

# First Line Supervision

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**First Line Supervision**  
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**First Line Supervision**

Course Outline:

- ✦ Define the supervisory role
- ✦ Situational Leadership
- ✦ One Minute Manager©
- ✦ Counseling
- ✦ Maintaining Discipline
- ✦ Diversity in the Workplace
- ✦ Situational Supervision

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**Civilians**

If our employees are the backbone of our organization, what role do first line supervisors play?

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## Questionnaire

As supervisors, do we really know our subordinates, what they are motivated by and what's actually important to them?

Follow the directions in handout #1

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## Questionnaire

We may be a bit surprised!

Follow the instructions in handout #2

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## What is Supervision?

Supervision is the technique of personally motivating and directing the energies of a subordinate group of employees toward the accomplishment of predetermined organizational goals.

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## Supervisory Strategies

- Successful supervisors know their subordinates individually
- Supervisors need to “get inside the head” of each subordinate
- What makes your subordinates tick?

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## Supervisory Actions

Supervisory actions should follow the acronym **O.U.C.H.**

- O** = Objective
- U** = Uniform in application
- C** = Consistently applied
- H** = Have job relatedness

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## Supervisory Characteristics

Some good supervisory characteristics:

- Ability to get along with people
- Job knowledge & technical competence
- Self control, dedication & dependability
- Problem-solving skills
- Leadership potential
- Positive attitude toward management

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## Supervisory Role

Supervisors are an essential part of the management team that gives an organization purpose and leadership.

Supervisors have the task of getting the "hands on the work" employees to carry out the plans and policies of the organization.

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## Supervisory - Concepts

Key supervision concepts to remember!!!!

Supervisors occupy the vital first level of management that interacts directly with the work force.

In carrying out their responsibilities, they must be careful not to be overzealous in pushing or protecting.

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## Supervisory Responsibility

As a supervisor, you must understand and accept that, your first responsibility is loyalty to the organization.

**(It is not about you!)**

By balancing the needs of your subordinates, consistent with established policy and procedure, you are meeting that obligation.

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## Supervisory Balance

In balancing supervisory roles remember:

Over supervision kills initiative and creates resentment; it does not allow room for subordinates to grow.

Under supervision will not get the job done.



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## Leadership - Defined

There are a number of leadership definitions but this one seems to stand out:

**Leadership** is the ability to get other people to follow you and to willingly perform whatever tasks may be necessary to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

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## Leadership Styles

Leadership styles that can be used along with basic leadership principles:

**Directive** – Structure, direction and control      Make decisions with no in-put from subordinates

**Supportive** – Listening, facilitating and praising      Make decisions based on input and suggestions of subordinates

**Delegating** – Duties & Responsibilities  
Defined limits and authority.

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## Leadership - Influenced

Subordinates influence leadership style:

- ✦ Knowledge or experience – Skill Sets
- ✦ Readiness for responsibility
  - \*Accountability\*
- ✦ Interest in the task (motivation)
- ✦ Understanding of goals
  - \*Personal & Professional\*
- ✦ Self-confidence

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## Leadership - Situational

Situational factors that influence style:

- ☞ Pressure of time
- ☞ Type of environment
- ☞ Type of problem
- ☞ Type of work group
- ☞ Mr. Murphy
- ☞ ????????

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## Supervision- Final Thought

*WE ULTIMATELY CONTROL OUR ATTITUDES, FEELINGS AND VIEWPOINTS. EMPLOYEES REFLECT THE ATTITUDE OF THE LEADER. LOOK TO SEE IF WHAT YOU THINK AND DO ARE HELPING YOUR ORGANIZATION SUCCEED, OR PREVENTING IT FROM SUCCEEDING*

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## Counseling

Counseling is one of the key elements of an effective leader/manager. The goal of counseling is to change a behavior, practice, pattern or attitude. It is the process for assisting your subordinates in finding answers to their problems, in essence, helping people help themselves.

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## Counseling - Responsibility

Managers and supervisors have a legitimate interest in employee performance that either does not measure up to **established** standards or is disruptive to the normal conduct of business or operations.

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## Counseling- Defined

A task oriented problem-solving technique that features empathic, **interactive** discussion that emphasizes listening skills aimed at changing unacceptable behavior or unsatisfactory performance.

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## Counseling - Methods

There are three general methods of counseling. Any one or combination of methods may be used based on the situation or the person being counseled:

- Directive
- Non-Directive
- Participative

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## Counseling - Directive

● **Directive** – The manager takes an active role in directing the dialogue.

The manager points out shortcomings and advises actions and alternatives. This method basically **tells** the counselee what he/she **will** do to address shortcomings.

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## Counseling - Nondirective

● **Nondirective** – The counselee directs the course of the counseling session.

The manager listens and reserves judgment, using open-ended questions to stimulate further dialogue. This method allows the counselee to be more objective and solve their own shortcomings.

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## Counseling - Participative

● **Participative** – This method allows the manager and counselee to jointly identify shortcomings and develop a course of action to resolve the problem.

Open, candid dialogue is the key to success when using this method.

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## Counseling Session

### Conducting the Counseling Session

To formulate a set of guidelines for a counseling session is rather difficult because each session is going to be unique. The following information offers advice on approaches which can be adapted to various situations plus a range of practical skills and approaches.

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## Counseling - Guidelines

1. **Atmosphere** – The atmosphere should be private, about business and non-threatening.
2. **Problem solving** – The emphasis is solving problems, not judging or blaming.
3. **Factual** – Use specifics not generalizations; mention implications.
4. **Opportunity to explain** – Counselee should comment or give their thoughts.
5. **Policy and procedure** - Counselor should be knowledgeable of policies/procedures
6. **Perspective** – Empathy and support are essential, personal criticism is avoided.
7. **Alternatives** – More than one way to consider an issue, no lies or distortions.
8. **Reschedule** – Timing is everything, employee should be amenable to counseling

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## Counseling Guidelines

9. **Management conflicts** – Role confusion, management actions not the "company's"
10. **Listening** – Encourage counselee to take their time and summarize their point(s).
11. **Attitude** – Positive regard for the subordinate, genuine respect.
12. **Organization** – Employee account maybe disorganized, clarify before setting goals.
13. **Solutions** – Exploration, look for alternatives, various avenues of approach.
14. **Positive emphasis** – Encourage subordinate and reinforce their strengths.
15. **Goal setting** – Jointly set reasonable and attainable goals; "contract"
16. **Resources** – Be aware of E.A.P. and other outreach venues.

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## Counseling Caution

### Additional Information

During the counseling session, avoid using words such as "reason", "logic" or "common-sense" as value judgments. People don't always act reasonably, logically or rationally when they have an emotional involvement.

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## Countering Emotional Responses

When engaged in counseling sessions, an employee may demonstrate strong emotions. The following are suggested guidelines which can assist the counselor in responding to emotion and to redirect the emotion into a positive response.

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## Countering Emotional Responses

**Employee response: hostile and/or angry**

The underlying feelings and motivations may be:

- pain
- anger
- disappointment
- relief

**Management response:**

- Summarize in a tentative manner: "It sounds like you're angry about this?"
- Avoid confrontation or becoming defensive
- Remain objective, stick to the facts, be helpful

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## Countering Emotional Responses

**Employee response: defensive and bargaining**

The underlying feelings and motivations may be:

- guilt
- fear
- uncertainty
- disbelief

**Management response:**

- Let employee know this is difficult for them as well as for yourself
- Don't engage in a bargaining session
- Offer reassurance and connect to the overall counseling process

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## Countering Emotional Responses

**Employee response: formal and procedural**

The underlying feelings and motivations may be:

- vengeful
- suppressed
- controlled
- unbelieving

**Management response:**

- Allow pertinent questions, stay to the point
- Avoid side issues and discussions i.e. "political" motivations
- Keep the tone formal

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## Countering Emotional Responses

### **Employee response: stoic**

The underlying feelings and motivations may be:

- shock
- disbelief
- numbness

### **Management response:**

- Let the employee know you recognize their shock, defer if mutually agreeable
- Ask if there are any specific questions. If not, arrange for a follow-up

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## Countering Emotional Responses

### **Employee response: crying and sobbing**

The underlying feelings and motivations may be:

- sadness
- grief
- worry
- fear

### **Management response:**

- Give the employee an opportunity to cry, offer some tissue.
- Avoid comments like "what are you crying about?"
- When employee regains their composure, move on with the facts.

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## Counseling - Confidentiality

### **Conclusion**

The confidentiality of the counseling session cannot be overstated. However, the employee should also be informed that you are duty bound to share relevant information with your immediate supervisor and those notifications of "need to know" information, such as referrals, will be shared up the chain of command.

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### Dealing with the Difficult Employee

1. Do - Establish performance expectations
2. Do - Make the expectations clear
3. Do - Document all incidents – absenteeism, tardiness, sub-standard performance, good or outstanding performance
4. Do - Confront performance not **suspected** alcoholism, drugs, and personal problems
5. Do - Be firm but flexible

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### Dealing with the Difficult Employee

6. Do - Be direct, speak with authority
7. Do - Be prepared to deal with employee resistance
8. Do - Take responsibility to intervene at the appropriate time
9. Do - Seek commitment to improved performance
10. Do - On-going monitoring and documentation

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### Dealing with the Difficult Employee

1. Don't - Be a diagnostician or health care "professional" (*significant liability*)
2. Don't - Make value judgments
3. Don't - Moralize, avoid "you should know better"
4. Don't – Ask why an employee does this or that. Always accountable and responsible
5. Don't – Allow the employee to box or corner you regardless of any rationalizations

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## Dealing with the Difficult Employee

6. Don't – Allow employee to "play" you against higher/upper management
7. Don't – Make idle threats
8. Don't – Discuss drinking/drugs unless it occurs on the job
9. Don't – Cover up for a friend
10. Don't – Forget loyalty to the agency

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## Discipline

Discipline is a control mechanism to ensure adherence to organizational values and mission.

Discipline is also a concentrated effort in accordance with agency policy, procedures, rules and regulations. Discipline can be positive or negative.

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## Discipline - Rationale

The key to effective discipline in a any organization is the first line supervisor. In maintaining discipline among subordinates, the supervisor performs the following functions:

1. Ensuring that employees do not develop work habits that will result in violations of management expectations generally and written rules of conduct specifically
2. To fully understand and articulate organization policy, procedures and rules of conduct
3. Explain/interpret management expectations to subordinates.
4. To determine whether or not the alleged violation of work rules have, in fact, been committed by employees.

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## Discipline Principles

In carrying out the disciplinary functions listed above, the supervisor must apply four significant principles:

1. The supervisor's actions must be legal
2. The supervisor's actions must be reasonable
3. The supervisor's actions must be consistent
4. The supervisor's actions must be timely

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## Discipline – “Hot Stove Theory”

“Hot Stove” theory is an allegory to illustrate four essentials of a fair and equitable discipline policy:

**ADVANCE WARNING** - you see it and know it's hot

**IMMEDIACY** - if you touch it, you will get burned right away.

**CONSISTENCY** - every time you touch the stove, you will get burned.

**IMPARTIALITY** - everyone who touches the stove will get burned.

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## Personal Attacks

Personal attacks usually arouse anger in the person being attacked. Do not become angry. An angry exchange of words seldom accomplishes anything except damage. Instead, analyze the behavior and the attacker's charges. Take a deep breath and concentrate on remaining calm. Remember that no one can make you angry but yourself. You are in sole control of how you react. Do not relinquish this control to others. At the same time accept the right of others to disagree with you. Respond rather than react.

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## Supervision

WE ULTIMATELY CONTROL OUR ATTITUDES, FEELINGS AND VIEWPOINTS. EMPLOYEES REFLECT THE ATTITUDE OF THE LEADER. LOOK TO SEE IF WHAT YOU THINK AND DO ARE HELPING YOUR ORGANIZATION SUCCEED, OR PREVENTING IT FROM SUCCEEDING

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## Situational Scenarios

Supervisors are challenged daily with various administrative and operational situations. The following scenarios are presented as an interactive learning exercise where the participants are spontaneously tasked with a myriad of situations. The participant will apply their experiences as well as “lessons learned” to resolve, or at least mitigate, the problem or issue.

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## Situational Scenarios

1. A female approaches you after the work day. She states that all of the males use excessive profanity during the work day. She finds this situation distressing and wants action to be taken. How would you handle this situation?
2. You are the supervisor directing others in a work situation; another employee clearly begins subverting your authority and undermining the successful resolution of this situation. How would you deal with this employee and get the situation back on track?

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### Situational Scenarios

- 3. A subordinate, who previously had been an excellent employee, seems to have lost interest in the job. The subordinate has begun to report late, takes an inordinate amount of time to handle routine assignments and their overall performance has been sub-par. How would you intervene in this situation?
- 4. You have been assigned a group of employees who have been described as malcontents. On your first Friday night shift, three of nine employees call in sick. How would you handle the staffing issue in the short term and deal with the underlying causes(s) in the long-term?

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### Situational Scenarios

- 5. One of your subordinates has recently lost interest in his hygiene and appearance. Other employees have begun to complain about the employee's body odor, dirty clothing and his generally unkept appearance. How would you respond to the complaining employees and how would you deal with the employee in question?
- 6. A clerk has complained that a female supervisor, from another section, is sexually harassing her. The clerk has made a similar accusation against her previous supervisor who was a man; that allegation was investigated and found to be unfounded. How would you resolve this situation?

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### Situational Supervision

- 7. Several subordinates approach you with information that their supervisor is having an affair with an employee under your supervision. It appears the affair is affecting the morale of the work group. What action would you take?
- 8. As a supervisor, what techniques would you employ to ensure that your subordinates are properly handling their jobs without appearing to be a micromanager?

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### Situational Supervision

- 9. A veteran employee has accused you of lowering her evaluation because of her newly acquired "alternative" life style. She states this is discrimination and threatens to complain to the EEOC if you do not raise her evaluation.
- 10. Two of your subordinates have developed a personality conflict and have asked be moved away from the other. This conflict has created a divisive situation with other employees taking sides. Your space is limited and a relocation of their desks would not really accomplish much. How would you minimize the divisiveness an neutralize the personality conflict?

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### Situational Supervision

- 11. You supervise a diverse eight person work group (3 whites, 3 blacks, 1 Hispanic and 1 Asian). All of the employees have agreed to rotate the office radio between five different stations during the week. Recently, one of the employees has insisted on adding a rap station to the rotation. The other seven employees are vehemently opposed to this station which uses violent, harsh and sexist lyrics. The involved employee accuses the others of racism. How would you resolve this issue?

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First line supervision is the ultimate extension of management in any organization

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