examples of up-to-date, respectful language that should be used instead.

Step 2: Opening the Conversation

- **Acknowledge Strengths:** Begin by recognizing the prevention professionals's strengths and contributions to the team.
- **Set a Positive Tone: Use a non-confrontational approach to express a shared goal.** Example:
 - "I appreciate your commitment to our cause, and I want to ensure we're always using the most respectful and effective language in our work. Let's talk about some areas where we can improve together."

Step 3: Providing Feedback

- **Use Specific Examples:** Refer to exact terms or phrases that may be perceived as stigmatizing. Example:
 - "In your last presentation, I noticed a few terms like [specific terms] that could be interpreted as stigmatizing. It's important to be mindful of how our language impacts others."
- **Explain the Impact:** Highlight the importance of inclusive and respectful language in building trust with the communities served.

Case Study: Implementing Supportive Feedback Sessions

Step 4:

Exploring Challenges & Solutions

- **Encourage Open Dialogue:** Ask the staff member if they faced any challenges or felt unsure about certain terms. Listen actively to their responses.
- **Collaborate on Solutions:** Work together to find solutions, such as:
 - **Training Sessions:** Suggest attending workshops or training sessions on inclusive language.
 - **Mentorship:** Offer mentorship or peer support for ongoing learning.
 - **Resources:** Share reference materials or guides on up-to-date terminology.

Step 5:

Developing Presentation Skills

- **Provide Skill-Building Opportunities:** Recommend specific training or mentorship opportunities to enhance presentation skills.
- **Offer Constructive Feedback:** Offer to review practice presentations and provide constructive feedback.
- **Explore Effective Techniques:** Discuss presentation techniques, including:
 - Storytelling to connect with the audience.
 - Engaging visuals to enhance understanding.
 - Interactive elements to promote participation.

Step 6:

Setting Goals & Follow-Up

- **Set Clear, Achievable Goals:** Collaborate with the prevention professional to establish goals for improving language use and presentation skills.
- **Schedule Follow-Ups:** Plan regular follow-up meetings to:
 - Review progress and provide ongoing feedback.
 - Celebrate improvements and milestones achieved.

Tips for Success

- **Maintain a Positive Tone:** Create a supportive and non-confrontational environment.
- **Be Specific and Constructive:** Use clear examples and constructive feedback to guide improvement.
- **Collaborate and Listen:** Engage the staff member in problem-solving and actively listen to their perspectives.
- **Follow Through:** Regular follow-ups help maintain momentum and provide continued support.

Reflection

Share your thoughts on providing supervision to Jordan. Can you foresee any challenges? Are there additional resources you would need to have an effective conversation?



Closing & Review

Bringing It All Together: The Role of Supervision in Prevention

Effective supervision is not just about oversight—it is about fostering growth, ensuring ethical practice, and creating an environment where prevention professionals can thrive.

Throughout this workbook, we have explored key components of supervision, from ethical leadership to performance metrics, constructive feedback, and open communication. Each of these elements plays a vital role in shaping a workforce that is competent, supported, and prepared to uphold the highest standards in prevention.

As a supervisor, your role extends beyond administrative tasks; you are a mentor, a guide, and a champion for professional development. By integrating the principles and strategies covered in this workbook, you can cultivate a culture of learning, accountability, and ethical integrity. The way you lead directly impacts the confidence, effectiveness, and success of the prevention professionals you support.

As you move forward in your supervisory journey, consider the following ways to apply what you've learned from this resource:

- Frame supervision as a space for professional growth, skill-building, and mutual accountability.
- Apply the tools and strategies from this guide to strengthen your supervision practices.
- Create an environment where prevention professionals feel supported, challenged, and empowered.
- Commit to ongoing reflection and learning as a core part of ethical and effective supervision.

Every supervision conversation is an opportunity to shape the future of prevention. With intention, compassion, and consistency, you have the power to build a thriving, resilient workforce—one conversation at a time.

Reflection

What are the top three takeaways from this workbook that you plan to implement in your supervisory practice? How will you apply these insights to enhance both individual and team performance?

Resources

Explore the following appendices to deepen your understanding and apply the concepts from this guide in your own supervision practice:

- **Note to reader**
The following worksheets are designed to help supervisors deepen their understanding of supervision practices while applying the concepts in this guide. These tools can be printed and used during supervision sessions or filled out electronically. ✨👉
- **Appendix 1**
A structured worksheet designed to guide supervision conversations using the six IC&RC Prevention Specialist domains. Includes definitions, key competencies, and reflection questions to support continuous development and role clarity for prevention professionals. ✨👉
- **Appendix 2**
A practical tool for incorporating ethical reflection into supervision. Each of the six core principles includes key ethical considerations and guided questions to reinforce responsible and inclusive prevention practice. ✨👉



Great Lakes (HHS Region 5)

PTTC

Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration