

Best Practices

- **Don't assume** that employees understand where they may not be in alignment with expectations. What may seem clear to you, may not be clear at all to someone else.
- Keep in mind that **most office conflict is rooted in confusing roles and responsibilities**. As supervisor, you must be clear and consistent about roles and responsibilities, expectations, parameters, and accountability.
- **Start the communication process in face to face** conversations. It is easy to misread tone and concern in an email or memo; relying on emails can escalate tension rather than resolving what may start as a minor issue. Keep small issues small but addressing them in real time, consistently and appropriately.
- **Praise in public**, but address **corrections, counseling and reprimands in private**.
- **Email is a good resource for follow up**. Give a brief summary of the issue and confirm agreed actions. This creates a written record documenting with date and time stamp when an issue was addressed.
- If situations aren't resolved and/or behaviors continue, it is the supervisor's responsibility to coach and document, following the process and procedures laid out in the union contract and MSU policies and procedures. **For the next steps it is essential that you contact the college Human Resources Director and make them aware of the situation**.
- **Counseling Memos** are the next step up in addressing corrective behavior. Like an email follow up, you'll give a brief synopsis of the issue and then focus on the corrected behaviors that are expected.
- **Support Staff Disciplinary Action Policy & Procedure**
 - Investigation (verbal warning, written reprimand, suspension)
 - Disciplinary action--Verbal Warning
 - Disciplinary action--Written Reprimand
 - Disciplinary action--Suspension pending investigation
 - Disciplinary action--Suspension
 - Disciplinary action--Discharge

As supervisor you may encounter varying degrees of behavior that needs guidance and correction, from repeated tardiness, to hostile work environments that are being created through micro and macro-aggressions. You may have to deal with how someone's implicit biases affect their interactions with co-workers or students. You might have to address theft or embezzlement.

As serious as your supervisor duties are, remember that you are not alone. **Familiarizing yourself with the correct reporting chain, tools and resources available to supervisors builds your resilience and flexibility to address issues in real time with professionalism, compassion and firm accountability**. It is important to understand that there are situations where you are required to call in the assistance of the College Human Resources Director. When in doubt--reach out.

And finally, keep a work journal. Memory fades and might alter over time. It is very important to capture the facts in real time. Be specific. Focus on facts not second hand information, gossip or impressions. The more serious the situation, the more essential it is to have a real time written narrative capturing the facts. It's suggested that you might send yourself an email and save it in a folder for future reference. Remember to also **capture the positive and successful triumphs and not just focus on negative behaviors and interactions**. This becomes a very useful tool that you can refer to when it comes time for annual reviews and goal setting.