

Section 4: Supervising Your -Providers

Work Environment

The key to being an effective supervisor is clear communication and taking the time to deal with issues as they come up before they grow into big problems.

Tips to Maintain a Positive Work Environment

Assume responsibility - Especially in the beginning, don't lay on the blame. Begin feedback by saying things like: "I probably wasn't clear about this in the beginning, but I really want you to..."

Remember that everyone has a bad day - One of the difficulties with working together so closely is that it's hard to hide a bad mood. Try to be accommodating when someone seems to be "off" once in a while. Don't ignore frequent moodiness or disrespect, however.

Engage in mutual problem solving - Bring up a problem and ask your worker for ideas about how to solve the problem: "I know you are trying to get to work on time but when you are late, I get really anxious. What are your ideas about how to solve this?" Your worker may re-double her efforts to get to work on time, or if she really can't get to you on time and you want to keep her, perhaps you could do some things in the evening that you are currently doing in the morning.

Try temporary solutions - Sometimes there is no good solution to a problem. Instead of doing nothing, try the best idea for a set period of time. Make plans to review the situation with your worker after this trial period. It may be helpful to write a note on your calendar to make sure you actually discuss the issue again.

Get help - Just because you are the boss, doesn't mean you have to go it alone. Contact your DDS Support Broker and/or PPL for help and advice.

Performance Evaluation

A good way to keep the balance between being "friends" and having an employer/worker relationship is doing performance evaluations. Evaluations don't have to be long, but they are an important way for both you and your worker to check in with how things are going.

Warnings

There are some issues that demand firm action - like chronic lateness, or not showing up for work. Giving the staff person a written warning is a good way for you to communicate that they “have crossed the line” and have threatened their job security. If you feel like you need to give a staff person a warning, it’s probably best to get some support from family or friends, your Support Broker or PPL.

Remember, the biggest problems are those that you try to ignore until it's too late!

Terminations

Few things are harder to do than dismissing an employee. Even when you know it is the right thing to do, it’s still stressful. Discuss this with your Support Broker.

If you’ve hired an agency to provide staff to you, inform the agency of your desire to have the employee dismissed. The staff person is employed by the agency and therefore the agency must terminate their relationship with you.

If you hired the staff person directly, don’t try to fire them on your own. Talk it over with your Support Broker and make sure you have someone there with you on the day you tell your staff person.

It is important to notify PPL that you have let your staff person go. A termination form is included in **Appendix E**, please complete this Form and send it into PPL.

Important Steps to Terminate A Support Worker

- It is critically important that you make this decision before you sit down and meet with the person. First decide if they need to go; then plan how you are going to talk to them about it.

Avoid confrontation when terminating a provider.

Although this is difficult, try to avoid going back into old issues. You have already made up your mind, so now it is time to be as calm as possible.

- Avoid confrontation. Although this is difficult, try to avoid going back into old issues. You have already made up your mind, so now it's time to be as calm as possible. Let the person know your needs have changed and you need to let them go.
- Have a back-up plan. Even if you are willing to have the person work for a few more weeks, it's important to have a backup plan because there is a good chance the person will quit on the spot.
- Learn from the experience. After you've had some time to consider the situation, think about what you have learned from it. Would you deal with the conflict in another way? Was there a question you would have asked in the interview process that would have helped you realize that this was not the person for you?



Section Review: Pulling the Pieces Together

Supervising your own staff can be a tough job, because it's hard to be “the boss” for people you care about and who care about you. The key to being an effective supervisor is clear communication and taking the time to deal with issues as they come up rather than allowing them to grow into big problems. Tips for maintaining a positive work environment: *assume responsibility, remember that everyone has a bad day, engage in mutual problem solving, try temporary solutions, and get help when you feel overwhelmed or need advice.*

A good way to keep the balance between being “friends” and having an employer/worker relationship is doing performance evaluations. Most employees will do a good job and get good reviews, but some may not work out. Terminating an employee is stressful. Don't try to fire someone on your own. Talk to your Support Broker and ask them for advice and assistance. After you've had some time to consider the situation, think about what you have learned from it. Was there a question you would have asked in the interview process that would have helped you realize that this was not the person for you?

PPL Contact Information

If you have questions about the tax forms or the process, please contact your Support Broker. If you would like to request tax packets, confirm receipt of tax packets, have questions about your timesheet or checks please contact Public Partnerships by telephone, e-mail or fax at the numbers listed below. If Public Partnerships is unable to answer your questions, we will direct you back to your Support Broker. We welcome your input, so please feel comfortable about contacting us. Make sure you keep this handbook in a safe place to use as a reference in the future.

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