In this course, human resources is defined as planned processes that are designed to improve the ability of staff members to do their job so that the human service organization in which they work can achieve its goals, and the staff are satisfied with their work experience. Based on this broad definition, a number of activities are included, such as work organization and job analysis, recruitment, affirmative action and hiring processes, performance appraisal, and compensation and benefit arrangements. Basic principles and techniques for the management of these activities will be reviewed in lecture and/or readings.

In addition, a number of staff development activities can be identified. These include individual and group supervision and consultation, orientation, problem-solving staff meetings, in-service training, educational leave, out-service education (e.g., conferences, workshops, evening courses, etc.), operation of an agency library, staff’s participation in the development of an accountability system, field trips to cooperating organizations, serving as a training site for students, participation in research on performance evaluation, and informal social functions for staff.
COURSE DESCRIPTION

Human service administrators increase practice effectiveness through structured human resource practice methods. The application further improves the quality and efficiency of agency staff performance. This course deals with ways to develop an equitable, healthy and viable workplace for employers and employees. This course provides relevant skills in staff recruitment, hiring, retention and termination, staff development, compensation and performance and benefit packages development. Students will also review relevant laws and legislation governing workplace relationships, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

COURSE CONTENT

Course topics include work organization and job design, personnel recruitment and selection, performance monitoring and improvement, compensation management, training and development, occupational health, labor management and negotiation, job discrimination, managed care, gender equity, sexual harassment policies and affirmative action. Personnel management and staff development within human service organizations are seen as collective processes involving the shared responsibility and active participation of management and all other staff sectors. Issues of gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age and other forms of social stratification and disenfranchisement are given special attention, particularly in the areas of recruitment, promotion, compensation, and benefits. Special attention is provided to the human resource and management issues of volunteers. Special attention is also provided to the labor management issues impacting union and non-union “at will” employees.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course should help students apply human resources concepts to their own agency experiences. As a result of completing this course, you should be able to design, develop, implement and evaluate comprehensive human resources in a human service organization in way that would elicit organization-wide support. More specifically, by the end of the course, students will be able to use skills such as the following:
1. Conduct job analysis and assist agency administrators in correcting job design problems.

2. Plan and implement a developmentally oriented performance appraisal and personnel assessment program.

3. Design and participate in administration of a staff and volunteer recruitment and selection program.

4. Develop affirmative action programs and policies with investigative procedures and consequences.

5. Identify and critique an agency’s compensation plan and develop a corrective action plan as appropriate.

6. Participate in the design and implementation of a staff development and training program.

7. Using principles of continuous quality improvement, be able to function within a small task force creating a program, plan or service while facilitating the group process.

8. Develop and write sexual harassment policy with investigative procedures and consequences.

Note: Some typical HR topics not included here are Employee Safety and Health, Employee Discipline, Employment Law, Collective Bargaining and International issues.

COURSE DESIGN

The course is a lecture discussion format with guest experts as well.

RELATIONSHIP TO FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES

1. Multiculturalism and Diversity: Students will develop the capacity to identify ways in which variable such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age and other forms of social stratification influence and are impacted by human resource policies and procedures, particularly those related to recruiting, hiring, retention, promotion and termination.

2. Social Change and Social Justice: Students will be sensitized to the potential for and existence of social and economic exploitation in human service agencies. As students consider the personal and community impact of movements to decertify and reclassify workers, destabilize labor unions, and shift salaried/hourly employees with benefits to contract workers without benefits. Students will learn approaches that will
allow them to work to prevent such exploitation and work proactively to realign agencies where this is present.

3. **Promotion and Prevention**: Human resource programs should be encouraged to place a high priority on the development of prevention, promotion, treatment and rehabilitation activities for employees. These activities are addressed through studies of successful and unsuccessful workplace health initiatives, periodic health appraisals and health screenings that emphasize physical health and emotional well being for employees, as well as the use of internal and contract employee assistance programs (EAPs).

4. **Social Science**: Behavioral and social science research are addressed through the presentation and discussion of contemporary theories of human relations, as well as an examination of various theories of equity, compensation, human motivation, organizational development and work design.

**RELATIONSHIP OF THIS COURSE TO SOCIAL WORK ETHICS AND VALUES**

The NASW Code of Ethics enjoins social workers to “remain proficient in professional practice.” This course encourages students to implement the ethical values of fidelity, beneficence, non-maleficent behavior (“do no harm”) and autonomy through the provision of opportunities for staff growth and advancement and through the promotion of emotional wellbeing and occupational health of the staff. Ethical values can also be implemented with organizational policies, procedures and consequences in the areas of discrimination,”whistleblowing”, sexual harassment, and disabilities (e.g., ADA).
Course Assignments:

1a) Agency Assay and Recommendations (∑: 60 POINTS) (Can be a group effort)
   1.1 Visit an Agency (It can be your placement); ask about their human resources function:  
      Due 6/9
      1.1.1 Do they have a human resources administrator?  
      1.1.2 Do they have a package of human resources policies?  
      1.1.3 Can you have copies of some of them (sometimes they may be called “personnel  
          policies”). ..  
      1.1.4 Identify a problem area (5 pp.).  
      1.1.5 Prepare a preliminary text reflecting your findings, and your judgment about the adequacy  
          of this function (< 3 pp) and a  
      1.1.6 Make a REPORT in class on 5/26 Connect to at least 3 references; hopefully more,  
          (Retain the essence of these ideas as the first part of your written REPORT) 20%.  
   1.2 Prepare a REPORT (<5pp) to the director of that agency on what should be done about the  
      problem area. Due 7/7  
      1.2.1 Try to include some “best practices” from another agency if possible, and, perhaps, some  
          practices that you have observed.  
      1.2.2 Use at least 6 references, (the 3 previous ones can be among the 6)  
      1.2.3 The first page should be an EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, http://articles.bplans.com/writing-
          an-executive-summary/developed in the following format:  
          The Problem  
          Options  
          The Recommendation  
          The remaining (or other) 5 pages should make the case. In the recommendations attend to  
          issues of logic, judgment, possible error, and bases for future improvement. 30%  
   1.3 Prepare an oral/written report to the “board of directors” of the agency Due 7/21  
      Use PowerPoint) outlining the problems (from paper 1) and the recommendations (from paper  
      2) in a convincing, professional presentation. Hand in your presentation; have copies for class  
      members.  
      20%  
   1b) Prepare a Policy Brief on an area of Human Resources you are passionate about. Due  
      2.1 A brief statement about the problem as in 1.1  
      2.2 Prepare a Policy Report, as in 1.2  
      2.3 Prepare a Presentation, as in 1.3.  

2) Personal Career Review and Work plan 15% 6/23 http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Memo  

3) Class Participation: Attending, joining in, sharing: (10%)  
   Most weeks we will have a vignette to discuss in groups and then overall.  
   Also we will read one of the columns from the NYT Corner Office Series and discuss it.  
   http://projects.nytimes.com/corner-office  

4) Memo on Video Due 5% Due 6/6
### 5) Memo on Agency HR Review 5% Due 6/6

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| 1 5/12 | - Introduction  
- From Scientific Mgt. to HR Management  
- Sharpen Your Saw/Manage Your Career  
- Career Pathing  
- Current Issues : |
| 2 5/19 | - No Class...  
- Assignment  
- Watch a couple HR videos on YouTube  
- Bring a one page memo for discussion on 6/2  
  - [http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Memo](http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Memo) |
| 3 5/26 | - No Class  
- Assignment  
- Find and read the Human Resource Policies at your agency.  
- Write a short memo (2pp) evaluating them (topical currency, completeness, recency of review/updating; missing parts, etc.) and hand it in on 6/2  
  - [http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Memo](http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Memo) |
| 4 6/2 | - Discussion of YouTube Videos  
- Assignments 4 & 5 Due  
- Discussion of HR Assignment  
- Through A Glass Darkly: HR and SW  
- Dignity  
- The Sibson Report |
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| 5    | 6/9   | Current Issues  
  - Staffing: Job Design, Recruitment/Selection, RIF, Turnover, Training and Development of Staff and Volunteers  
  - **(Assignment 1a or 1b Due)(brief sharing)**  
  - Discussion of *From the Corner Office*  
  - Sally Schmall, Adjunct Professor at UMSSW and HR Consultant |
| 6    | 6/16  | Current Issues  
  - Appraisal: Techniques & Problems /Supportive Communication  
  - **Ken Adams** COO, Employee Physicians Medical Group |
| 7    | 6/23  | Current Issues  
  - Rewards - Motivation  
  - Rewards Theory - Old and New  
  - Managing Mutual Expectations and Mutual Rewards  
  - **Assignment 2 due**  
  - Marcella Wilson, CEO, Matrix Human Services, Detroit |
| 8    | 6/30  | Current Issues  
  - Total Compensation: Old Pay and New Pay  
  - **Rich Holcomb, Senior Director of Benefits, University of Michigan** |

**Strengths Perspective**  
- Rachael Wiener, Program for leadership in Community Benefit Organizations and Janice Williams Miller, Office of Student Services and Program for Leadership in Community Benefit Organizations, and Strengths Perspectives Facilitators
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<td>- (Assignment 1b or 2b due) (brief sharing)</td>
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<td>- Supervision</td>
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<td>Presentations (Assignment 1.3 or 2.3 due)</td>
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</table>

**Recommended Texts:**

G. Dressler, A FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, 3rd (2004)

Perlmutter, Baity and Netting, MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE HUMAN SERVICES (aka MHRHS)

Ming-sum Tsuen, SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION

Barbeito/Bowman, NONPROFIT COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS PRACTICES (aka NPCP)

R. Dodson, DIGNITY AT WORK (2001)

M. Jacobsen M.S.W., HAND ME DOWN DREAMS: HOW FAMILIES INFLUENCE CARER PATHS AND HOW WE CAN RECLAIM THEM (1999)

M. Buckingham and c. Coffman, FIRST BREAK ALL THE RULES (1999)

J. Tropman, THE TOTAL COMPENSATION SOLUTION

M. Austin, and K. Hopkins, SUPERVISION AS COLLABORATION IN THE HUMAN SERVICES

R. Brody, EFFECTIVELY MANAGING HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

John Tropman, Liang Zhu, and Renee Smith, “Supervision of People with Different Backgrounds” (On Ctools)
John Tropman SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT IN NONPROFITS AND HUMAN SERVICES: HOW NOT TO BECOME THE SUPERVISOR/MANAGER YOU HAVE ALWAYS HATED (forthcoming, Eddie Bowers publishing, 2005) (On Ctools)

John Tropman, Kathleen Colburn Faller and Sara Feldt, ESSENTIALS OF SUPERVISORY SKILLS FOR CHILD WELFARE MANAGERS Available through the Family Assessment Clinic Website (which in turn is available through the SSW Website.)

Suggested Resources:

Encyclopedia of Social Work (aka ESW)

Encyclopedia of Business (aka EB)


1 I am referring her to the 1995 edition. There is a later edition, but this is the one we have at the moment. It is in the grad library. The call number is HF 1001 .E4661 1995


WEB SITES – ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

http://mars.wnec.edu/~achelte/ob1/lprob01/index.htm
Table of Contents Author: LT Best experienced with Click here to start. What is Organizational Behavior Click here to start What is Organizational Behavior
More Like This

http://www.lewisu.edu/~culleema/surfront.html
On line surveys from Whettten and Cameron

FastCompany Home Page
http://www.fastcompany.com/home.html
Fast Company Magazine, the handbook of the business revolution.

http://ursus.jun.alaska.edu/
Brain Food for Managers

http://www.ccl.org/
The Center for Creative Leadership is an international, nonprofit educational institution. Through our research, we are developing models of managerial practice. Through our training programs and products, we are applying these models as guides for assessment and development. This combined approach makes our research accessible and our training practical.

http://point-blockbusternet.lycos.com/reviews/WorkingWomen_12396.html
National Association for Female Executives

Surviving in no-man’s land

http://www.insiderviews.com/epubs/myths/genfebt.htm
Insider Views: Illusion of Inclusion, Myths related to genders
In their efforts to be accepted by male colleagues, it appears women who break into higher-level management positions tend to pattern their behaviors after the businessmen around them.

WEB SITES - HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

http://www.human-resources.org/
Human resources innovative practices - best practices library
The human resources learning center presents HR best practices, benchmarking studies, reengineering and technology news.
Some “Sample” Text From Performance Appraisals

1] Since my last report he has reached rock bottom and started to dig.

2] His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiosity.

3] I would not allow this employee to breed.

4] This employee is really not so much of a has-been as a will-never-be.
5] Works well under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap.

6] Whenever she opens her mouth it is only to replace the foot that was previously there.

7] He would be out of his depth in a parking lot puddle.

8] This young lady has delusions of adequacy.

9] She sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.

10] This employee should go far, and the sooner he starts and the farther he goes, the better.

11] This employee is depriving some village somewhere of an idiot.
COURSE ACTIVITIES

1 5/12  INTRODUCTION
From Scientific Mgt. To HR Mgt.
SBS, Part 1, Ch.1,2.


Sharpen Your Saw/Manage Your Career
Check coaching and career development websites

Tropman, SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT - SKIM

2 5/19  No Class  Watch some HR videos and Prepare a brief reflective statement

3 5/26  No Class  . Review the Agency’s HR Policies and prepare an assessment.


4 6/2  CURRENT ISSUES

Through a Glass Darkly:
HR and the Profession of Social Work
The Sibson Report; Dignity @ Work; Break All The Rules


NPCP, Ch 1 and 2

Read FIRST BREAK ALL THE RULES
Read DIGNITY @ WORK

Kanter, MEN AND WOMEN OF THE CORPORATION
Dessler, Ch. 2 Managing Equal Opportunity and Diversity

MHRHS, Chapter 6, “Supporting Diversity”

*Temps/Employee Leasing/Job Share/FlexTime/Virtual Office/ Private Practice*


5 6/9

**CURRENT ISSUES**

Staffing, Job Design; Recruitment/Selection, Rif, Turnover /Training And Development and Volunteers

Dessler, Chapter 3 – Personnel Planning and Recruitment; Developing of Staff MHRHS, Ch. 9, Protecting Managers as Workers”
P&A, Chs. 2 & 3.

5 6/16

**CURRENT ISSUES**

Appraisal, Techniques Problems,/Supportive Communication
Mathis and Jackson, HR Management, 9th Ch 12


7 6/23

**CURRENT ISSUES**

Rewards - Theory old and New.
Managing Mutual Expectations and Mutual Rewards

Tropman, THE TOTAL COMPENSATION SOLUTION
EB, “Employee Motivation,” p. 499ff
MHRHS, Ch. 8 “Motivating, Appraising, Rewarding”


8 6/30

**CURRENT ISSUES – Old Pay and New Pay**

Schervish, P. “Just Compensation”

9 7/7

**current issues**

*Total Compensation*”Base Pay, Augmented Pay, Indirect Pay, Perks Pay, Workpay/Opportunity for Growth/Advancement/Psychic Income/Quality of Life/the X Factor

NCBP, Ch 4., Ch. 5

10 7/14

**SUPERVISION**

Skim Tsui
Read Tropman/Zhu/Smith

11 7/21

Reports
EB – Vol 1

Absenteeism, p. 1
Affirmative Action, p. 14ff
Age and Employment, p. 25ff
Aids in the Workplace, p. 31ff
Aliens, Employment of, p. 34
Americans with Disabilities Act, p. 34ff
Career and Family, p. 177ff
Child Care/Elder Care, p. 213ff
Civil Rights Act of 1991, p. 220ff
Comparable Worth, p. 248ff
Diversity Culture, p. 433ff
E A Ps, p. 492ff
EEOC, p. 537ff
Equal Opportunity, p. 538ff
Executive Development, p. 554ff
Fair Labor Standards Act, p. 577ff
Family Leave, p. 578ff
Handbooks and Manuals, p. 715f
Health Insurance Options, p. 727ff
Illiteracy in the Workplace, p. 745ff

EB Vol 2

Labor Law, p. 882ff
Labor-Mgt. Relations p. 887ff
Labor Unions, p. 889ff
Layoffs, p. 896ff
Leadership, p. 898ff
Management, p. 941ff
OSHA, p. 1085ff
Organizational Development, p. 1121ff
Profit Sharing, p. 1200ff
Retirement Planning, p. 1260ff
Sex Discrimination, p. 1316ff
Sexual Harrassment, p. 1322ff
Stress in the Workplace, p. 1385ff
Teams, p. 1411ff
Temporary Employment, p. 1436ff
Unemployment, p. 1477ff
Vocational Rehabilitation, p. 1505ff
Worker’s Compensation, p. 1529ff

ESW

Unemployment Compensation and Workers’ Compensation, p. 2413ff
Unions, p. 2418ff
Source Materials

Journals

Administration in Social Work
American Compensation Review
American Review of Public Administration
Economic Development Review
Group and Organization Studies
Harvard Business Review
Journal of Health and Social Policy
Journal of Voluntary Action Research
Management Review
Management Science
Nonprofit Management and Leadership
Nonprofit World
Social Policy and Administration
Social Service Review
Social Work
The Social Worker/Le Travailleur Social
Training and Development Journal
Holland’s Theory
John Holland, professor emeritus at Johns Hopkins University, is a psychologist who devoted his professional life to researching issues related to career choice and satisfaction. He developed a well-known theory, and designed several assessments and supporting materials to assist people in making effective career choices. His theory and assessment tools have helped millions of people worldwide and are supported by hundreds of research studies.

Holland found that people needing help with career decisions can be supported by understanding their resemblance to the following six ideal vocational personality types:

- **Realistic**
- **Investigative**
- **Artistic**
- **Social**
- **Enterprising**
- **Conventional**

Work settings can also be categorized by their resemblance to six similar model work environments. Because people search for environments that allow them to express their interests, skills, attitudes and values, and take on interesting problems and agreeable roles, work environments become populated by individuals with related occupational personality types.

Holland’s Six Personality Types
The descriptions of Holland’s personality types refer to idealized or pure types. Holland’s personality types are visually represented by a hexagonal model. The types closest to each other on the hexagon (Requires Adobe® Reader®) have the most characteristics in common. Those types that are furthest apart, i.e., opposites on the hexagon, have the least in common.

Review the six Holland Occupational Personality Types and estimate which of the types is most like you. The descriptions of “pure types” will rarely be an exact fit for any one person. Your personality will more likely combine several types to varying degrees. To get a better picture of how your interests and skills relate to the types and to identify your dominant type, see how many phrases in each description are true for you.

For an in-depth assessment of your Holland vocational personality type, please contact CMP to make a career counseling appointment. As part of the career counseling process, you will take the Strong Interest Inventory (SII) online and receive a personal interpretation of your results.

Or, for a nominal fee, you can take the Self-Directed Search (SDS) online at www.self-directed-search.com. The SDS takes about 15 minutes, and you will receive an 8-16 page printable report that provides a list of the occupations and fields of study that most closely match your interests.
REALISTIC (R)
Realistic individuals are active, stable, and enjoy hands-on or manual activities such as building, mechanics, machinery operation and athletics. They prefer to work with things rather than ideas and people. They enjoy engaging in physical activity and often like being outdoors and working with plants and animals. People who fall into this category generally prefer to "learn by doing" in a practical, task-oriented setting, as opposed to spending extended periods of time in a classroom. Realistic types tend to communicate in a frank, direct manner and value material things. They perceive themselves as skilled in mechanical and physical activities, but may be uncomfortable or less adept with human relations. The preferred work environment of the realistic type fosters technical competencies and work that allows them to produce tangible results. Typical realistic careers include those in the military, electrician, engineer and veterinarian.

INVESTIGATIVE (I)
Investigative individuals are analytical, intellectual and observant, and enjoy research, mathematical or scientific activities. They are drawn to ambiguous challenges and may feel stifled in highly structured environments. People who fall into this category enjoy using logic and solving highly complex, abstract problems. They are introspective and focused on creative problem-solving, therefore investigative types often work autonomously and do not seek leadership roles. They place a high value on science and learning, and perceive themselves as scholarly and having scientific or mathematical ability but lacking leadership and persuasive skills. The preferred work environment of the investigative type encourages scientific competencies, allows independent work, and focuses on solving abstract, complex problems in original ways. Typical investigative careers include medical technologist, biologist, chemist, and systems analyst.

ARTISTIC (A)
Artistic individuals are original, intuitive and imaginative, and enjoy creative activities such as composing or playing music, writing, drawing or painting, and acting in or directing stage productions. They seek opportunities for self-expression through artistic creation. People who fall into this category prefer flexibility and ambiguity, and have an aversion to convention and conformity. Artistic types are generally impulsive and emotional, and tend to communicate in a very expressive and open manner. They value aesthetics, and view themselves as creative, non-conforming, and as appreciating or possessing musical, dramatic, artistic, or writing abilities while lacking clerical or organizational skills. The preferred work environment of the artistic type fosters creative competencies and encourages originality and use of the imagination in a flexible, unstructured setting. Typical artistic careers include musician, reporter, and interior decorator.

SOCIAL (S)
Social individuals are humanistic, idealistic, responsible and concerned with the welfare of others. They enjoy participating in group activities and helping, training, caring for, counseling or developing others. They are generally focused on human relationships, and enjoy social activities and solving interpersonal problems. Social types seek
opportunities to work as part of a team, solve problems through discussions, and utilize interpersonal skills, but may avoid activities that involve systematic use of equipment or machines. They genuinely enjoy working with people, therefore they communicate a warm and tactful manner, and can be persuasive. They view themselves as understanding, helpful, cheerful, and skilled in teaching, but lacking mechanical ability. The preferred work environment of the social type encourages teamwork and allows for significant interaction with others. Typical social careers include teacher, counselor, and social worker.

ENTERPRISING (E)
Enterprising individuals are energetic, ambitious, adventurous, sociable and self-confident. They enjoy activities that require them to persuade others, such as sales, and seek out leadership roles. They are invigorated by using their interpersonal, leadership, and persuasive abilities to obtain organizational goals or economic gain, but may avoid routine or systematic activities. They are often effective public speakers and are generally sociable, but may be viewed as domineering. They view themselves as assertive, self-confident and skilled in leadership and speaking, but lacking in scientific abilities. The preferred work environment of the enterprising type encourages them to engage in activities such as leadership, management, and selling, and rewards them through the attainment of money, power, and status. Typical enterprising careers include salesperson, business executive, and manager.

CONVENTIONAL (C)
Conventional individuals are efficient, careful, conforming, organized, and conscientious. They are comfortable working within an established chain of command and prefer carrying out well-defined instructions over assuming leadership roles. They prefer organized, systematic activities and have an aversion to ambiguity. They are skilled in and often enjoy maintaining and manipulating data, organizing schedules, and operating office equipment. While they rarely seek leadership or "spotlight" roles, they are thorough, persistent, and reliable in carrying out tasks. Conventional types view themselves as responsible, orderly, efficient, and possessing clerical, organizational, and numerical abilities, but may also see themselves as unimaginative or lacking in creativity. The preferred work environment of the conventional type fosters organizational competencies, such as record keeping and data management in a structured operation, and places high value on conformity and dependability. Typical conventional careers include secretary, accountant, and banker.
Reinvention. What a quintessential American idea! It's the frontier spirit. It's Ben Franklin, it's Ralph Waldo Emerson, and by God, it's Tony Robbins and Stephen Covey, too. They all understand the American impetus and genius for wholesale self-reinvention. We survive by staring change in the eye--and adapting. Look at us now. Our white-collar jobs are being offshored, and the possibility of lifetime employment is evaporating before our eyes. What's next is ultimately about reinvention. A passive approach to professional growth will leave you by the wayside.

In the new frontier, the only way to protect yourself is to realize that you have to be the boss of your own show. Brand You. Me Inc. It matters. When I wrote about this in Fast Company in the summer of 1997, it was cool. But now it's necessary. Ain't no choice, bro. Even if this idea scares you to death, ordinary has become a design for disaster. It's not easy to embrace. If you grew up thinking that you were going to work for Citibank for 40 years, you're simply not going to survive with the same set of attitudes that you've had in the past. If you're going to reinvent yourself for this new reality--and I say "if," but it's really not an option--here's how to develop the attitude that will let you reimagine yourself as the CEO of Me Inc. and save yourself before it's too late.

**Think About Great Gigs**

You undoubtedly read Dilbert. I read *Dilbert*. We laugh at *Dilbert*, and *Dilbert* talks of a world where, fundamentally, the opportunity to create your own shtick doesn't come easy. Workers aren't exactly inundated with projects that would create a signature. But now there is a requirement that you take assignments and bend them in a way that allows you to have something to talk about. Every employee who will survive has to turn projects into stuff that gets the person on the other side of the recruiter's desk excited. The frustration of it is that it's not typically the way things have worked in finance, HR, or logistics departments. They don't produce new products or art portfolios that are tangible signs of what you've accomplished. But it's precisely that mentality you have to pursue if you're a 28-year-old relatively junior member on a PricewaterhouseCoopers tax consulting team. Where's the value you added to that project? Where's your signature?

**Be a Spin Doctor**

Reimagining Brand You is not a one-time thing. You need to revolutionize your portfolio of skills at least every half-dozen years. This is a minimum survival necessity.
Yes, you have your story of what you've done in your job, but you have to put the best twist on it. On each gig, you must be marketing your worth, marketing Me Inc. You can go too far (think Dennis Kozlowski or Martha Stewart), but you constantly have to spin-doctor. If you don't, you have what I call the "engineer's mentality"—and I am an engineer by training. People with an engineer's mentality believe that truth and virtue will automatically be their own reward. That's a crock, no matter what you do for a living. There are companies that don't like people who stick their necks out, but at the same time, they like people who succeed wildly. So if you choose to stay where you are, you have to learn the rules. The Brand You world doesn't let you hang out for 20 years with the same 17 people in the credit department.

**Master Something**

Competence in many skills is important, but it's not enough. The act is finding the stuff you love and getting so damn good at it that you become an indispensable human being. The new exemplar is Tim Monich, this guy neither you nor I have heard of, who is the go-to guy in Hollywood for teaching prima donnas foreign accents. I love this! This is classic Brand You. This guy is best-in-planet. He taught a bunch of Brits how to sound like rednecks for the movie *Cold Mountain*. He's the metaphor for all this. Monich is someone who found something he's good at, something he enjoys, and became the Tiger Woods equivalent in his world. I believe that within some small limits, it's not what the market says is worth something, it's what turns you on. If you don't develop mastery in something of specific economic value by the age of 35, you're a journeyman. Why be so dull?

**Laugh Off the Fabulous Screwup**

If you buy the mastery thing, you'll pursue different angles in assignments that you accept or concoct—and you're going to grow. And if you're growing, you're screwing up. You have to be able to laugh off the screwup and immediately move on to the next try. A sense of humor in this way is the sweet spot of a Brand You attitude. You may not always be laughing as you pursue mastery. But growth comes from learning an off-speed slider during spring training and having the guts to throw it to Alex Rodriguez in June. And then, after A-Rod unloads the sucker into the third deck of Yankee Stadium, having the guts to throw it to Nomar Garciaparra two days later. After the third home run, you either drop the pitch or you finally get the thing mastered and start making fools out of those hitters. The top athletes are consummate pros who work obsessively at their craft. Approach yours the same way.

**Embrace Ambiguity**

Mastery is great, but even that is not enough. You have to be able to change course without a bead of sweat, or remorse. All bets are off. Nobody knows what the hell he or she is doing. You can't just "deal with" constantly slipping and sliding circumstances; you actually need to thrive on that ambiguity. There is a fabulous book called *Franklin and Winston*, by Jon Meacham (Random House, 2003), and one of the many one-liners worth remembering is when Eleanor Roosevelt says, "Franklin just can't wait to get into the Oval Office every morning because he loves the game so much." If you watch *The West Wing*, or read the front page of *The Washington
Post, you know these Washington people get a kick out of the game. And you need to love your game.

**Loyalty Ain't Dead**

It's more important than ever, in fact. It's loyalty to peers in your industry and not to a hierarchy. You have to develop a Rolodex obsession, building and deliberately managing an ever-growing network of professional contacts. My wife, Susan Sargent, runs a home-furnishings business. She's planning to go from two retail stores to a half-dozen or so over the next number of years. To do this, she needs money. Susan is not a typical old-girl networker, but she has been working the networks in Boston, with angel investors and so on, which is a little unnatural for her, but that's the way you get engaged with these things. Some networks are dead ends, but if she pursues enough of them, she'll probably work her way into the right ones.

**Appreciate New Technology**

The hard truth is that lots of people simply aren't going to "get" new technologies. But you don't have to be an expert, just someone who recognizes how technology can suddenly turn a business upside-down. The stuff that's going to change the world? For the first five years, it's totally useless. The hype is insane. But then you wake up one morning and discover that a leading candidate for a major-party presidential nomination is some oddball from Vermont who figured out how to use the Web to start a movement. F. Scott Fitzgerald said that the number-one test of a first-rate mind is its ability to hold two opposing ideas at the same time while continuing to function. With technology, the answer is to be completely skeptical and totally naive in equal measure. The term that we need to invent is "dewy-eyed curmudgeon."

**Never Be Satisfied**

Reimagining Brand You is not a onetime thing. Picking up new skills on an as-needed basis used to be a reasonable strategy. Not anymore. You need to revolutionize your portfolio of skills every half-dozen years, if not more often. This is a minimum survival necessity. Uprooting may be painful, but to me, these are truly exciting times. Remember my mantra: distinct ... or extinct.
When Supervisor and supervisee are of different disciplines:

Guidelines and Resources

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2 Chapter 130 in School Social Work and Mental Health Worker’s Training and Resource Manual
When Supervisors and Supervisee are of Different Disciplines: Guidelines and Resources

Introduction

There is a huge literature on supervision, so large that it is hard to know where, really, to get concise and core information about supervision. However, there is almost no empirical literature on the exact topic of supervision with respect to social workers. The literature that can be found is often written abroad and deals with national differences. To make matters more complicated; there are two kinds of supervision which people commonly have in mind when they speak of supervision - clinical and managerial. Clinical, or professional, supervision involves directive responsibility for the substance of the work of the clinical professional. It is essentially case review, planning, and interpretation from a professional perspective. Managerial supervision, on the other hand, looks to the organizational functioning as important. As the lead author has said elsewhere:

You are a managerial supervisor or supervisory manager when you are put in charge of overseeing one or more persons for the purpose of assisting them with the accomplishments of their jobs, and assuring that their assignments jobs are completed in a timely fashion and according to law and policy (Tropman, 2005, forthcoming).

There is an emphasis on efficiency (doing things right), innovation (improving the job), and assisting supervisee growth and development.

Of course it is not possible to completely separate these functions “on the ground.” All supervisors do some of both. To complicate matters further, in the social work community, the term supervisor is usually used to refer to the professional aspect of supervision, and the term “boss” refers to the managerial aspects. That said, this chapter focuses upon the issues of managerial supervision and problems that occur when the disciplines or backgrounds of supervisor and supervisee differ. Almost all of it will apply to both functions; though the professional supervisor would need to add substantive content related to the discipline to the material reviewed here.

Approach/Method

This chapter has been informed by previous research utilizing a focus group approach. In connection with a Children’s Bureau grant to the University Of Michigan School Of Social Work (on
which the lead author was Co-PI\(^3\), focus groups were conducted with supervisors in child welfare to explore the issues they seemed most concerned about, the skills they felt were most important, and the problems that seemed most central to their supervisory life. To broaden and supplement this information, the lead author met with a variety of supervisors and used them as informants and respondents. What emerged were four areas where professional and disciplinary differences matter. One was in mindset and culture. A second was in the performance of common tasks of supervision. The last two points were cautions. Supervisors, thirdly, stressed that disciplinary and professional differences are exacerbated in several commonly difficult areas, including feedback, giving corrective information, and dealing with difficult people. Lastly, informants cautioned us that the professional and disciplinary difference cleavages were not all that separates us. In particular, they mentioned generational differences, gender differences, and differences in temperament. These general findings are corroborated and elaborated in several books (Gambrill & Stein, 1983; Middleman & Rhodes, 1985; Humphrey & Stokes, 2000; Fuller, 1990; Bittel & Newstrom, 1992; Fuller, 1995; Broadwell & Dietrich, 1998; Perlmutter, Baily, & Netting, 2001; Whetten & Cameron, 2005) and the periodical literature as well (Buhler, 1998; Cousins, 2000, Cole, 1999; Fracaro, 2001; Fracaro, 2001; Grassell, 1989; Lindo, 1999; Hull, 1999; O'Neil, 2000; Pollock, 2000; Pulich, 1989; Ramsey, 1999; Shea, 1995; Weiss, 2000; Woodruff, 1992).

**Key Concerns Across Disciplines – The Mindset/Culture Issue**

We each have our professional perspectives or ways of looking at a problem—our professional “mindset.” This mindset often involves elements such as: (a) what we think matters; (b) what we think is important; (c) what we notice as opposed to what we do not notice; and/or (d) the variables that our profession, training or discipline prepares us to consider, manage, and discuss. Disciplines usually have a specialized vocabulary—often called jargon by others—to reflect and embody these elements. The popular phrase “if you are a hammer everything is a nail” captures the potential problems of this conflict of mindsets. If you are a school psychologist, political, economical, or sociological perspectives are not as likely to emerge from you, or be accepted by other psychologists if they did. If you are a principal, social work jargon or perspectives may be confusing, vague or simply unwelcome; if you are a school social

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\(^3\) Training Program for Child Welfare Supervisors, Children’s Bureau # 90CT0080(University of Michigan #F003707)
worker, educational administrative jargon or perspectives may be unclear or misinterpreted. In summation, both mindset—the personal package of discipline, and culture—the embedded elements of discipline in groups, organizations, and polities, operate to make members of one discipline/profession strangers in a strange land when it comes to other disciplines (Heinlein, 1961). We often simply do not understand nor appreciate the perspectives of “the other.”

The issue of mindset is the personal version of culture. Culture is the institutionalized set of rules and meanings that is a group property rather than an individual one. Culture assures that group norms and values are repeated. Disciplines are groups (perhaps even tribes) with norms and values—in a word, cultures. Supervising across disciplines must take both mindset and culture into account.

A simple game, called Barnga, may help illustrate the problems that different cultures generate when they come in contact.\(^4\) The game, named for a village in Africa, is a series of card games in which several teams play. No talking or writing is permitted, and only the word “Barnga!” in various intonations is permitted to be spoken. General instructions are given, and then written instructions are passed out to each group. One of the rules is that after playing for five minutes, the leading scorer of Team 1 moves to Team 2, and the lowest scorer moves to Team 5. Every high and low scorer moves. After a few rounds, debriefing is held, but by that time the room is usually in a state of chaos, with shouts of “Barnga!!!!!” going around, people standing, glaring, sighing loudly, etc. The reason for this turmoil is that the written instructions were different for each team. As people move from team to team, they assume that the destination team is using the same rules as the team of origin. The destination teams assume that the “immigrants” come with the same rules they are already using. One can immediately picture the conflicts. Supervising across disciplines is a lot like this game, but the rules are more subtle. The additional factors of communication, such as meaning, power, and the stress/default reaction need to be taken into account when supervising.

Of course, if people could talk they might figure out that they had different sets of written rules. One might think that supervisors and supervisees could simply talk about the different rules and get everything straightened out. However, when rules are complex and buried within the deep structure of

\(^{4}\) [http://www.interculturalpress.com/shop/barngatext.html](http://www.interculturalpress.com/shop/barngatext.html). There is a good bit of material on Barnga on the web.
individuals and groups, mindset, and culture people do not necessarily begin by talking about the different rules under which they operate. Quite often they assume that others accept the same rules and they are not even, sure of which rules are relevant. Hence, communication, usually useful, does not always work as well as one might expect.

Then there is the matter of meaning. Mindsets and cultures have both rules and meaning. Meaning refers to rules that are infused with values. We tend to think of our rules as, well, right, correct, the obvious thing, moral, or even sacred. It is one thing to discuss the rules for a card game and figure out that one set of written instructions had hearts as trump and another set had no trumps. However, when one person believes that one or the other of those rules is morally right considerably more trouble may ensue. Values are not really amenable to “splitting the difference.” Professional values take on a sacred aspect like religious values. One would be as unlikely to say “I am a social worker Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and a lawyer Tues, Thursday, and Saturday” as one would be to say “I am a Jew on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and a Baptist on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.”

A third variable is power. Supervisors are more powerful than supervisees are, which gives an added weight to whatever culture or mindset the supervisors happen to follow. The supervisor's power can privilege or sanction his or her position and make even questioning, not to mention opposition, on the part of the supervisee vastly more difficult.

But let us assume that communication occurs, meaning negotiated, and power differences smoothed. There is still one problem remaining, the stress generated from these interactions. Behaviors driven by mindset and culture (and temperament, as we shall see in a moment) tend to be our default choice. Under pressure and stress we default to thinking and acting like a social worker or thinking and acting like a lawyer even if we fully intend NOT to do so.

5 However, where we have competing values, as in achievement versus equality we do have ways of balancing them, including averaging, alternating, sectoring, and having a rule which specifies the occasion where we use one or the other value.

6 The lead author can serve as an example here. When I went to social work school students were still being “counseled out” as opposed to flunking out. Basically one was “counseled out” if the faculty perceived that the student did not have the proper values. In my case I came close to being clipped by that perception. I had come from an undergraduate school where we were taught to challenge the Professors. As I began to activate that behavior in social work school the Assistant Dean called me in and asked if I was “resisting” social work education. Lucky for me it was that I learned one did not “question” Professors at that time, but rather “shared feelings.”
Figure 1 below identifies the lawyer mindset/culture and the social worker mindset/culture in some essential elements. We picked these professions because they have clear differences and often work together around common cases, especially in child welfare, recipients' rights, schools, and many other issues. Because the strength of professional socialization is often built upon and augments prior value dispositions, it can be exceptionally powerful. It is sometimes difficult for even well attuned colleagues from different professions to walk in the other person’s shoes. In conditions of stress, such as a court proceeding, respective practitioners may well default to their own personal/professional perspectives and dispositions. When one profession supervises the other (another stressful situation) similar defaults may occur as one tries to communicate with the other based on professional assumptions. These professional assumptions are often taken for granted by the sender, but not shared by the receiver. Under stress, both the supervisor and the supervisee are likely to rely on the default, “common sense”, of their respective professions, thus complicating the supervisor/supervisee relationship further.

Another example would be the principals in the role of supervisor and a school social workers (or other school-based practitioners) in the role of supervisee. While school-based practitioners often have

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I want to thank Kathleen C. Faller of the University of Michigan School of Social Work and Frank Vandervoort from the University of Michigan Law School for their help in constructing this Figure.

### Figure 1:

Default Professional Thinking Styles: Quintessential Lawyer and Social Worker Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking like a Lawyer</th>
<th>Thinking like a Social Worker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rules/Law</td>
<td>Circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facts</td>
<td>Feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Forward</td>
<td>Person-in-Situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Play</td>
<td>Fair Share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversarial</td>
<td>Mediating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Win/Loose</td>
<td>Win /Win</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 I want to thank Kathleen C. Faller of the University of Michigan School of social Work and Frank Vandervoort from the University of Michigan Law School for their help in constructing this Figure.
professional supervisors such as Special Education Directors, or School Social Work Services Directors, when that practitioner is in a school building he or she will typically receive managerial supervision for the building principal. The mindset and culture of principals (and other school administrators) can, and arguably should be, different from that of a school social worker. Along with disciplinary differences, their frames-of-reference will also vary resulting in the previously referred to pitfall of not appreciating the perspective of “the other.” For example, while a principal has the responsibility to consider all students, families and teachers when confronting many situations, a school social worker could be focused on how to intervene and advocate for a specific student or family. Such a difference frequently leads to conflicting professional opinions on the appropriate response by the school. However, these differences represent important contributions and need to be recognized and respected by both the principals and practitioners. Essentially, school administrators employ clinicians in part to bring a different mindset and culture to bear on school issues. Likewise, school practitioners need to be mindful of the roles and responsibilities that school administrators must assume when making decisions. Figure 2 below illustrates how a building principal and school social worker may diverge in mindset and culture.

Figure 2:

Default Professional Thinking Styles: Quintessential Principal and School Social Worker Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking like a Principal</th>
<th>Thinking like a School Social Worker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situation with a student</td>
<td>Student-in-Situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior --&gt; Consequences</td>
<td>Assessment --&gt; Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is best for the student body?</td>
<td>What is best for this student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should I suspend/expel this student</td>
<td>Should I refer this student for a Special Education or Psychological Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I get this family to come and pick this problematic student up?</td>
<td>Can I get this family to come and meet with me to try and help this problematic student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What impact is this student having on the climate of the school?</td>
<td>What impact is the climate of the school having on this student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will I have a group of parents or teachers complaining about similar struggles?</td>
<td>Should I start a group for students with similar struggles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These professional and disciplinary differences may well arise, as noted before, from even more basic value dispositions. Previous work on values by the lead author (Tropman, 1989; 1996; 2002) suggests that values come in pairs that are juxtaposed to one another. Each of us has a dominant commitment and a subdominant commitment. The provisional list offered below in Figure 3, mentions some common American values with which we would all agree. The problem, as it were, is that each of us prefers one set, in general, to the other.

As one engages in the work of supervision, which is difficult enough if we start from the same place. Different disciplines provide us with different rules which makes the work of supervision more complex. Cultural competence, largely used in social work to refer to understanding the different cultures of ethnicity, gender, and societies, also means one needs to understand the different cultures of professions and disciplines. Encountering different professional cultures is indeed a form of culture shock. The value packages in Figure 3 are even more difficult to address than those in Figures 1 or 2, because they exist more in our personal selves and hence, are more in the background and deep structure of our persona. When an alpha supervisor and a beta supervisee begin working together, there can be value differences, which are even deeper than professional differences that need to be understood. While reviewing Figure 3, also consider how such values orientations may correlate with, and therefore compound, differences between supervisors and supervisees resulting from the choices individuals’ might make with respect to chosen discipline and career path.

Figure 3:
Basic Value Packages Which Characterize American Society (Tropman, 1996; 2002)
Addressing these professional and personal differences is not easy. However, when differences in discipline exist, a good place to start is by focusing on value clarification. Clarification of values allows lawyers and social workers, alphas and betas, to have some awareness of their own values and those of the other. A second step is to develop an appreciation for, though not necessarily an embracing of, the different values. Cultural competence, as noted previously, involves working with different cultures in an appreciative and understanding manner. These cultures can include the legal culture as well as different races and ethnicities.

Key Concerns Across Disciplines: Common Tasks in Supervision

Culture and mindset, both professional and personal, represent the first big hurdles for supervisors of cross disciplinary work. They represent the context of supervisory work. Professional and disciplinary differences in core skills are also important. The focus groups we worked with identified seven areas of common supervisory work, and these become places where professional and disciplinary differences can make a difference. In each case, the impact of these differences can be minimized through the establishment and use of common tools.

1) Managing the work.

Managerial supervision's job is to keep work moving along. Supervising across disciplines is hard because different disciplines have different templates and comfort levels that keep the work process moving. POSSBE is an acronym that stands for: planning work, organizing the steps that get plans accomplished, strategizing with supervisees about how to sequences the plans, staffing by getting the people you need, budgeting by allocating money and time, and evaluating by monitoring, overseeing, assessing and appraisal. Using these POSSBE areas and following the sequence as a common template can be of great help in reducing interdisciplinary friction.

2) Setting goals and goal milestones.
Disciplines have different ways of goal setting, goal types, and moving toward goals. POSSBE helps, but an additional step of defining, distinguishing and orchestrating outcomes and outputs is necessary. Supervision requires defining, with and for workers, goals (outcomes, accomplishments) and milestones toward those goals (outputs), and not mistaking outputs for outcomes.

3) Using the supervisory staircase.

Workers arrive with different levels of competence (competence = knowledge + skill). Once on site they grow through levels of competence. Generally, these can be organized into the following levels of competence: novice worker, beginning worker, journey person or acceptably competent worker, expert worker, and master worker. Picture a staircase with the novice worker at the bottom stair and the master worker on the top stair. Supervision here involves working across competence levels. Supervisors need to use training, coaching, teaching, educating, and mentoring techniques up through this staircase. A couple of problems can develop here. One is that the fact that a person is a master in one area, for example law, does not mean that she or he cannot also be a novice in another area, for example social work. This problem is one that needs to be handled with delicacy, because masters tend to generalize their expertise. Hence, there can be masters in many different fields, and supervision of a master in one field by a master in another becomes difficult for obvious reasons.

Secondly, supervision is an administrative position, not a competence indicator. Orchestra conductors “supervise” orchestra members who play instruments, on which the conductor is (sometimes barely) a novice. So sometimes supervisors are journey persons supervising masters, as in the case of a new principal supervising a school-based mental health practitioner with 20 years experience. In such situations, the supervisor becomes more of a guide and attends to the fit between the master and the remaining whole, rather than reviewing work, as would be the case if the supervisor were working with a novice instead.

4) Making high quality decisions.

Perhaps the most important bottom line in supervision in the human services is the decisions that are made for and with clients. Different disciplines may have different criteria for determining high quality

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8 Appendix 1 gives an outline of the Supervisory Staircase and the Supervisory issues associated with each step from Novice to Master.
decisions. Decisions are the products of supervisor/supervisee interaction. They should be of the highest quality (high quality = all stakeholders ahead). Many organizations cannot learn by trial and error because their first error may well be their last trial. In child welfare, for example, decisions about whether a child should remain in their home or be removed are a daily occurrence. Likewise, decisions made by school professionals about whether a child needs to repeat a grade, or be expelled from school, can have life-long consequences. These are critical, even life and death decisions. Legal requisites come first, of course. After taking into account the legal requirements, attending to a decision framework that involves the following elements can help toward quality decision making:

1. consider the greatest good for the greatest number;
2. address the concerns of those who feel deeply;
3. address the concerns of those who have to carry out the decision(s);
4. address the issues of experts; and,
5. address the issue of what powerful people want.

A decision that meets these five criteria (1-5 + legal) has an excellent chance of being of high quality. In addition, it usually helps if some standard framework is followed in the processing of information for a decision. That way, everyone involved can be reassured that there is a process in place, which tends to assure that the relevant variables will be taken into account. Janis and Mann’s (1977) steps are really excellent for this purpose as they provide an easy to use process for decision making: determine need, 2]develop alternatives, 3]evaluate gains/losses for self and others, 4]weigh pros/cons, 5]commit to act, and 6]implement. Decisions go better if one follows these simple steps, in order.

Supervisors need to help supervisees develop and master an orderly decision making process to be sure that variables are not overlooked or improperly contextualized. Using such a process as a template will move supervisees along the road to high quality decision making.

5) Using Effective Communication.

Communication – what is said, how it is said, and to whom, involves at least three areas: 1) communication with self; 2) communication with others, and 3) feedback communication. While there are

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9 Other organizations where this is an issue are air traffic controllers, operators of nuclear power plants, delivering babies, etc. These are discussed in Karl Weick’s Sensemaking in Organizations (Weick, 1995).
many kinds of communication, the focus here is on oral communication. The first area of communication, communication with self, involves what people say to themselves, is where the supervisors’ mindset is reinforced, and is one of the key points of difficulty in supervising across disciplines. Hence, supervisors need to engage in reflection, which, examines their self-talk to temper their tendency toward closed circle, self reinforcing, self-talk.

The second area of communication is with the supervisee. Naturally that will be a better conversation if the supervisor has completed efforts in the first area of communication (the self) and the supervisor has an idea of the purposes of the meeting and what he or she hopes to get from it. That said, conversations with supervisees go more smoothly if they are focused, the communication is conjunctive, and the supervisor uses the skills of reflective listening (for example: confirming what the supervisee has said through oral statement “I hear you saying…,” attentiveness, actual responses to queries and question as opposed to evasions, and achieving conclusions for next steps at the end of the session).

The final area of communication that is of vital importance is feedback. Providing feedback is essential to the supervisory interaction, and is perhaps its core element. Following simple rules of feedback can minimize the chance of miscommunication and misunderstanding. Constructive feedback should be 1) close to the event; 2) nonjudgmental; 3) focused on behaviors (both in terms of problems and suggestions); 4) given in relatively small amounts. While not perfect, these tips can be very helpful in making feedback heard and used.

6) *Holding effective meetings.*

Much of the supervisor’s communication work, other than self-talk, is done in meetings. Running excellent meetings is a crucial skill, whether it is a staff meeting or a one on one meeting. While communication is an important component, structure and agenda building is vital as well. Disciplines have very different ways of approaching meetings. Developing a standard structure for meetings is extremely helpful – whether one on one or in a group of staff. One of the most useful practices is encompassed in the “Agenda Bell” (Tropman, 2002). Supervisors have the responsibility to run good supervisory meetings. In a nutshell, these meetings should achieve decisions, which are of high quality.

The "Agenda Bell" represents a graph of energy over time. As any meeting begins, the energy flow organizes itself into a “get go” phase, a “heavy work” phase, and a “decompression” phase. This
appears to be true regardless of the length of time of the meeting. For example, if there is a two hour staff meeting, it is the same as if it is a 20 minute supervisory session or a week long conference. The general format is as follows: intro; easy items; hard items; brainstorming for the future; and wrap (Tropman, 2002). It is important that one not use reporting; rather all participation is driven by the items upon which the group needs to act upon or about which they must brainstorm. This recipe is one which can be adapted and configured in terms of the local situation. Better practices for meetings can help supervisors be both effective (doing the right thing) and efficient (doing things right).

7) Managing and developing the supervisee/supervisor self.

Supervisors have the responsibility to assist in the development of their supervisee. This responsibility focuses on enhancing professional growth. It means that the managerial supervisor provides increasing challenges and encourages the development of increasing skills. In this respect the supervisor can model herself or himself after a music teacher. Music teachers want their pupils to get their current music lesson right, but also desire that their students migrate to more difficult music and more difficult techniques. Supervisors should take the same approach with their supervisees.

At the same time, supervisors need to develop themselves over time as well. If they are not growing they have a difficult time helping their supervisees grow. A key element here is that the supervisor reinforces and develops diverse interactional and cultural styles rather than growing only in their initially preferred area (preferred refers to naturally occurring realms, such as temperament). Diversity of intrapersonal and cultural styles means that one is comfortable in many modes, including, but not only, the one in which one feels the best. This is crucial in supervising across professions and disciplines because the ability to put oneself in another’s shoes plays a large part in supervising across disciplines. It allows for the understanding of the other that is necessary for successful supervision anywhere, but especially when your supervisor or supervisee is from another culture or mindset.

Key Concerns Across Disciplines: The Problem of Exacerbation

Whatever differences exist across professions and disciplines are magnified in certain situations that seem especially difficult for supervisors; providing feedback, giving corrective information, and dealing with difficult people (Pollan, 1996; Stone, Patton, & Heen, 1999; Milt, 1989). These are among the more difficult conversations the supervisor will have (think performance appraisal), and because each
party feels uncomfortable, the possibility for miscommunication rises sharply. Generally, good preparation is helpful (write it down) and using the “two meeting rule” helps as well (one for sharing information and perspectives, the second for action plans with reflection time in between). These especially difficult situations can also be cooled if the supervisor invites upward appraisal, where the supervisee also assesses the supervisor. One good technique for this is KSS – Keep, Stop, and Start. The supervisor asks the supervisee to share what things the supervisor is doing that are helpful and she or he should KEEP, what things are not helpful that she or he should STOP, and what things are not currently happening that she or he should START.

Key Problems Across Other Divides

Professions and disciplines are not the only differences with which supervisors might have trouble. Gender differences in communication styles, as well as differences in temperament (as measured, for this illustration, by a Myers Briggs Type Indicator [MBTI]) (Grey, 1992; Tannen, 1990; Keirsey & Bates, 1982). For example, Tannen argues that men tend to engage in “report” talk first—with the goal of conveying information, while women tend to engage in “rapport” talk first—with the purpose of establishing connection (Tannen, 1990). Of course each sex is able to do the other form of talking but it may help a "Mars" man work more effectively with a "Venus" woman if they understand and are more aware of these different forms of talking (Grey, 1992).

One of the world’s most popular assays in terms of behavioral repertoire is the Myers Briggs Type Inventory (Keirsey & Bates, 1982). That assay develops 16 focal styles that have important communication properties. As long as one does not push “type” too far, it is a useful aid in improving communication. In terms of temperament, consider the extrovert (E) and the introvert (I). The extrovert tends to think through talking, and surfaces a lot of ideas to which he or she may not really be attached. Whereas the introvert tends to think internally first and is quiet, then shares an alternative to which she or he might well be quite committed. The E thinks the I is not responding and the I thinks the E is babbling. Understanding type can help in understanding communication styles.

Conclusion
Social Work has long believed in the adage “start where the client is.” In another voice, Stephen Covey has Habit 5, "seek first to understand, then be understood”\(^{10}\) (Covey, 1990). The application of these dicta are vital to the managerial (and the professional) supervisor. The translation is simple, begin with the supervisee. Start where they are, rather than slipping into the default self which is so usual and comfortable to you that it is easy to do.

\(^{10}\) See http://www.leaderu.com/cl-institute/habits/habit5.html
Appendix 1: From Novice to Master

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Levels</th>
<th>Supervisory Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Novice: Thumbnail</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• performance slow and jerky</td>
<td>• understanding requirements and routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• attention to rules/facts</td>
<td>• reviewing requirements and routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• works with the book in hand</td>
<td>• narrow policy/practice gap</td>
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<tr>
<td>• heavy learner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisory Problem: little reinforcement from the task</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Beginner: Thumbnail</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• performance faster and smoother</td>
<td>• understands the requirements need to be accomplished by the employee</td>
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<tr>
<td>• begins rule fade (acting automatically)</td>
<td>• provides tips and suggestions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• patterns not mentioned in rules</td>
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<tr>
<td>• uses book less frequently</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisory Problem: embarrassments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Journeyperson: Thumbnail</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• performance usual in terms of speed and smoothness</td>
<td>• mastering requirements and routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• rule fade mostly complete</td>
<td>• improving requirements and routines</td>
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<tr>
<td>• selecting most important cues</td>
<td>• some p/p gap</td>
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<tr>
<td>• calculated, educated risk taking</td>
<td>• pass along information</td>
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<tr>
<td>• uses book only for exceptions</td>
<td>• set standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisory Problem: may think it’s the end</td>
<td>• the employee studies on her or his own checks in with the teacher for review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expert: Thumbnail</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• performance becomes fluid</td>
<td>• questions/improves routines and requirements, as possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>• rule fade complete</td>
<td>• brings best practices from elsewhere</td>
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<tr>
<td>• calculation and rationality diminish</td>
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<tr>
<td>• no plan is permanent</td>
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<tr>
<td>• attention shifts with cues</td>
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<tr>
<td>• holistic, intuitive grasp</td>
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<td>• can write the book</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisory Problem: possible “culture lock”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Master: Thumbnail</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• performance is seamless</td>
<td>• employee growth is the focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>• exactly the right speed; appears effortless</td>
<td>• looking to the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understands the deep structure of the effort</td>
<td>• personal connection with employee</td>
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<tr>
<td>• holistic recognition of cues</td>
<td>• mentoring begins when one goes beyond her/his job responsibilities in a voluntary, caring, sharing and helping relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• performance is solid, confident and sure</td>
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<tr>
<td>• deeply understand; sees beyond the obvious</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisory Problem: finding/arranging/managing access to the Master’s knowledge and self</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

References


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