Tips and Traps: Training New Staff   Members

WORKFORCE **INNOVATION**
through **SELF-MANAGED SUPPORTS**

Tips and Traps:
Training New Staff Members

This Tips and Traps sheet covers induction, ongoing training and performance management of staff

TIPS: *Inducting and Training Staff*

Recruitment — Avoid Information Overload — Varied Training Resources — Feedback — Learning Cycles and Reflections — Set Goals

INDUCTING STAFF BEGINS WITH RECRUITEMENT:

By the time your staff members start working with you, they should already know something about your vision for a good life, the goals you are working on, the kinds of values and beliefs that are important to you, what they look like in action and the kinds of qualities in a support worker that are expected. Your recruitment process should weed out the people that don't fit with the culture you want to create around you and there should be no surprises for you or them when they start working with you.

PROVIDE STAFF WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THEY NEED OVER A PERIOD OF TIME:

Identify what your workers absolutely must know before their first shift, on day 1, in the first week, in the second week, third week, fourth week, second month and so on. This will avoid information overload.

CREATE TRAINING MATERIALS IN A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT FORMATS:

We only remember 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, 50% of what we see and hear, 70% of what we discuss with others, 80% of what we personally experience 95% or what we teach others. Telling someone how to do something will not be enough nor will just giving them written instructions. Use additional strategies like photographs or videos. Buddy new support workers up with more experienced ones and get the new support staff member to answer some written reflection questions by discussing them with the more experienced support worker.

CAREFULLY CRAFT YOUR FEEDBACK:

Feedback needs to be given in a timely way – don't wait weeks before mentioning an issue or something the support worker did well. Be mindful of the tone and the words you use to ensure the feedback is given in a caring way. Be specific and give examples to avoid being vague. Ask your support workers to give you feedback too on how you could improve your working relationship with them.

CREATE A LEARNING CYCLE:

Help your support workers reflect on their practice and improve on it. This reflection can then be fed back into the documented practices. Include practice reflection in shift reports or at team meetings. Ask them to think about what worked, what didn't and why.

SET PERFORMANCE GOALS WITH YOUR STAFF:

Help your staff to identify their strengths and weaknesses and how their strengths could be harnessed and their weaknesses improved. Write this down and support them to achieve their work goals. Review them regularly.

TIPS: *Effective Communication*

Make sure the information your staff need can be accessed quickly and easily when they need it and only by those who need it:

Paper based systems tend to make the information difficult to find when you need it. For example, a guide on how to operate a wheelchair that is kept in the filing cabinet is not helpful when you are out and about and forget how to operate the chair.

Paper versions of documents can get out of date and you can end up with staff having different versions of the document as it is updated. Paper based documents can also get damaged – torn, stained or fading. They are also hard to keep secure or private. You don't want visitors seeing your bowel movement charts. It can also be difficult to collect information that helps you see trends or patterns. For example, if you want to analyse the relationship between diet and challenging behaviour from hand written paper notes.

Explore using online information management systems as these will allow you to store information securely and to be able to access it from anywhere with an internet connection. Examples are Google Docs, OneDrive, Drop Box, Podio.

Hold effective team meetings:

Meet regularly, start on time and keep to a routine. Agree on the ground rules and have a consistent agenda. Take it in turns to chair the meeting and take the notes. Make sure you allow everyone to have a say and record action items and due dates.

Take care when sending emails:

Take your time to craft emails to your staff and read them over carefully before sending. Never write one when you are upset. Have a face to face conversation if you need to discuss an issue. Emails can be hurtful and demotivating.

Remember the 7 C's when communicating:

Clear, Concise, Concrete, Correct, Coherent, Complete and Courteous. Help your staff to identify their strengths and weaknesses and how their strengths could be harnessed and their weaknesses improved.

TRAPS:

Not investing time in your team:

Having a team of supports that provides the support you need and stay with you for the long haul requires investing your time. The investment is well worth it.

Expecting staff to be able to provide the support you want from day 1:

Wouldn't it be great if you could hire a support worker that knew everything. Unfortunately, that is unlikely as you or the person to be supported is an individual, with individual needs. You will need to train them.

Expecting staff to remember everything you tell them:

If you find yourself telling staff things over and over and they are not getting it, take some responsibility for that yourself and look at other ways of providing the information. Video, photographs, role plays and so on can help.