

## JOB PERFORMANCE COUNSELING MEETING OUTLINE

This page should be utilized to prepare a business meeting outline for the job performance counseling session in conjunction with pages C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, and C-6.

Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

### **PURPOSE OF JOB PERFORMANCE COUNSELING SESSION:**

\_\_\_ AT THE START OF THE SESSION STATE PURPOSE OF SESSION: CRITIQUE/DISAPPOINTMENT/CONCERN. (BRING EXAMPLES, CHARTS, FORMS ETC. WHICH ILLUSTRATE PROBLEM) (BE SPECIFIC, NOTING DATES, TIMES, ETC.)

\_\_\_ IDENTIFY THE ACCEPTABLE STANDARD OF PERFORMANCE/CONDUCT/POLICY/ETC. (BRING COPIES OF POLICIES, STANDARDS, JOB DESCRIPTIONS, EAP MATERIALS AS NEEDED.)

\_\_\_ ITEMS TO COVER IN MEETING FROM MARC JOB PERFORMANCE COUNSELING CHECKLIST/ ATTACH PLANNING CHECKLIST PAGES C-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. (CHECK OFF ITEMS AS THEY ARE COVERED TO ALLEVIATE NEED FOR EXTENSIVE NOTE TAKING.)

\_\_\_ DISCUSSION OF EFFECTS UPON PROMOTION AND/OR CONSEQUENCES FOR FAILURE TO IMPROVE.

\_\_\_ INFORM EMPLOYEE OF NATURE OF RECORD TO BE KEPT OF JOB PERFORMANCE COUNSELING SESSION.

\_\_\_ CONSIDER A SHORT BREAK BEFORE MOVING INTO "GOAL SETTING."

\_\_\_ IDENTIFY GOALS/FOLLOW-UP CHECKPOINTS.

**NOTE: ONCE THE ITEMS ON THE OUTLINE SHEET HAVE BEEN COVERED, THE SUPERVISOR SHOULD ASK THE "ONE-MILLION-IN-ONE" QUESTION: "IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WHICH PREVENTS YOUR PROPER PERFORMANCE?" AND END THE MEETING.**



## **JOB PERFORMANCE COUNSELING/ CORRECTIVE INTERVIEWING CHECKLIST**

### **ANTICIPATION/PREPARATION**

#### **THE SUPERVISOR SHOULD CONSIDER THE ITEMS ON THIS PAGE BEFORE ANNOUNCING THAT A COUNSELING SESSION WILL TAKE PLACE**

- \_\_\_ Don't weaken or water down the job performance counseling tool by using it for every little problem that is encountered. Many times the smaller problems can be handled one-to-one at the work station or in the work area, in private between the employee and the supervisor (sometimes called "coaching").
- \_\_\_ Make absolutely sure the supervisor wants to assist the employee and wants the employee to improve. This positive supportive attitude is critical whenever job performance counseling is utilized. Remember, job performance counseling is not disciplinary action. The supervisor should state: "Part of the purpose of this session is to avoid the need to discipline."
- \_\_\_ The supervisor should be thorough in preparing for the job performance counseling session and ascertain the need for the session, even before announcing or requesting the meeting. There should be a reason for the session, and that reason should justify the time and effort involved. (Utilize MARC pages C-0 through C-6 to plan the counseling session.)
- \_\_\_ Do not rely exclusively on a "canned" formula for the job performance counseling approach. A separate meeting planning outline should be prepared for each job performance counseling session in order to address the specific employee and the specific incidents where improvement is desired. The amount of preparation and the extent to which the prepared outline is followed determine to a great extent the success of the session. Do not stereotype counseling sessions, even with the same person. Each session is different. Have the job performance counseling outline and checklists available and refer to them during the session, checking off major points as they are covered.
- \_\_\_ The employee will assign to the session only the amount of credibility which the supervisor builds into it. The employee should see that the supervisor is sincere in wanting the employee to succeed.
- \_\_\_ The supervisor should locate, study, and know the rules and regulations, specific operating rules and procedures, policies and job descriptions which apply to the incident or topic of discussion. The materials should be indexed and highlighted so that the supervisor can refer to them authoritatively during the discussion, with copies available for the employee.
- \_\_\_ The employee's personnel and performance records should be reviewed and considered before the job performance counseling session is announced or requested. Examine achievements as well as problems, and determine if there have been previous job performance counseling or discipline sessions for the same or similar conduct. (Discuss previous instances with previous supervisors.) Bring absence report forms, etc., to the sessions for reference. Remember the "Physical Assist" items to hand to the employee to increase likelihood of retention and improvement.
- \_\_\_ If appropriate, the supervisor should discuss the situation before the session with the department head, the Personnel Department, or the Human Resources/Labor Relations Department, or with other supervisors who share responsibility for the employee's performance.
- \_\_\_ If poor work or poor performance is the topic of discussion, the supervisor should be prepared to show specific examples of poor-quality work. Facts, not impressions or opinions, should be available for discussion.



- \_\_\_ If attendance is the topic of discussion, a color-coded calendar or marked chart will be very effective in convincing the employee there is a problem. Likewise, green-circled days off in conjunction with the red-circled absence days will often reveal a pattern to both the employee and the supervisor. Remember, "a picture is worth a thousand words." The employee should be told regarding the attendance chart: "In effect, each employee keeps his/her own chart based upon the record of attendance he/she achieves."
  
- \_\_\_ Whatever the problem being discussed, the supervisor should be prepared to show the detrimental or negative effects the problem is having on the employee's job performance. Maintain perspective and deal with the problem exactly for what it is. MAINTAIN YOUR COOL, no matter what the employee reaction happens to be.
  
- \_\_\_ Anticipate the questions and challenges of the employee. Use of the checklist pages C-2 through C-6 will assist in this matter. Don't wait until the session to learn about or think about them. The supervisor should do his/her homework and preparation even before announcing or requesting the session. This preparation is called the "professional pause" and is part of "managing along lines of excellence."
  
- \_\_\_ It is generally not in good taste to ask questions the answers to which the supervisor already knows. Instead, facts which are known to the supervisor should be clearly stated to the employee, with opportunity given to the employee to comment if he/she feels the information is inaccurate or incomplete.
  
- \_\_\_ If the employee requests a steward be present, inform the employee that this is not disciplinary action, and that the purpose of the session is not to discipline the employee. Inform the employee further that the supervisor does not believe a steward's presence is necessary; however, if the employee insists at the start or at any time during the session, then a steward will be provided. Inform the employee that if a steward is present, the supervisor will also obtain a second supervisory witness, as the matter will then become union-management business.
  
- \_\_\_ The job performance counseling session should be conducted in such a manner that there is an opportunity for the supervisor to present the material planned and so that there is an "interview" atmosphere also prevalent, whereby the employee is given an opportunity to tell the employee's side of the story as well as an opportunity for the employee to provide suggestions for improvement methods.
  
- \_\_\_ In preparing for the job performance counseling session, the supervisor should consider if there are other employees with the same or similar problem. If so, the supervisor should take steps to ensure that the same or similar corrective action is being taken with the other employee or employees. This "worst offender" consideration will ensure that the supervisor is not asking more of the employee being job performance counseled than is being asked of others.
  
- \_\_\_ There is no need for the supervisor to take excessive notes during the session. Simply checking off items on the checklist as they are covered is sufficient. The supervisor should spend his/her time listening and leading the discussion, not taking notes. Taking excessive notes may make the employee believe the session was designed to "set up" the employee, rather than to assist the employee. Record of the session should be kept in the supervisor's "currently using file" for the employee.



**OPENING OR STARTING THE JOB PERFORMANCE COUNSELING SESSION**  
**CONSIDER THESE ITEMS AS THE SESSION IS ANNOUNCED**  
**AND IN OPENING THE SESSION**

- \_\_\_ Alleviate employee fears by:
  - \_\_\_ letting the employee know the reason for the session ahead of time, and letting him/her know at the same time that the supervisor is interested in assisting the employee,
  - \_\_\_ letting the employee know that he/she will not be asked to do anything unreasonable or anything without help and understanding from the supervisor. Inform the employee that the supervisor will provide guidance and support.
  
- \_\_\_ Make absolutely sure job performance counseling sessions are held in private and that confidentiality is maintained, even if a steward is present. Make it a point to tell the employee the sessions are confidential. Remember, if the steward is present it becomes union/company business, etc.
  
- \_\_\_ Don't be distracted during the session, and don't be doing something else such as looking at papers or peering out the window. Give the employee undivided attention. Clean off the desk or table so that the employee knows he/she is important and so the employee has space to place papers and to take notes, if desired. Make it a point to notify the operator or secretary that there are to be no interruptions or calls during this "very important session," and let the employee hear that. If there are interruptions, notify the interrupter that you are in a very important meeting, and let the employee hear that. If it is known before the session that there will be an interruption, notify the employee that it will occur, and deal with it expediently when it does happen. If the supervisor believes it would be appropriate, both the employee and the supervisor may be seated on the same side of the table, on a sofa, or beside a coffee table. Consider holding the session on "neutral turf" such as a conference room or unoccupied lunch room.
  
- \_\_\_ Make absolutely sure to tell the employee at the very start of the session: "This is a job performance counseling session. This is not disciplinary action. The purpose of this session is to avoid the need for disciplinary action."
  
- \_\_\_ Identify the specific purpose of the meeting immediately as the meeting opens and state that it is the supervisor's desire to avoid disciplinary action.
  
- \_\_\_ In those companies that utilize a verbal warning as a formal part of their corrective action policy, the supervisor should clearly identify to an employee during a job performance counseling session that the activity is not a formal verbal warning.
  
- \_\_\_ After clearly defining the nature of the problem to be addressed, attempt to emphasize early in the session the positive aspects of the employee's past performance. At all times maintain RESPECT, DIGNITY, AND PROFESSIONALISM. Emphasize such positive points as the employee's present value to the organization or the department, and the satisfactory performance of the employee in other areas or in the past; but don't "sandwich" the real purpose of the meeting in so that it is lost between the positive points. State the meeting's purpose first of all, then follow with positive supportive points where appropriate.
  
- \_\_\_ Make positive statements such as the following, when they can be offered sincerely:
  - \_\_\_ "I'm offering friendly advice."
  - \_\_\_ "You have demonstrated in the past that you can do..."
  - \_\_\_ "We have a reputation for being fair."
  - \_\_\_ "We are providing an opportunity for you to improve and to avoid discipline."
  - \_\_\_ "We value your services."
  - \_\_\_ "Our intent is to assist you."
  
- \_\_\_ Remember, the supervisor's role in the job performance counseling session should be a SUPPORTIVE role with the desire to ASSIST the employee to achieve the proper and acceptable performance.



## **ITEMS TO CONSIDER, ANTICIPATE, AND COVER DURING THE SESSION**

- \_\_\_ Do not overload the session with numerous objectives or problems. The "single track" principle should apply, with the desired improvements or objectives held to a minimum. This will allow the employee reasonable opportunity to improve. The supervisor should remember that controlling and focusing the direction of the interview session will prevent multiple objectives from arising and that careful preparation will give proper and constructive direction to the session.
- \_\_\_ While it is important that job performance counseling sessions be conducted in a casual and informal fashion, the supervisor should maintain a business-like approach in order that the employee understands the supervisor is indeed serious about his/her desire for the employee to improve.
- \_\_\_ While it is desirable to have the employee make suggestions he/she intends to follow to correct the problem being discussed, not all employees will be eager to do so. The supervisor should have some suggestions for improvement plans in the event the employee simply refuses to make suggestions for improvement.
- \_\_\_ If the employee is resistant, the supervisor should not attempt to prolong the meeting simply to achieve a more affable atmosphere in the meeting. The employee should not, however, in any way, be made to feel intimidated or threatened.
- \_\_\_ The three-fold supervisory responsibilities of the job performance counseling are:
  - 1) To make the employee aware that his/her present performance is unacceptable.
  - 2) To make the employee aware of the supervisor's expectations and possible consequences of failure to improve.
  - 3) To provide the employee the opportunity to improve and to avoid disciplinary action.
- \_\_\_ If the employee cites problems or conditions which merit the supervisor's attention, the supervisor should make an effort to correct such problems or conditions. He/she should remember, however, to stress to the employee that the ultimate responsibility for personal improvement lies on the shoulders of the employee. The supervisor should take care to ensure that at the end of the session it is the employee, not the supervisor, who is accountable for the ultimate improvement. The supervisor should make notes of items which require a supervisory follow up.
- \_\_\_ Stay away from sensitive personal topics, especially those that are not directly job related. Show understanding; however, try to keep focused on issues and do not become personally or emotionally involved. If needed, be ready to help locate professional assistance; but general referrals through employee assistance programs or the Personnel Department or the Medical Department would be most advisable, unless there are unusual and compelling reasons to become involved. This is especially true when the employee begins to discuss financial, family, alcohol, drug, religious, emotional, or medical factors.
- \_\_\_ In job performance counseling for multiple absences caused by the same or similar illness, the supervisor should raise the subject as to whether or not the employee is fit for duty and that the employee may want to consider a leave of absence until the problem is corrected.
- \_\_\_ Do not be caught in a situation where an employee borrows money from a supervisor. Do not promise extra work, overtime shifts, or advancement in order to help solve any employee's financial problems.
- \_\_\_ Do not compare the employee's performance or problems to any other employee's performance or problems. If comparisons are to be made, compare the employee's performance to the acceptable standard only, not to another standard, such as those raised by the employee. If the employee attempts to raise other employees' names, inform the employee that his/her performance is discussed only with him/her, and that you extend the same respect and courtesy of confidentiality to all employees. Inform the employee you are there to discuss his/her performance, not anyone else's. If two or more employees are involved in a problem, interview each of them separately and in private.



- \_\_\_ If the employee asks, "Why haven't others had this happen to them?", the supervisor should not cite examples where others have been so involved. Instead, an excellent reply is that whenever others have similar problems, they likewise are job performance counseled, and most often there is no need for further action, as most employees then take it upon themselves to improve and meet the acceptable standard of performance. The supervisor should then add that the employee is expected to do likewise, so that no further problem is expected and so that discipline can be avoided.
  
- \_\_\_ If the employee asks, regarding attendance charts, reports, etc., "Do you keep one of these on every employee?" the supervisor may choose to answer, "In effect, each employee keeps one of these on himself/herself. In fact, you have kept this record yourself, by the record you accumulate or achieve by your own performance."
  
- \_\_\_ If the performance or misconduct being addressed could in any way be a consideration in making promotions, the supervisor, during the job performance counseling session, should tell the employee the following, sometimes called the "common-sense qualifier."

"This factor is a job performance factor which is carefully considered in promotional decisions. In order to be promoted an employee should be doing an acceptable job in his/her present job. Failure to improve job performance to acceptable levels may result in denial of a promotion, and continued failure could lead, in addition, to disciplinary action or termination of employment. While I cannot promise you a promotion if you improve, I can assure you that if an advancement opportunity were available, you would likely not receive it if this problem were not corrected."
  
- \_\_\_ The supervisor should do this in the job performance counseling sessions and not wait until the denial of the advancement or promotion to explain this to the employee. The promotion factor concern should be raised near the end of the job performance counseling session but before setting goals.
  
- \_\_\_ In attempting to encourage discussion on the part of the employee, the supervisor should utilize these techniques, sometimes called the "interviewer's helpers" or the "interviewer's friends":
  - \_\_\_ Listen attentively and maintain eye contact but don't stare blankly at the employee.
  - \_\_\_ Pause, give the employee time to respond, and indicate the supervisor expects an answer.
  - \_\_\_ Repeat the question/don't answer your own questions.
  - \_\_\_ Respond to the employee's feelings or emotions in a supportive manner
  - \_\_\_ Elaborate upon what the employee says.
  - \_\_\_ Periodically summarize or "play back" what has been said, especially when moving from one major item to another on the "business meeting" planning sheet.
  
- \_\_\_ It is not necessary for the supervisor to take extensive detailed notes during the job performance counseling session. Extensive efforts to take notes may indicate to the employee that the supervisor is simply trying to "build a case" or "set up" the employee rather than to sincerely assist the employee to avoid future disciplinary action. The C-0 planning page and pages C-1 through C-6 with points checked-off as they are covered may be used as part of the employee's "currently using" file to document the session. The C-0 planning page should at all times be clearly visible to the employee during the session to avoid a perception that the supervisor is being devious or sneaky.
  
- \_\_\_ In most cases, the supervisor should keep record of the job performance counseling session in the employee's "currently using file," sometimes called the "fairness file." The job performance counseling checklist and planning sheet are sufficient record of the meeting. If the employee has been told that a record will not be kept of the session or that it will never be used against him/her, then it never should be! To break the promise would irreparably strain the credibility of the supervisor with the employee in the future. The supervisor should not tell the employee the session is "off the record". Instead, the supervisor should tell the employee that a record of the job performance session will be kept, but that it is not a disciplinary record. The supervisor can even refer to the Job Performance Counseling Session MARC Checklist in a manner such as: "As you can see, I've been following a checklist which I prepared for this session, and we have covered all I wanted to cover. I will keep a record of this simply to show we had the session."



- \_\_\_ Remember wherever possible to utilize PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION techniques in job performance counseling. There is no better place for their use than where the primary effort is to obtain the employee's cooperation in solving a problem. Plan the session and interviews with persuasive communication principles in mind. Build upon facts you can prove from the start because citing them will minimize employee resistance to cooperation and will lead or persuade the employees to conclude that it is in their best interest to improve.
  
- \_\_\_ Allow the employee to talk. The supervisor should listen particularly for meaning and for points of AGREEMENT, not just for a place to start talking. Make every effort to allow the employee to offer suggestions or ideas for improvements. Listening for meaning will be possible if proper preparation and planning have taken place. The supervisor should look at the employee when the employee is talking. If the employee persists in being non-conversant, the supervisor should not allow that to deter the supervisor from moving ahead to complete the session.
  
- \_\_\_ Bear in mind throughout the session that it is the employee's job performance improvement that both parties are discussing.
  
- \_\_\_ If the employee asks regarding performance, "What is excessive or what is bad?", answer by illustration, "Your record is excessive and bad." Re-emphasize the reason for the session.
  
- \_\_\_ If it is appropriate to identify the problem's causes, ask questions such as:
  - \_\_\_ Are there any other problems preventing your proper performance? (Always ask this question.)
  - \_\_\_ Is there anything about your job you don't like or which is preventing your proper performance?
  - \_\_\_ Why do/did you do this?
  - \_\_\_ Is there something being done by your supervisor or by any other employee or supervisor which is preventing your proper performance?
  
- \_\_\_ Do not tolerate verbal abuse, shouting, etc. Use a cooling-off period if necessary and keep the discussion in perspective. Don't allow a new problem or incident to cause the parties to forget the original problem. MAINTAIN YOUR COOL.
  
- \_\_\_ Make absolutely sure to make the employee aware of the Employee Assistance Program and ask the employee if he/she would like for the supervisor to arrange a meeting with the EAP representative for the employee. If the employee indicates he/she does not understand the scope or purpose of the EAP, the supervisor should take steps to clarify and to stress the confidentiality aspect of EAP. The supervisor should stress that the employee should seek EAP assistance, if appropriate, before serious job performance problems exist which may result in disciplinary action or terminating employment.
  
- \_\_\_ It is sometimes desirable to take a short break before moving into the "improvement goal setting" part of the session, although it is not absolutely necessary. A short break would, in effect, be an application of the "two-part" meeting concept and would separate the "venting" or discussion phase of the meeting from the "resolution" or goal setting part of the meeting.
  
- \_\_\_ If a break is utilized at this point, upon resumption of the meeting the supervisor should proceed through the items on pages C-4 and C-5 without interruption.
  
- \_\_\_ In some instances it may be discovered that an employee is having job performance difficulty due to a hearing disability or a learning or comprehension disability. In some such cases remedial training may be necessary. The supervisor may want to ask the employee whether or not such disabilities exist in the event customary training measures aren't effective.



## TOPICS TO CONSIDER IN ENDING AND CLOSING THE SESSION

- \_\_\_ Make absolutely sure toward the end of the session that the employee once more has the opportunity to comment and make suggestions. Getting things "off one's chest" is very often cleansing and one of the benefits of job performance counseling. Do not take the employee's comments as personal and do not be defensive. Remember, no matter what the employee says, you asked for it! Do not retaliate! "Venting" is often one of the major accomplishments of the job performance counseling sessions.
  
- \_\_\_ If the job performance counseling session points to the need for training, discuss it, and by all means follow up and provide for it promptly, within the same time frame during which you expect the employee to improve. Even if it has to be one-on-one, don't wait for someone else to set up the training or do it for you.
  
- \_\_\_ Inform the employee that the supervisor will not settle for half of the desired goal just because it would represent an improvement over present performance. Settle only for the achievement of the desired performance standard, NOTHING LESS! Remember, settle only for ACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE.
  
- \_\_\_ Do not allow the job performance counseling session to end with the employee "down on himself/herself." The session should end on a positive note. Be optimistic and positive about your expectations of the employee. State and show a willingness to help.
  
- \_\_\_ If the supervisor writes down anything during the session, it should not be done secretly. It should be left lying on the table at all times in full view of the employee, further demonstrating positive intent to assist the employee, not to set up or punish. Do not hide notes, but it is not necessary to give notes or copies of the meeting planning outline to the employee. If goals or follow-up activities are written down, or if an improvement plan or action plan is prepared or outlined, it is desirable to provide a copy of the goals or activities for the employee.
  
- \_\_\_ Before closing the session the supervisor should do the following:
  - \_\_\_ State again the purpose of the session, expectations for improvement, the standard, and timetable.
  - \_\_\_ Ask the employee if there are any questions.
  - \_\_\_ Make absolutely sure the employee understands what could happen if performance does not improve, but do not make the session a threatening experience.
  
- \_\_\_ Ask the employee if he/she believes there has been anything about the session or if there has been anything requested of the employee by the supervisor that is unreasonable.
  
- \_\_\_ It is sometimes desirable to take a short break before closing the session. If the supervisor does so, checklist page C-5 can be covered following such a break.
  
- \_\_\_ If no short break is taken, the supervisor should briefly summarize the purpose of the session and the points covered and then close the meeting by covering the points of checklist page C-5.



**CLOSING AND IDENTIFYING FOLLOW-UP TO THE  
JOB PERFORMANCE COUNSELING SESSION**

- \_\_\_ The supervisor should take steps to ensure that all of the items on the "business meeting" plan have been covered in order to avoid dragging the meeting out. As soon as the items have all been covered, the supervisor should utilize this page to recap, summarize, and bring the session to a favorable close.
  
- \_\_\_ Ask employee to describe what he/she understands the improvement requirements and methods to be.
  
- \_\_\_ Establish specific improvement goals and timetables and targets including a date or time period for a follow-up "checkpoint" discussion.
  
- \_\_\_ Make sure the employee understands that it may be necessary to meet again or that more serious action may occur before the date or time period selected for follow-up "checkpoint," if steady improvement is not seen or if performance decreases further.
  
- \_\_\_ Repeat, before the session ends, that the supervisor is eager to assist the employee, and that there are other services available to the employee, on a confidential basis, to assist the employee with any personal problems which may be interfering with the employee's job performance. Again remind the employee of the procedures to contact the Employee Assistance Program even though that topic should have been covered earlier in the session.
  
- \_\_\_ Refer to the meeting planning outline and state, "As you can see I've made an outline for this meeting, and we have covered everything I planned to cover. I will keep this as a record in your 'currently using' or 'fairness' file; and if you will correct this problem, I don't believe we should have a problem in the future."
  
- \_\_\_ Ask the employee if there is anything else he/she would like to discuss or if there is anything else preventing the employee from achieving proper and acceptable performance.
  
- \_\_\_ It is permissible for the employee and the supervisor to work out an outline or recap of the goals and timetables agreed upon and to provide the employee with a copy, so long as the supervisor distinguishes such a record or plan as being different from disciplinary action, and so long as the corrective action policy and disciplinary action procedures accommodate such written format.
  
- \_\_\_ The supervisor should thank the employee for coming to the session and for his/her comments and participation, and the supervisor should state that he/she is looking forward to working with the employee and to seeing the employee improve.
  
- \_\_\_ A positive statement, if sincere, can be ..."I know that you can do this" and possibly a statement such as, "I am looking forward to working with you, and if there is anything I can do to help you, please feel free to discuss it with me."
  
- \_\_\_ A final statement should be made, in a positive manner also, such as, "I will be monitoring your performance, and I look forward to sitting down with you in the future to discuss your improvement."



## **JOB PERFORMANCE COUNSELING FOLLOW-UP**

- \_\_\_ The supervisor should follow-up with the employee to ensure that the goals and timetables decided upon in the job performance counseling session are achieved.
  
- \_\_\_ If misconduct reoccurs, a follow-up job performance counseling session may be conducted, or the supervisor may choose to proceed into formal disciplinary or corrective action, depending on the employer's corrective action policy.
  
- \_\_\_ Repeated job performance counseling sessions can be conducted so long as performance continues to improve or if the time between repetition of poor performance increases considerably, indicating some improvement. The supervisor should inform the employee, however, that job performance counseling sessions will not simply continue to be repeated, and that disciplinary action may occur.
  
- \_\_\_ In many types of job performance counseling, a supervisor may find it advantageous to set an actual follow-up date for review and a follow-up checkpoint meeting. Where the performance problem is attendance or tardiness, the opportunity for measuring performance improvement, in effect, renews itself each day the employee is scheduled for work.
  
- \_\_\_ The follow-up period for attendance problems is based upon the occurrence of the next violation or whenever an improvement period is achieved which is greater than the past frequency of absence, at which a positive-recognition session should be held. Comparisons of the number of absences/latenesses during the two months or three months following the job performance counseling session as compared to several two- or three-month periods before the session may indicate a change in the frequency of absences/tardinesses.
  
- \_\_\_ If it becomes obvious that job performance counseling is no longer working, the supervisor should proceed to the employer's corrective action policy.
  
- \_\_\_ If the employee's performance improves, the supervisor should acknowledge the improvement in a positive job performance counseling session, and the supervisor's "currently-using file" should reflect such improvement.
  
- \_\_\_ The follow-up acknowledgment session, in effect, constitutes the final "resolution" step of the employee's problem in the event of satisfactory improvement.
  
- \_\_\_ The question is often asked: "When do I stop counseling the employee?" The best answer is: "Whenever the employee achieves proper total satisfactory performance, or whenever there is a repeated misconduct or poor performance, thereby indicating that possibly a more formal action, such as warning or disciplinary action, is more appropriate."



## SPECIAL TYPES OF EMPLOYEE RESPONSES - CHECKLISTS

- \_\_\_ Often the supervisor receives the super-silent treatment from the employee during job performance counseling:
  - \_\_\_ Don't fall into the "feel sorry for me" trap.
  - \_\_\_ Don't fail to cover all of the points you have planned for the session.
  - \_\_\_ Ask the employee direct questions to elicit short answers.
  - \_\_\_ The response is a sign of the employee believing, "Why's everyone always picking on me?"
  - \_\_\_ Make sure to let the employee know that if there is a need for future job performance counseling (or disciplinary action), it will only be because the employee himself/herself necessitated it.
  - \_\_\_ If the super-silent type begins to cry, the supervisor should maintain his/her cool and display a positive attitude. Don't apologize or agree to overlook the problem. Consider taking a short break, then bring the discussion back to some positive point of agreement and start anew from there.
  - \_\_\_ Assure the employee the session is confidential and private.
  - \_\_\_ The supervisor should stress that he/she knows improvement can be made and that he/she has confidence in the employee.
  - \_\_\_ No response from the employee might be simply due to the realization on his/her part that the less said, the quicker the session will be over.
  - \_\_\_ This employee will often agree with everything the supervisor says. If so, ask the employee why, since he/she is in agreement, is he/she not performing properly, and if there are any other reasons why the employee cannot achieve performance improvement.
  
- \_\_\_ The argumentative employee may try to get the supervisor into a shouting match and away from the real issue which the supervisor wanted to discuss.
  - \_\_\_ Be polite and firm. Be dignified and respectful. Do not stoop to the same heightened emotional level or irrational methods of this type of employee.
  - \_\_\_ Do not lose control. Be cool.
  - \_\_\_ Remember, the employee is the one with the problem, not the supervisor!
  - \_\_\_ State the problem clearly and emphatically.
  - \_\_\_ Make sure not to threaten the employee.
  - \_\_\_ If necessary, use a cooling-off period, and warn the employee against any abusive language or unnecessary outbursts.
  - \_\_\_ Ask the employee to explain his/her denials.
  - \_\_\_ The supervisor generally can predict which employee is likely to be argumentative and defensive. With that employee, the supervisor should be especially well prepared with concrete specific examples of poor performance.
  - \_\_\_ Even though the supervisor knows he/she may be "bluffed" by this employee, the supervisor should always come back to the point.
  - \_\_\_ In response to "You never have disciplined anyone else for this" the supervisor should state that "we are dealing with your problem, not another employee's; most employees take corrective action so that strict discipline is not necessary, and I expect you to do likewise." (Don't threaten and don't use other employees' names.)
  - \_\_\_ REMEMBER, studies have shown that the argumentative employee is very often the one who makes the most marked improvement, so be patient. Resistance should be kept in perspective.
  
- \_\_\_ The REFUSER should be dealt with firmly. It should also be stated that often the refuser will tend to cause the supervisor to overreact and over-discipline beyond the initial intent of the session.
  - \_\_\_ Bear in mind the original purpose and stick to it. Re-state it. If the employee's response or comments indicate the employee's "state of mind" to be non-cooperative or opposed to making any changes or improvements or if the refuser firmly states that no improvement will be attempted, the supervisor should verbally warn the employee that discipline could follow failure to improve or refusal to attempt to improve. In such cases it is advisable to take a short break and make arrangements for a steward and a second supervisor to be present before giving the warning, as the nature of the meeting has changed considerably from its initial purpose. The supervisor should document any comments by the employee which may indicate that the employee's "state of mind" was to do something other than attempt to improve.