

Putting the SUPER in Supervision

Introduction:

If you have spent any time in the workplace, you may have encountered managers and supervisors that you thought to be very good at supervising others. Regrettably, you also may have seen managers and supervisors who were very poor when it came to supervising others. This class is about the importance of good supervision; because when done well, it makes the work a better place. A caveat – if you are looking for some kind of secret ingredient to great supervision, you will probably be disappointed. Becoming a SUPER supervisor is hard work and we will look at five skill areas that, in the opinion of your facilitator, distinguish good, great, and SUPER supervisors from the rest.

Bosses can be smart, talented and experts in their field, but that does not mean they are also good at managing people.

American Funding Solutions

Why this topic?

Your facilitator is someone who has considerable experience both as a supervisor and someone who has trained supervisors and managers in understanding the importance of the work they do as supervisors and managers. Here are four (4) reasons for a class like this one.

1. Supervisors operate at the interface
2. Supervisors set the environment/tone
3. Supervisors are the front line of organizational leadership
4. Supervisors develop others

What your facilitator has learned along the way:

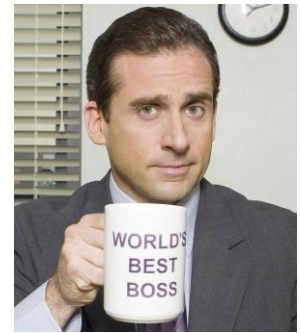
Your facilitator's experience provides a good background for this class.

1. Director of Employee Relations
2. Higher Education, Corporate, public sector, non-profit work areas
3. Experience in:
 - a. Investigations
 - b. Policy violations
 - c. Disciplinary actions
 - d. Performance management
 - e. Terminations (and other adverse employment actions)
4. Numerous interactions/conversations with:
 - a. Employees
 - b. Supervisors

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Objectives for today:

1. Discuss what makes a “good” supervisor (Group activity)
2. Identify five (5) core skills for supervisors
3. Review related research findings about supervision
4. Identify obstacles which hinder good supervisor development
5. Create a personal action/development plan. (Take home exercise)



Group Activity:

As mentioned at the outset, most of us have experiences with some good and some not so good supervisors. In this activity, group up with others and talk about characteristics, abilities, skills, or behaviors that distinguish the good and not so good supervisors/managers. Try to come up with 2 or 3 examples for both the positive and negative side. And if you had to identify one item on the positive side as more important, what would that be?

(+) Supervisor	(-) Supervisor
1	1
2	2
3	3

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“Stuff” that gets in the way:

There are many things that can get in the way of becoming an effective supervisor or manager. Here are three that your facilitator has observed across his tenure working in employee relations.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Top five SUPER skills:

One could spend hours reading books, internet articles, and listening to stories as to what distinguishes good supervisors and managers from poor ones. Such efforts would likely produce a list of many items and examples. We, however, will focus on five skills that your facilitator believes are key difference makers in becoming SUPER supervisors.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

*A leader is best when people
barely know he exists, when his
work is done, his aim fulfilled,
they will say: we did it ourselves.*

Lao Tzu
5th Century BC

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Skill 1: Communication:

Almost without exception, a discussion concerning what separates good from poor supervisors and managers frequently points to their communication skills or lack thereof. We need to remind ourselves that communication is much more than the words we say. Effective communicators understand the interplay between verbal and nonverbal communication skills.

Do you want to find out if you are a good communicator, send this simple four statement survey to those you supervise. Using a scale of 4-Consistently, 3-Most of time, 2-Sometimes, 1-Rarely, ask them to respond to these four statements:

- My supervisor keeps me informed about things that are important.
- My supervisor provides clear directions & priorities to me.
- My supervisor really listens to me when I speak to them.
- My supervisor communicates well with me one-on-one.

If we were to ask 1000 employees at your institution, what concerns do you have about the communication you receive from your supervisor or manager, what do you think we would find?

Communication styles:

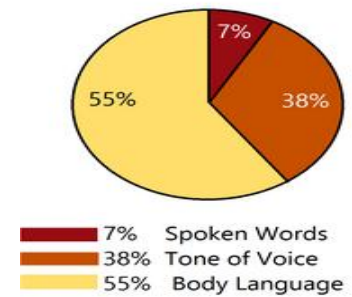
Those who teach communication skills may talk about models that describe different styles of communicating. One such model describes seven (7) communication styles

1. Assertive
2. Aggressive
3. Passive-Aggressive
4. Submissive
5. Manipulative
6. Direct
7. Indirect

Other models focus on four styles: assertive, aggressive, passive, and passive aggressive. The point here is there are many models we could examine. We will discuss one that is a bit simpler. **Please complete the communication styles assessment before attending the presentation.**

See your guide for the communication style assessment tool.

Albert Mehrabian's rule of interpersonal communication



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Interpreting the communication styles assessment results:

In this model, the assessment identifies four (4) communication styles, which link to certain personality types:

- Type 1 – Action
- Type 2 – Process
- Type 3 – People
- Type 4 – Idea

Connecting to others communication style:

Our challenge as supervisors is taking the time to listen to our people. Pay attention and they may communicate their style. Here are some suggestions for connecting to each of the four styles in your people.

- Type 1 – Action
- Type 2 - Process
- Type 3 - People
- Type 4 - Idea

Communication and Conflict:

If you supervise others, conflict is pretty much inevitable and it's extremely probable that communication played a significant part in the development of that conflict.

It's understandable that we just want conflict to go away. We want things to be calm but just ignoring conflict or trying to force it to go away is not the answer. It needs to be addressed. It is likely that you probably already have an approach which you rely on when dealing with interpersonal conflict and we are going to see if we can find out what it is with an in-class assessment.

Great communication begins with connection.

Oprah Winfrey

"Life is very short, and there's no time for fussing and fighting my friends"



— John
Lennon

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The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)...

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument was designed to assess one's approach or conflict handling style. Regrettably, because it is copyrighted and expensive, we can't use it for this class. The TKI:

- Identifies five (5) common styles/approaches to conflict
- Is scientifically validated; features 30 forced-choice questions
- Has sold/published 10+ million copies; multiple languages
- Costs for one person varies (\$45-\$60)

Since we are precluded from using the actual TKI, we can, however, use a proxy, public assessment based on the work of David Johnson. He describes the same five conflict styles but uses animal images to illustrate each style. If you haven't completed the assessment, we will take some time in class to do so.

In class conflict assessment

Your instructor will explain more about in-class assessment, how to complete, score it, and then review each of the five styles/approaches.

TKI: Two dimensions & Five conflict approaches/styles...

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument (TKI) is one of the most well-known tools for assessing how one approaches conflict. We may not be able to use the actual TKI, but we can describe it and discuss each of the five approaches identified by the researchers, Thomas and Killman. The five approaches are:

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Accommodating
- Avoiding
- Compromising

A copy of conflict style assessment tool is also in the participant guide

Communication and Conflict
(A Self-Assessment)

Below are 15 statements. Each statement represents a possible style or approach someone might choose when they find themselves in conflict with another team member or co-worker. Please don't over think your response or speculate on how you "should" answer. Read the statement and respond according to your first impulse.

For each statement, provide a rating (i.e. a numerical value) corresponding to the rating values shown below:

1 = Rarely/never 4 = Very Often 3 = Sometimes 2 = Not Very Often 1 = Rarely, if ever

1. I will be assertive with my colleagues and coworkers to demonstrate the merits of my ideas and the positions I take.

2. I will push for give and take to reach a settlement to conflict that exists between me and others.

3. I will attempt to meet the expectations of colleagues and others when we are in conflict.

4. I will investigate issues creating conflict to discover and reach solutions that are mutually acceptable to the concerned parties.

5. I will be firm in my resolve when it comes to defending my beliefs/ideas about a position I have taken.

6. I will avoid being singled out, preferring to keep to myself conflict I am having with others.

7. I will push for my ideas/solutions to be heard and considered when in conflict with colleagues and co-workers.

8. I will bargain with others so we can reach a solution to conflict we are experiencing.

9. I will trade important information with others so problems caused by conflict can be solved cooperatively.

10. I will avoid discussing my differences or disagreements with other colleagues and co-workers.

11. I will adjust to the ideas and concerns of my colleagues and coworkers.

12. I will push to bring everyone's concerns out into the open to resolve the conflicts between us.

13. I will put forward middle positions to break deadlocks and impasses that keep us in conflict.

14. I will go with the recommendations & opinions of my colleagues and co-workers.

15. I will get around hard feelings and keep my disagreements with colleagues and co-workers to myself.

From Putting the SUPER in Supervision - CBAE Presentation by David Gleason (2026)

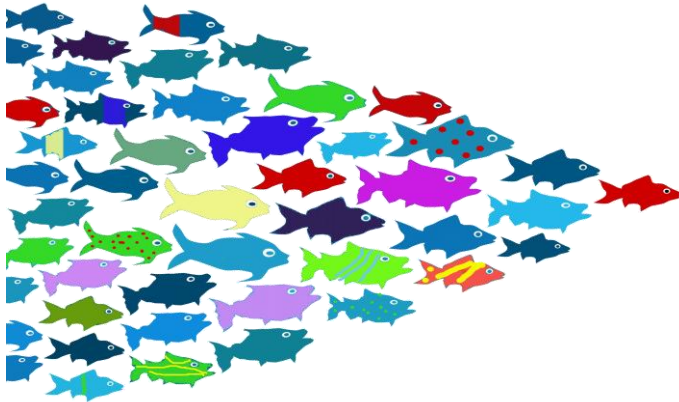
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Skill 2 - Leadership:

There are voices that argue those operating at the basic supervisory level are not true leaders. What's even worse is when the supervisor believes this. If you ask a supervisor if they a leader, they might say, "who me." However, the question is not whether a supervisor is a leader. The better question to ask is what kind of leader the supervisor is.

Group Discussion – Who's the Leader?

Looking at the image below, who would you say is the leader in this group? Why?



Leadership theories and models:

What makes a great leader? Who gets to decide? There are probably more ideas and models than there are participants in this class. A popular early model was advanced by Kurt Lewin in 1939. Three types:

⇒ Authoritarian

⇒ Participative

⇒ Delegative

Four common theoretical approaches to describe leadership:

⇒ Trait theories

⇒ Behavioral theories

⇒ Contingency theories

⇒ Power & Influence theories

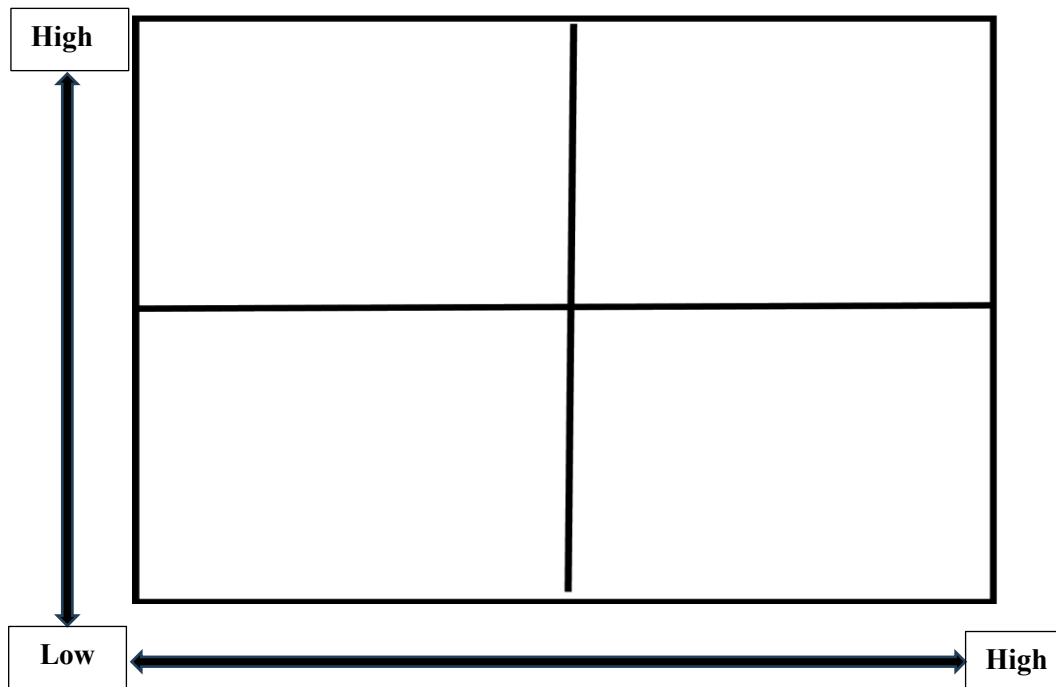
If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

John Quincy Adams
6th US President

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The Situational Leadership Model:

This model was created by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard and described in their 1969 book, *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*. It's currently in its 10th edition. The basic idea of the model is that no single leadership style is better than the other. Each style has its place, and good leaders will adapt their leadership style based on those they lead. The model has four (4) domains and two (2) dimensions:



Situational Leadership® is a common-sense, contingency-based leadership model that consists of four common leadership styles.

Center for Leadership Studies

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Are you a checkers or chess type of leader?

Marcus Buckingham, writing for the Harvard Business Review, asked an important question. “*What sets the great boss apart from the average boss?*” To some extent, this class focuses on five skills that begin to answer that question. Buckingham describes survey research of 80,000 managers which was conducted by the Gallup Organization and studies of top performers; he has found one quality that seems to set great managers and supervisors apart from the rest. See his answer in the sidebar.

Using the metaphor of playing checkers or playing chess, Buckingham suggest “*average managers play checkers*” and “*great managers play chess.*” What do you think Buckingham means by that?

“I’ve found that while there are as many styles of management as there are managers, one quality sets truly great managers from the rest: They discover what is unique about each person and capitalize on it.”

Marcus Buckingham.
What Great Managers Do
Harvard Business Review

Value of the Situational Leadership Model:

Despite being an older model of leadership styles. This model offers the flexibility to “*read the room*” and adapt your approach to lead in a way that makes the most sense, given the persons with whom you are working. Thus, some key features or benefits of this model include:

- Understands that employees are all different
- Recognizes and uses employee differences in how they lead
- Adjusts/adapts leadership style to:
 - Needs of the situation
 - The employee’s abilities
 - The employee’s motivation

When supervision follows a “cookie cutter” approach to the management of direct reports, supervision suffers as does those who report to that supervisor. Supervision is tough enough. Perhaps this model offers something better.

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It's about your view of leadership:

There is an important question to ask yourself. “*What is my view of leadership?*” When you think about leadership, what terms do you use to describe or define it.

Too often leadership is viewed in terms of three common variables.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

So, how about we start using a better word, a better description of what the supervisory role can become.

Performance management is the ongoing process of communication between a supervisor and an employee that occurs throughout the year, in support of accomplishing the strategic objectives of the organization. The process includes clarifying expectations, setting objectives, identifying goals, providing feedback, and reviewing results.

Office of Human Resources,
UC Berkley

Skill 3 - Performance management: What exactly is it?

How would you define performance management? What words, concepts, principles come to mind? Consider UC Berkley's definition of performance management shown in the side bar. Consider the following elements:

- Ongoing process
- Communication between supervisor and employee
- Throughout the year
- Strategic objectives
- Clarifying expectations
- Identifying goals
- Providing feedback
- Reviewing results

Dare we ask? Does this really happen? Aren't these the very things that separate poor performance management from super performance management? If so, what gets in the way? Why doesn't this kind of performance management happen all the time?

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Performance management: Seven sins...

It has been said that feedback is critical for employees. If they don't know what is not working, they can't fix it. Admittedly, performance management requires critique but it so much more. Yes, managers and supervisors are busy with their day-to-day duties and that can easily get in the way of knowing and providing the feedback that employees need, and surprise, want. Unfortunately, that is not the only issue when it comes to providing effective performance management.

1. Treating it as a once-a-year event
2. Not talking about it (waiting for a better time)
3. Avoiding “difficult” conversations
4. Failing to document in real time
5. Little or no specific goals
6. Focusing on failure vs success
7. Surprising the employee

Responding to performance problems

What happens when an employee is not performing well? What's supervisor to do? Rather than jump to conclusions, we need to engage in some very serious discernment and ask some specific questions like:

Is this about _____ or _____

Is this an issue of _____ or _____

Are we talking about _____ or _____

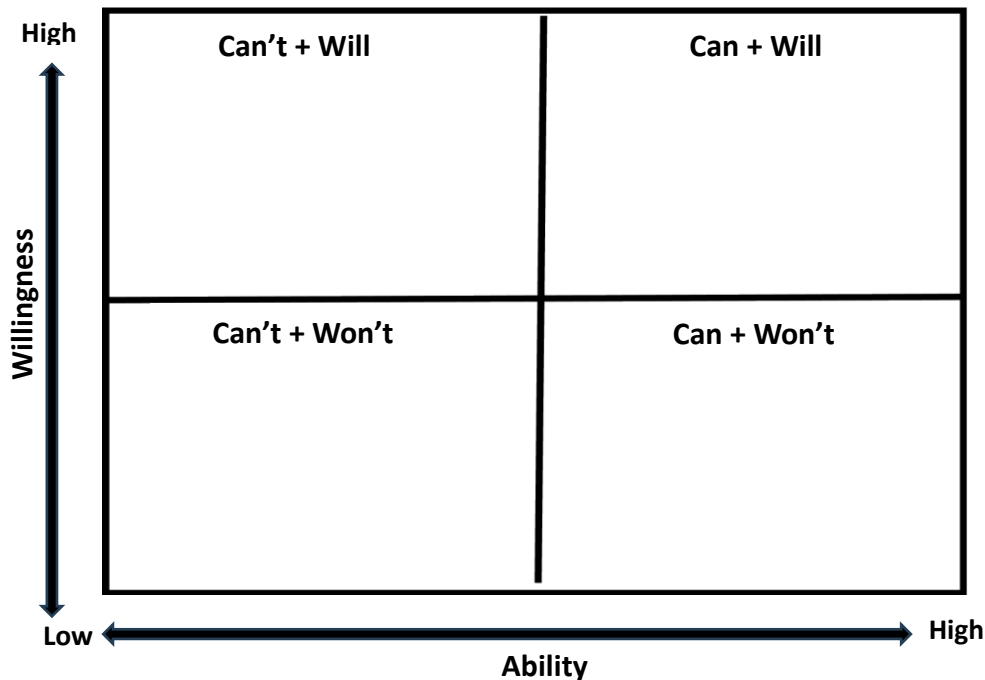
Is the performance deficit a problem of _____ or _____



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Using a decision matrix:

Addressing employee performance concerns is about asking the right questions so you know where to start. A decision matrix is a tool that can help you ask the right questions and here's a way to visualize that.



To ask the right question is already half the solution of a problem.

Carl Jung,
Swiss Psychiatrist

What about using a performance improvement plan (PIP)?

The performance improvement plan, (aka PIP) is a tool for talking about and documenting performance concerns with your employees. It often depends on the relationship between the supervisor and the employee along with the why, how, and when the supervisor uses this tool. The PIP has its fans and its critics. Listed below are examples of both.

- + A formal, structured plan.
- + Helps to identify problem issues.
- + Helps clarify/codify expectations.
- + Identifies resources & supports.
- + Establishes timelines
- Less useful for personal issues.
- May create resentment "trapped."
- Sometimes seen as "last straw."
- Often used too late in the process.

A sample PIP form can be found in the back of the participant guide.

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Employees and performance feedback:

Some believe that most employees dislike performance reviews. To some extent that is true. Yet research suggests that employees are not against performance reviews, but they do struggle with the way the review is done. It seems employees do want feedback. Note the following:

- 75% - believe feedback is useful
- 65% - want more feedback
- 63% - Gen Z want more timely constructive feedback
- 80% - Gen Y prefer on spot recognition vs formal reviews
- 14% - lower turnover rate for companies who give regular employee feedback
- One in five employees don't believe they will get regular feedback.

The challenge then is how supervisors can do a better job of communicating feedback to the employee. It's fundamentally about being consistent in delivering useful and meaningful feedback to employees. A tool that some find helpful is using a performance planning summary document.

See performance planning meeting summary form in participant guide.

There are voices out there arguing that the performance review process is dead; some companies have abandoned it, but many are still searching for something better to replace it. Perhaps the solution is to just make it better by becoming more consistent in our feedback to employees and putting greater emphasis on how they can develop, become better, and be more successful instead of just documenting their failures.

Skill 4 - Discipline:

It's probably true. Whether you are the supervisor or the employee, discipline carries a great deal of negativity. In truth, discipline is about learning, or at least it should be. The employee probably doesn't feel like it's a learning experience. appears we have a long way to go in our practices of employee discipline and changing everyone's perception.

Review the quotation on the right, taken from Rutgers University and their Office of Human Resources. Notice the following:

- It's about instruction rather than punishment.
- It's about a supervisor's responsibility to explain.
- It's about expected improvement areas.
- It's about suggestions on how to improve.
- It's about allowing time for improvement.



In most cases, the purpose of discipline is to instruct and correct rather than to punish. It is your responsibility as a manager/supervisor to explain to the employees those areas in which they are expected to improve, to make suggestions about how to improve, and to allow time for the employee to make improvements."

Rutgers University,
Office of Human Resources

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Managing the discipline process:

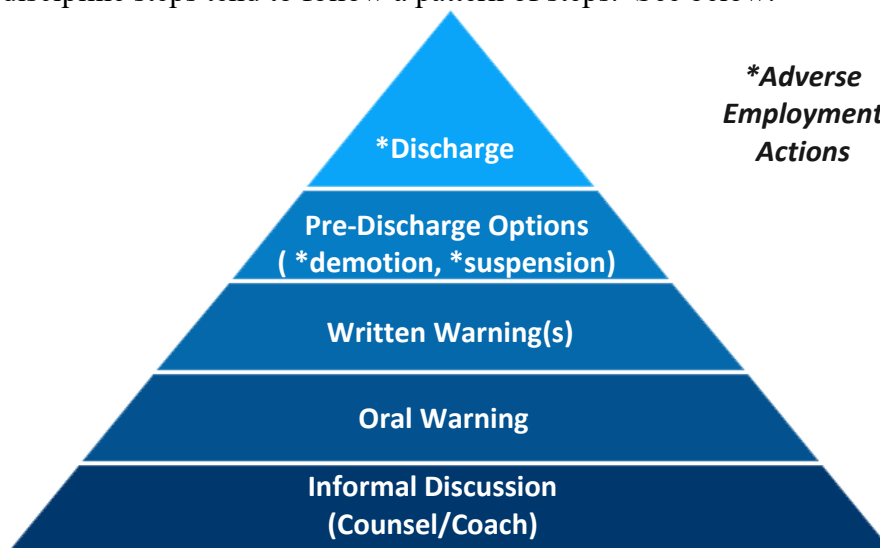
Getting discipline right may well be one of the most difficult and stressful things a supervisor does. If we are honest, it just doesn't feel good. Why is that? If discipline is supposed to be about learning, then maybe we are using the wrong lens to look at employee discipline. Here are a few things to remember in administering the discipline process.

- Get HR involved at every step.
- Know/follow institution policies.
- Set your ego aside.
- Document, document, document.
- Follow a progressive approach.

A closer look at progressive discipline:

According to Nolo.com (an online source for legal information), *"Progressive discipline is an employee disciplinary system that provides a graduated range of responses to employee performance or conduct problems. Disciplinary measures range from mild to severe, depending on the nature and the frequency of the problem."*

The steps of progressive discipline are outlined in your institution's policy. If your institution includes bargaining units (i.e. unions), the steps may be prescribed in the bargaining unit's documents. Progressive discipline steps tend to follow a pattern of steps. See below:



Where to start? (Group Discussion)

Supervisors sometimes struggle with where to begin once they have a performance or behavioral issue requiring a disciplinary action. What is warranted? Where to begin? What step comes first?



An adverse employment action is a significant, tangible change in employment conditions that negatively impacts the employee, such as termination, demotion or suspension. It could also include a failure to promote, undesirable work duties, work schedule or location.

Nolo.com

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The decision to terminate:

The decision to terminate an employee is one that deserves considerable introspection and caution. It carries very real legal risks to the supervisor and to the institution. Some suggestions to remember if it comes to this.

- If it is not troubling to the supervisor, something is wrong
- It's always about dignity and respect
- "Every firing is a failure"
- What are legitimate reasons to fire an employee
- When to fire (i.e. best times/days)
- Follow institution policies
- Work closely with HR

Additional thoughts about the discipline process:

Many believe that the disciplinary process is more difficult than ever for today's supervisors, especially when it comes to conducting safe and legal disciplinary actions. Perhaps that is true. Perhaps not. However, the very good supervisors and managers have learned better ways of managing this process and the stress it brings to all concerned. There is no simple solution, just vigilance and a deep desire to do the right thing.

SUPER supervisors understand the danger of trying to go it alone. They choose to do their very best, even with something as difficult as discipline: they listen deeper before making decisions, ask questions, they consult with others, they act consistently and they treat every employee with dignity and respect, even those with appalling performance issues or serious behavioral problems. Just maybe one of best predictors of a very good supervisor is how they respond to disciplinary issues.

Choosing to be curious first

In the Ted Lasso series there is a quote that Ted attributes to Walt Whitman. Though unable to find such a quote in the published writings of Walt Whitman, there is a lot of wisdom here. It is particularly good for those who supervise/manage others, given the incredible responsibility they have as supervisors and how they respond to those they supervise.

"Be curious not judgmental." Ted Lasso, Season 1, Episode 8)



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Skill 5 - Emotional intelligence:

Emotional intelligence is about the ability to understand and manage your emotions, as well as recognizing and influencing the emotions of those around you. Daniel Goleman is best known as someone who popularized the term “emotional intelligence.”

Goleman believed that emotional intelligence is one of the best abilities for predicting the success of supervisors and managers. Furthermore, Goleman stated that emotional intelligence is as important as cognitive intelligence and wrote: “*research shows that for jobs of all kinds, emotional intelligence is twice as important an ingredient of outstanding performance as cognitive ability and technical skill combined.*” The good news for us is that emotional intelligence is something that can be learned, practiced, and improved.

Emotional intelligence - Four core areas:

We could easily do an entire class on emotional intelligence, also known as EI or EQ. Historically it’s been a frequent topic at CBMI. For this class we will do a quick overview of emotional intelligence. All 4 core areas are important skills for becoming a good supervisor. After the overview we will focus on one key element that differentiates the very good supervisors from very poor ones.

(See the Emotional Intelligence assessment in the participant guide.)

Recognition		Regulation	
You	Self-Awareness	Self-Management	
	Social-Awareness	Relationship Management	
Others			

(See some suggested readings on EQ listed in the participant guide.)

Emotional intelligence is the something in each of us that is bit intangible. It defines how we manage behavior, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions that achieve positive results.”

Emotional Intelligence
Quickbook

Travis Bradberry & Jean Greaves

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Emotional intelligence – Social Awareness (Empathy):

Several definitions are provided in the right column. Some key elements emerge, which give us a pretty good picture of what empathy is about.

- Understanding
- Sharing
- Imagining
- Being aware
- Vicarious experiencing
- Other's frame of reference

Daniel Goleman believes empathy is a crucial skill in social connections. Quite simply, he contends that empathy is paying attention, turning your attention toward others. It's about our focus. You can't understand others, what they are feeling if you aren't paying attention.

If for some reason we are unable to view in class the Simon Sinek video on empathy, check out the link to it in the references and useful web links found on the last page of the participant guide.

Empathy:

Goleman talks about empathy as one's focus and suggests that our focus or paying attention can take different forms. In several of Goleman's writings, he describes three forms of empathy.

1. Cognitive empathy -
2. Emotional empathy -
3. Empathic concern -

The ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation.

(Cambridge Dictionary)

The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another

(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Understanding a person from their frame of reference rather than one's own

(APA Dictionary of Psychology).

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Research on empathy:

Ernst and Young is a large global consulting firm; it's one of the top four accounting firms. They conducted a study of 1000 employees, asking employees how they thought empathy affected their work relationships and workplace operations. Here's some of their findings.

More than 80% of the respondents had some strong opinions about how empathy changes the workplace.

- More efficient
- More creative
- Increased job satisfaction
- Increased idea sharing
- Increased motivation

The study also discovered other interesting things about empathy:

- Inspired positive change
- Increased mutual respect
- Increased productivity
- Reduced turnover

As good as all this sounds, there was a caution that employees expressed about management's use of empathy:

- 52% of employees believed management's use of empathy was dishonest or disingenuous.
- The evidence they cited for this – “*a lack of follow-through*” by management.

We know what empathy looks like and feels like it. And with many of us our BS meter is sufficiently tuned to recognize when empathy is not genuine—when it is just an act. This is not a time to “*fake it until you can make it.*” Supervisors who are unable to feel or show empathy for others have a much bigger problem.

Being a supervisor who practices empathic concern changes things. Of everything we have discussed in this class, empathy is perhaps the one skill that makes the other skills work better. Yes, increased workplace empathy changes things; most of all it will change you and it will change your workplace.

Empathy is the only human superpower—it can shrink distance, cut through social and power hierarchies, transcend difference, and provoke political and social change.

Various sources

Empathy is my superpower but sometimes it feels like my Kryptonite.

Source Unknown

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Creating your own personal action plan:

It's been an honor to lead you through several areas that can make a profound difference in your job as a supervisor or manager. Hopefully, you have found something that you can take with you. But more than that, take some time and develop a written action or personal development plan concerning things you think you can do better as a supervisor or manager. There are many models of action plans forms, which you can find on the internet. Attached to this guide is simple plan that appears in the book, *The Emotional Intelligence Workbook* by Jill Dann and Derek Dann. Use it or find one from the Internet and commit to an action plan of what you will do to become a better supervisor. ter supervisor. You will be doing yourself a favor and particularly for those you supervise.

If you should choose to take some steps to becoming a SUPER supervisor, I would love to hear about it. My contact information is included in this document.

Some final thoughts – May you...

- Aspire to be the kind of supervisor that others want to follow or never want to leave
- Become the kind of supervisor that chooses curiosity first
- Be the kind of supervisor who is known for their empathy
- Become the kind of supervisor you always wish you had
- Return home with an action plan, a commitment to become a better supervisor and leader than when you left.

"To handle yourself, use your head. To handle others, use your heart."

Eleanor Roosevelt

For questions or follow-up with the presenter:

**David Gleason,
dgleaso@gmail.com**

An action plan is defined as a document or a checklist outlining certain steps, actions or tasks one needs to complete to achieve a goal.

Communication Style Assessment

Instructions: From the paired statement, please select the statement that is more typical of your personality. Do not view the pairs as an “either or” condition. Choose the statement that is a better description of you in your work environment. Be as spontaneous as possible with your selections. There is no wrong answer.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. I like action. | 25. I am cool under pressure. |
| 2. I deal with problems in a systematic way. | 26. I value experience very much. |
| 3. I believe teams are more effective than individuals. | 27. I listen to people. |
| 4. I enjoy innovation very much. | 28. People say I am a fast thinker. |
| 5. I am more interested in the future than in the past. | 29. Cooperation is a key word for me. |
| 6. I enjoy working with people. | 30. I use logical methods to test alternatives. |
| 7. I like to attend well-organized group meetings. | 31. I like to handle several projects at the same time. |
| 8. Deadlines are important for me. | 32. I always question myself. |
| 9. I cannot stand procrastination. | 33. I learn by doing. |
| 10. I believe that new ideas must be tested before being used. | 34. I believe my head rules my heart. |
| 11. I enjoy the stimulation of interaction with others. | 35. I can predict how others will react to a certain action. |
| 12. I am always looking for new possibilities. | 36. I do not like details. |
| 13. I want to set up my own objectives. | 37. Analysis should always precede action. |
| 14. When I start something, I go through until the end. | 38. I can assess the climate of a group. |
| 15. I basically try to understand other people's emotions. | 39. I tend to start things and not finish them. |
| 16. I do challenge people around me. | 40. I see myself as decisive. |
| 17. I look forward to receiving feedback on my performance. | 41. I search for challenging tasks. |
| 18. I find the step-by-step approach very effective. | 42. I rely on observation and data. |
| 19. I think I am good at reading people. | 43. I can openly express my feelings. |
| 20. I like creative problem solving. | 44. I like to design new projects. |
| 21. I extrapolate and project all the time. | 45. I enjoy reading very much. |
| 22. I am sensitive to others' needs. | 46. I see myself as a facilitator. |
| 23. Planning is the key to success. | 47. I like to focus on one issue at a time. |
| 24. I become impatient with long deliberations. | 48. I like to achieve. |
| | 49. I enjoy learning about others. |
| | 50. I like variety. |
| | 51. Facts speak for themselves. |
| | 52. I use my imagination as much as possible. |
| | 53. I am impatient with long, slow assignments. |
| | 54. My mind never stops working. |

55. Key decisions need to be made cautiously.
56. I strongly believe people need each other to get work done.

57. I usually make decisions with too much thinking.

58. Emotions create problems.

59. I like to be liked by others.

60. I can put two and two together quickly.

61. I try out my new ideas on people.

62. I believe in the scientific approach.

63. I like to get things done.

64. Good relationships are essential.

65. I tend to be impulsive.

66. I accept differences in people.

67. Communicating with people is an end in itself.

68. I like to be intellectually stimulated.

69. I like to organize.

70. I tend to jump from one task to another.

71. Talking and working with people is a creative art.

72. Self-actualization is a key word for me.

73. I enjoy playing with ideas.

74. I dislike wasting my time.

75. I enjoy doing what I am good at.

76. I learn by interacting with others.

77. I find abstractions interesting and enjoyable.

78. I am patient with details.

79. I like to be brief and to the point in my statements.

80. I feel confident in myself.

Scoring the Communication Styles Assessment

Instructions: Circle the items you have selected and add up the totals for each style (one point per each circled answer). The maximum is 20 per any one style and your total for the four styles should add to 40.

<u>Style</u>	<u>Circle your answer here</u>	<u>Style Score</u>
Style 1:	1 - 8 - 9 - 13 - 17 - 24 - 26 - 31 - 33 - 40 - 41 - 48 - 50 - 53 - 57 - 63 - 65 - 70 - 74 - 79	_____
Style 2:	2 - 7 - 10 - 14 - 18 - 23 - 25 - 30 - 34 - 37 - 42 - 47 - 51 - 55 - 58 - 62 - 66 - 69 - 75 - 78	_____
Style 3:	3 - 6 - 11 - 15 - 19 - 22 - 27 - 29 - 35 - 38 - 43 - 46 - 49 - 56 - 59 - 64 - 67 - 71 - 76 - 80	_____
Style 4:	4 - 5 - 12 - 16 - 20 - 21 - 28 - 32 - 36 - 39 - 44 - 45 - 52 - 54 - 60 - 61 - 68 - 72 - 73 - 77	_____

Sources: Negotiations: How to Achieve Win-Win Outcomes by Geof Cox.

(<https://ogefacultymentoring.web.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/11490/2016/09/Communication-Styles-assessment-ESAI.pdf>)
University of North Carolina

This assessment is for discussion and educational purposes; it is not a diagnostic instrument.

Communication and Conflict (A Self-Assessment)

Below are 15 statements. Each statement represents a possible style or approach someone might choose when they find themselves in conflict with another team member or co-worker. Please don't over think your response or speculate on how you "should" answer. Read the statement and respond according to your first impulse.

For each statement, provide a rating (i.e. a numerical value) corresponding to the rating values shown below:

5 = Routinely	4=Very Often	3=Sometimes	2=Not Very Often	1=Rarely, if ever
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1. _____ I will be assertive with my colleagues and coworkers to demonstrate the merits of my ideas and the positions I take.
2. _____ I will push for give and take to reach a settlement to conflict that exists between me and others.
3. _____ I will attempt to meet the expectations of colleagues and others when we are in conflict.
4. _____ I will investigate issues creating conflict to discover and reach solutions that are mutually acceptable to the concerned parties.
5. _____ I will be firm in my resolve when it comes to defending my beliefs/ideas about a position I have taken.
6. _____ I will avoid being singled out, preferring to keep to myself conflict I am having with others
7. _____ I will push for my ideas/solutions to be heard and considered when in conflict with colleagues and co-workers.
8. _____ I will bargain with others so we can reach a solution to conflict we are experiencing.
9. _____ I will trade important information with others so problems caused by conflict can be solved cooperatively.
10. _____ I will avoid discussing my differences or disagreements with other colleagues and co-workers.
11. _____ I will adjust to the ideas and concerns of my colleagues and coworkers.
12. _____ I will push to bring everyone's concerns out into the open to resolve the conflict between us.
13. _____ I will put forward middle positions to break deadlocks and impasses that keep us in conflict.
14. _____ I will go with the recommendations & opinions of my colleagues and co-workers.
15. _____ I will get around hard feelings and keep my disagreements with colleagues and co-workers to myself.

Scoring Your Assessment

Scoring: The 15 statements are listed below under five categories. Each category contains the statement number. Record the numerical value you placed next to each statement. Calculate a total score for each row. You will then add the values across each row and place the total value for each row in the cell on the right most column.

Style/Approach	Statement Value			Total Points
A:	1 =	5 =	7 =	
B:	4 =	9 =	12 =	
C:	6 =	10 =	15 =	
D:	3 =	11 =	14 =	
E:	2 =	8 =	13 =	

Results: Add the statement point values for each row and then please complete the three statements shown below. If you happen to end up with tied values, that's okay too. An explanation will follow.
--

1. Your dominant style: _____ (Style receiving the highest score)
2. Your back-up style: _____ (Style receiving the second highest score)
3. Your least preferred style: _____ (Style with the lowest score)

Remember that each style has its pros and cons. Problems emerge when we tend to overuse certain styles to the exclusion of the other styles. In other words, effective conflict management matches the style to the needs of the situation and the relationship we have with the other parties involved in the conflict.

(This assessment has not been scientifically validated and is offered for education and personal reflection.)

Performance Improvement Plan (Part 1)

Employee: _____ **Start Date:** _____

Job Title: _____

Supervisor: _____ **End Date:** _____

What is/are the area(s) of concern? (Describe area(s) of concern where employee is not meeting expectations.)

Role Expectations & Goals: (Describe acceptable performance/goals & what is required to successfully meet this plan.)

Performance Improvement Plan (Part 2)

Action Plan: *(Describe activities to help achieve performance goals including start dates and completion deadlines.)*

Resources & Supports *(Describe resources/ supports available to help employee complete goals)*

Tracking/Review: *(Describe employee progress. Include dates of reviews.)*

Signatures

Employee: _____ Date: _____

Manager _____ Date: _____

**Adapted from Academy to Innovate HR (AIHR)*

Performance Improvement Plan – Letter/Memo Format

To: Mike Carr, Financial Services Specialist
Re: Performance Improvement Plan

From: Ginny Tillerson, Manager
Date: July 29, 2025

As discussed in our monthly meeting on July 15, I raised concerns about declines in your performance. We have been working on these performance issues for about three (3) months now. Regrettably, I have only witnessed slight improvements in your performance and if you recall, I also brought up some initial concerns at your annual evaluation meeting in January. As such, I have created this plan to help us remedy the situation and ensure your job success. A copy of this performance improvement plan will be placed into your personnel file.

Your work as Financial Services Specialist requires you to work closely with our colleagues from across the University. For a little more than three months, I have received reports and seen numerous first-hand examples including: common and simple mistakes in your Excel reports; received complaints from various university departments on both the timeliness and accuracy of your reports. My goal is for you to be successful, but the current trajectory of your performance is not where it should and must be. Here are my expectations going forward:

- An immediate reduction in spreadsheet errors is expected, given your past proficiency with Excel. I understand that some errors may happen but expect an error rate of 0% but understand that occasional errors may occur as long they do not exceed 1% across your reports.
- Zero complaints from university colleagues and departments regarding timely submission and accuracy of reports for which you are responsible. I will request weekly feedback from those departments and personnel so that I may follow up with them and monitor your performance. Please provide me with a complete list of departments and the names of people in each department with whom you work.

To ensure your success, we will be meeting each Monday and Friday for the next four weeks so I can check and monitor your improvements. If I see consistent improvements, we will at that time alter the frequency of these review meetings. Also, if you need additional training on procedures or additional Excel training, let me know and I will get that for you. My goal here is your success. Therefore, please take seriously the corrective actions outlined in this plan.

This plan will begin immediately and will run for the next 60 days. After this period, a determination shall be made as to whether you are meeting the requirements documented here. If significant effort and progress have been made but the goals have not been completely met, this plan may be extended for an additional period not to exceed 30 days. If, however, I do not see a good faith effort on your part to make the necessary improvements described in this plan, I reserve the right to end the plan and consider possible disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

I am counting on you to improve your performance immediately and to maintain acceptable performance for the duration of your career. Once you have demonstrated that you can consistently meet the expectations outlined in this plan for a period of at least 120 days, I will then submit a memo to be inserted into your personnel file to indicate that you have satisfied the terms of this plan.

It is the policy of the University to encourage fair, efficient and equitable solutions for problems arising out of the employment relationship. If you feel that this action is unfair or inequitable, please contact the Office of Human Resources.

Signatures

--

Employee's Signature

Date

My signature above indicates that I have reviewed and discussed this Performance Improvement Plan with my supervisor. Signing this form does not indicate that you agree with this performance evaluation, only that your supervisor reviewed and discussed it with you.

--

Supervisor's Signature

Date

--

Witness Signature (if needed)

Date

cc: Human Resources (Employee Personal File)
Attachment: Discipline, Dismissal and Grievance Policy

Performance Planning Meeting Summary (Part 1)

Employee: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor: _____ Period: _____

Performance Goals/Objectives:

(Goals listed should include date set or modified)

Performance Goals Progress/Accomplishments:

(Completed goals, include date it was accomplished)

Performance Planning Meeting Summary (Part 2)

Performance Goals Progress/Accomplishments: *(Continued)*

Other Projects, Activities, & Accomplishments: *(Include other projects & activities showing this employee's time/ effort)*

Emotional Intelligence (EQ/EI) Self-Assessment

Responds to each statement using the following five-point scale to indicate your level of agreement with the statement. Add your scores and put a total score for each EQ measure in the space provided.

0 = Never/Rarely 1 = Occasionally 2 = Sometimes 3 = Frequently 4 = Always/Routinely

Self-Awareness			
#	Statement	Total:	Score
1	At any given moment, my feelings are clear to me.		
2	Emotions play an important part in my life.		
3	My moods and emotional states impact the people around me		
4	I find it easy to explain or put words to my feelings.		
5	My moods (emotional states) are easily affected by external events.		
6	I can sense when I am going to be angry.		
7	I readily can tell others my true feelings.		
8	I find it easy to describe my feelings.		
9	Even when I am upset, I remain aware of what is happening to me.		
10	I am able to stand apart from my thoughts and feelings and examine them.		
Self-Management			
#	Statement	Total:	Score
1	I accept responsibility for my reactions.		
2	I find it easy to make goals and then stick with them.		
3	I am an emotionally balanced person.		
4	I am a very patient person.		
5	I can accept critical comments from others without becoming angry or defensive.		
6	I can maintain my composure, even during stressful times and moments.		
7	For an issue that does not affect me directly, I don't let it bother me.		
8	I can restrain myself when I feel anger towards someone.		
9	I control urges to overindulge in things that could damage my well-being.		
10	I direct my energy into creative work or hobbies.		
Social Awareness			
#	Statement	Total:	Score
1	I consider the impact of my decisions and actions on other people.		
2	I can easily tell if people around me are becoming annoyed or upset.		
3	I can sense it when a person's mood changes.		
4	I am able to be supportive when giving difficulty or bad news to others.		
5	I am generally able to understand the way other people feel.		
6	My friends can tell me intimate things about themselves.		
7	It genuinely bothers me to see other people suffer.		
8	I know when to speak and when to be silent.		
9	I care what happens to other people.		
10	I understand when other people's plans change.		

Relationship Management			
#	Statement	Total:	Score
1	I am able to show affection to others.		
2	My relationships are special places for me, and I manage them well.		
3	I find it easy to share my deep feelings with others.		
4	I am good at motivating others.		
5	I am a cheerful person.		
6	It is easy for me to make friends.		
7	Others tell me that I am a sociable and fun person.		
8	I like helping people.		
9	Others can depend on me.		
10	I am able to talk someone down, make them feel better if they are upset or in conflict.		

Scoring Summary:

EQ Domain	My score:
Self-Awareness	
Self-Management	
Social Awareness	
Relationship Management	

Scoring Interpretation:

Scoring Range	Indications and Action Steps
0-24	Scores suggest an area to focus on; an area to enrich; an area for additional learning
25-34	Scores suggest some good, basic EQ skills; discover ways to strengthen skills
35-40	Scores suggest competence; proactively use your EQ skills; be a mentor to others

For Reflection & Follow-Up:

1. Even if this assessment did not score it as such, which of the four (4) core EQ skills do you think is your strength? Why?
2. Again, even if the assessment scores do not seem to score it this way which of the four (4) EQ skills do you see a gap in your EQ skills, an area for improvement? Why?
3. List some of the EQ skills you can work on, skills you can practice once you return to your institution.

Source: Used with permission and adapted from an assessment model created by Paul Mohapel.
<https://thevividmind.org/emotional-intelligence-questionnaire/>

(Author states this tool is for self-discovery and education; it is not a clinical or diagnostic instrument.)

A Sample Action/Personal Development Plan

<i>I will start...</i>	<i>I will do more...</i>
<i>I will stop ...</i>	<i>I will do less...</i>

From: The Emotional Intelligence Workbook by Jill Dann and Derek Dann, Hodder Education, 2012

References and Reading Suggestions

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- Dana, D. (2001). *Conflict Resolution*. New York: NY: McGraw Hill
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- Sutton, R. (2007). The no asshole rule: Building a civilized workplace and surviving one that isn't. Warner Business Books.

Web links

- Communication - <https://pumble.com/learn/hub/communication/> (includes discussion of communication styles)
- Kilmann Diagnostics – Free online resources and information related to conflict and the TKI assessment tool. Link to purchasing online TKI at a cost of \$50; includes a detailed report (sample report found on link) <https://kilmanndiagnostics.com/assessments/thomas-kilmann-instrument-one-assessment-person/>
- Discover Your Personality.Com - <http://www.discoveryourpersonality.com/tki.html>. TKI price appears to be \$55.00; includes a report and a link to a copy of a sample report.
- Leadership Overview of various types/styles - <https://www.leadershipahoy.com/leadership-styles/>
- Situational leadership. Center for Leadership Studies - <https://situational.com/situational-leadership/>
- Performance Management – Gallup: Reengineering Performance Management - <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/238064/re-engineering-performance-management.aspx>
- Emotional Intelligence – www.6seconds.org
- Emotional Intelligence and Leadership:
 - Yale School of Management - <https://cdo.som.yale.edu/blog/2025/11/07/leading-with-emotional-intelligence-the-key-to-effective-executive-leadership/>
 - Harvard Business School Online - <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/emotional-intelligence-in-leadership> (also offers free download – How to Become a More Effective Leader)
 - Simon Sinek – Leadership and Empathy - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi86Nr9Mdms> (about 22 mins.)
- Emotional Intelligence assessments:
 - Talent Smart Book edition - <https://www.talentsmarteq.com/test/> (Comes with purchase of Emotional Intelligence 2.0 book – Amazon: \$13.48-\$17.48. Online edition - \$70.00 - <https://www.talentsmarteq.com/assessments/>)
 - Information about various EQ/EI assessments - <https://www.themetissgroup.com/blog/cost-eq-assessments>
 - Psychology Today - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/tests/personality/emotional-intelligence-test> (test for information purposes only; not intended to be diagnostic)
 - Google “free online EQ tests” – some are free, some are not; tests may or may not be scientifically validated.