



The National Sexual Assault Coalition Resource Sharing Project

ReShape Newsletter

Working together to end sexual violence.

Supervision Tools

“Relationships matter. Overwhelmingly, nonprofit staff members tell us they do their best work when they have positive relationships on the job, especially with their direct supervisors.” – [What Works: Building Multigenerational Leadership, a report by the Building Movement Project](#)



Supervision is powerful. Not only is it key to retaining employees, effective supervision also mitigates vicarious trauma and helps organizations expand their capacity to create change in their communities.

The styles of supervision we choose to use reflect our organizational values, personal skills, and needs of those we supervise. Choosing trauma-informed approaches to supervision creates spaces that model for staff the type of strengths-based, empowerment relationship that forms the bedrock between coalitions and local programs. Because supervision is about building a relationship between two or more people, becoming an effective supervisor requires a combination of self-reflection, skill building, and practice. In this edition of

ReShape, we look at tools, worksheets, and longer readings that address some of these different aspects.

In addition to this ReShape, RSP hosts peer-sharing Middle Management Monday calls for coalition staff who manage others. Please contact your [regional TA provider](#) for more information on these gatherings.

Trauma-Informed Supervision

Trauma-informed principles apply to all of the work we do – from the technical assistance we provide to the ways we engage with supervision. But what does that actually look like? As Katie Reid from the South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA) notes, “When supervision is structured to help increase staff self-assessment and awareness (like with reflective supervision) it gives the space for continual relationship-improvement without staff feeling like they are being policed.” The following resources offer some examples of how supervisors can use trauma-informed approaches to build relationships, confidence, and equitable relationships. Though the reflective supervision resources are written for people working in child welfare settings, the questions posed about exploring parallel processes and working in crisis-based settings are translatable to the relationships between coalitions, sexual assault programs, and survivors.

- [Building Blocks of Reflective Supervision](#)
- [Description of the Qualities of Reflective Supervision](#)
- [Trauma Informed Supervision powerpoint presentation by Rebecca Nickels, MSW](#)
- [SADI Recording: Change Starts Within](#)



Supervision and Organizational Health

Effective supervision is important for creating and maintaining organizational health. These resources developed by RSP and WCSAP examine why supervision is important at the coalition level and ways to establish supervision and debriefing relationships that don't further spread trauma.

- [Vicarious Trauma and the Coalition \(RSP\)](#)
- [Organizational Strategies to Alleviate Vicarious Trauma](#)
- [Open and Ethical Communication Facilitator's Guide](#)
- [Low-Impact Debriefing \(WCSAP\)](#)



Supervision Guides, Templates, and Tools

New managers or managers looking for an overview of the role and tools a supervisor can use may find these resources from the Management Assistance Group (MAG) and others helpful. MAG specifically creates organizational development tools for people working in social change organizations. The longer guide offers worksheets, short lists, and problem solving tips. The other resources in this section offer concrete questions, agendas, and other templates to help build rapport and self-awareness.

- [Advancing Your Cause Through the People You Manage Guide](#)
- [Blog post on the power of managers](#)
- Sample supervision agendas from the [Management Center](#) and [CompassPoint](#)
- [Sample Reflective Questions](#)
- [Sample Coaching Questions](#)
- [MECASA Communications Preferences worksheet](#)
- [Style Under Stress Test](#)



Addressing Barriers to Trust and Relationship in Supervision

[Johari's Window](#) is a psychological tool that reminds us we all have blind spots – things we don't know about ourselves that others do know. As supervisors, when our blind spots include unexamined attitudes about race, class, gender, sexuality, geography, or other axes of power, this can undermine the trust necessary to build effective relationships with those we supervise. For example, [research shows](#) that regardless of the supervisor's race, having an equal or deeper understanding of racial identity development than the people we supervise is important to create meaningful partnership in same-race and different-race supervision pairings. If we do not know how deep our understanding of racial identity development is, we may be building unintentional barriers to trust. Taking responsibility for our own growth and learning about systems of racial oppression is an important part of our life-long leadership development as people seeking to create a better world for survivors of sexual violence. Engaging in self-reflection, receiving honest feedback from those around us, and being willing to make and admit mistakes are all part of this journey. There is no roadmap or step-by-step guide for this work. Rather, this section offers resources and tools that may inspire meaningful opportunities for reflection and promising practices.

- [Teaching Tolerance guide](#)
- [A personal story about race and class](#)
- [American Progress article on Reflecting the Ideals We Champion](#)

- [#GoodReads Resources on Racial Equity](#)



Supervising Remote Employees and Volunteers

Providing statewide/territory-wide technical assistance means that coalitions often need to have employees and volunteers spread out over long distances. Technological improvements increasingly allow coalitions to hire people who work remotely, enabling people from rural communities, folks with mobility limitations, and others for whom working off-site or from home is best to remain where they are. But there is also a trade-off. Working remotely can make it harder to build rapport, camaraderie, and a shared organizational culture. These are key protective factors against vicarious trauma, so this is an important challenge for supervisors to address. The resources below offer some tips for how to intentionally build relationships with employees or volunteers working remotely.

- [RSP's rural remote supervision paper](#)
- [Thrive Global's Tips for Strengthening Rapport with Remote Workers](#)

- [Forbes' Top 15 Tips to Effectively Manage Remote Employees](#)
- [HBR article on remote supervision](#)
- [Managing Volunteers](#)

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