

Q. As a supervisor overseeing a team working together in groups, how can I reduce the risk of conflict, tension, and communication issues given that employees can hear each other's conversations, a few personality issues exist, and everyone seems to know each other's business?

A. Assuming you can't increase privacy with physical barriers, having a team meeting can be helpful to discuss reducing tension for better communication and psychological safety. Consider having the team engage in a weekly "team health check" meeting. A brief 10–15-minute gathering would be held exclusively for team members, focusing on monitoring and maintaining the group's overall well-being. Approach the meeting being positive, as the workplace setup allows for enhanced communication and team bonding. During one-on-one employee check-ins, proactively discuss any communication issues or concerns that need resolution. Open dialogue allows team members to address potential conflicts early. Confidentiality promotes trust, encourages honest communication, and allows a safe environment where vulnerability can thrive. As positive changes occur, the team may be tempted to stop the meeting, but a consistent meeting avoids potentially slipping back into a less positive work environment. UR Medicine EAP is able to provide team workshops on effective communication.



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[Learn more about EAP workshops for your team here..](#)

Q. I am new to my supervisor role and want to make sure I come across as a strong, supportive leader employees can trust. What's the best way for me to showcase the type of leader I want to be perceived as?

A. Your employees will notice your temperament, supervision style, communication skills, and approachability. But how does this awareness develop? Initially, employees assess your competence, capabilities, and expertise. They will observe how you communicate, evaluating your confidence, clarity, and effectiveness. Your ability to inspire them is a key factor in their judgment of you as a supervisor. Consciously or unconsciously, employees pay attention to your fairness, empathy, and team interactions. They notice how you handle relationships, navigate difficult situations, solve problems, and manage conflict. Your team will observe your commitment to their professional growth and whether you take responsibility for your actions and mistakes.

Q. I've struggled with following through on disciplinary measures after discussing ongoing issues. We have had an initial conversation, which temporarily improves work performance,

but then the problem resurfaces. How can I hold employees accountable after our conversations?

A. Managing an employee struggling with work performance takes a focused approach. When a supervisor promises disciplinary action but does not follow through, it undermines credibility and negatively impacts an employee's motivation to change behavior. This dynamic erodes trust because employees are less inclined to take your feedback seriously. Although not a conscious process, failing to follow through can be an indication that no real consequences follow poor performance or misconduct. Following your organization's policy for addressing workplace performance issues will also serve as a guide on the appropriate next steps. EAP is available for unlimited supervisor consultations on how to approach your next conversation.