VRTAC-QM Performance Review QM2022-0305 Transcript

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CAROL PANKOW: Welcome to Performance Management, #ThisIsNotYourGr eatGrandmothersReviewProcess. This training is brought to you by the VRTAC for Quality Management, in partnership with the Center for Innovative Training in VR, also known as CIT-VR.

In a poll done with the supervisory community of practice and CIT-VR, the topic of effectively engaging in performance management activities and conducting performance reviews ranked really high. This combined with the turnover in the management ranks in VR and so many new to supervision, there is a need for training in this area. Today, we're focusing on the performance review part of the performance management process.

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Your presenters for today are myself, Carol Pankow with the George Washington University team on the VRTAC for Quality Management, and my buddy Nichole Tichy, also with the GW QM team and the CIT-VR team. How's it going, Nichole?

NICHOLE TICHY: Going great, Carol. Thanks for having me.

CAROL PANKOW: You bet. Let's dig in. Today, we're covering what is the performance management process, four steps to performance management, key elements of performance management, performance review best practices, dos and don'ts of performance reviews, and clinical supervision. So, Nichole, why don't you kick us off with what is performance management process?

NICHOLE TICHY: Thanks, Carol. I would love to get us started with defining the performance management process. So we can't head straight into talking about performance reviews without talking about the performance management process. The performance management process is an ongoing series of meetings and check-ins between a manager and employee that plans, monitors, and reviews the employee's objectives, long-term goals, and overall impact on the agency.

On this slide, we have a graphic depicting the circular process of the performance management cycle. At the very top of this cyclical process are an organization's driving principles, their core values, or their mission. For a lot of VR personnel, these goals focus on varying strategies to support individuals with disabilities in finding competitive, integrated employment opportunities.

These organizational goals and values then serve almost like a template for the development of individual employee goals or development plans no matter the role or responsibilities of the employee. Throughout this presentation, we will provide examples and information on how managers or supervisors can plan,

act, track, and review an employee's performance to ensure future success of both the individual and the overall organization.

But let's be mindful that the annual review is simply a small part of the picture. The performance review is one aspect of this overall process.

On this slide, we have an image that depicts a variety of words or phrases presented as a collage, indicating that the performance management process is so much more than simply a review once a year. We even have words such as "continuous" and "commitment," putting emphasis on the notion that the performance management process is more than just the annual evaluation. Some of the topics, such as feedback and supervision, Carol and I will cover later in this presentation.

Think of this process looking like a funnel. We are presented with this big, broad picture of the actual performance management process, to the actual review process, and then at the very end of the funnel. But there is so much more that happens in between the top of the funnel and the bottom. A liquid doesn't simply enter the funnel and immediately exit. It swirls around.

Now that we have a broad-stroke understanding of the performance management process, let's take a deeper look at some of the different models or methods of engagement when considering performance management. The two models we have presented here are simple enough to remember, in that one is called the four-stage process, and the other the three-stage process.

Well, first let's take a look at the four-step process. This process consists of planning, monitoring, reviewing, and rewarding.

Planning-- when engaging in the planning process of this particular model, the focus is to establish expectations and develop a strategic plan for employees. Here, you should set SMART goals-- goals that are considered Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based-- in order to determine deadlines and make clear how they will impact the team and the entire agency.

Moving on to monitoring, consistent monitoring of progress is crucial to achieving goals. Later, Carol will provide us with additional information about the importance of monitoring and different methods to practice this step with employees. While you don't want to be a helicopter manager, it is really important to frequently check in with employees to help work through problems as they may arise. Whether it's weekly, biweekly, or monthly, consistent check-ins keep employees and managers working together and on the same page.

Reviewing-- with frequent check-ins, performance reviews turned into more of a formality rather than an intensive process. Here we have reached the reviewing stage. And this is the official place for employees and managers to share their views on how the year went and look back on the progress and achievements.

Finally, rewarding-- nothing plays a bigger role in the employee motivation than this. Rewarding employees for their efforts and achievements throughout the year, not just once at the end of it, lets them know their talents are appreciated. And it encourages them to continue to perform at a high level. Inadequate rewarding can leave them discouraged, unappreciated, and looking for a new job.

But if this four-stage process doesn't necessarily fit your management style, we also present a three-stage process that involves coaching, corrective action, and termination. The coaching stage of performance management sets the tone for your organization and the success of your employees. Coaching involves training, outlining standards and goals, two-way feedback, and collaboration to help

employees get better. If this particular topic is of interest to you, we have a coaching strategies training that can be found on the VRTAC-QM website.

Corrective action-- if an employee isn't meeting the standards and expectations of the position after coaching from the manager, the next stage of performance management is corrective action. Corrective action calls on the manager and employee to work together to find the reasons for poor performance and develop a plan to improve the situation.

If coaching and corrective action fail to improve an employee's performance, the final stage of the performance management process is discharging the employee. While a difficult decision to make, the termination can have a positive effect by boosting team morale and offering a chance to improve at that position.

We recognize that each individual state has different processes when it comes to managing human resources. It will be important for you as the supervisor or manager to understand the nuances of your state's individual processes. The important message here is that no method is more correct than the other. So we encourage you to find what works best for you and your team.

These elements are critical to the success in the steps listed above. No matter what process you intend to utilize as your performance management process, there are key elements that should be included.

Consistency-- it is really important as a manager to develop a system and stick with it. This can be as simple as keeping a Word document on every employee you have where you put the date and time and a brief note, both for corrective actions and good contributions they have made. This could include nice emails received from a happy consumer, notes about them helping a colleague, or having to discuss dress code. This will help as a simple tracker over time.

Accuracy-- if you aren't keeping track, it can be easy to forget, get confused, or mix one employee up with another if you are tracking many people. Get the facts straight, as this can help employees feel more attended to. And it is a way for you as the manager to demonstrate your investment in your employees.

Employee engagement-- this is not a one-way street. This needs to be a give and take, a back and forth, all year round. No one should ever be surprised when the performance review comes around and hears something for the very first time.

Ease of use-- whatever system you set up, you actually need to work it and make it simple to use. Carol once told me about her old folder system and a Word document for each employee, nothing fancy, just practical. If I were her employee, I would have certainly appreciated a recap of all the good things I had done over the year.

And finally, future-proof. Future-proofing your performance management process doesn't mean peering around every possible corner, but rather prioritizing agility. So as circumstances change, you can, too. We can also look at this from the perspective of flexibility, or the ability to adapt to change.

Now that we have looked at the big picture, Carol, can you tell us a little bit about the actual performance review?

CAROL PANKOW: Thanks, Nichole. So what is a performance review? A performance review is a two-way, individualized conversation between a manager and an employee about performance impact, development, and growth. It's a critical component of a continuous performance management approach to evaluate and propel success for the employee, the team, and the organization.

So why do we need performance reviews? The performance review process is changing. It is no longer just an annual check-- or at least it shouldn't be. The goal is to ensure that employees are performing

efficiently throughout the year and, in the process, address any issues that may arise along the way that affect employee performance.

It can increase engagement and relationship development between managers and employees. It helps staff to maintain or obtain autonomy in their work by setting individual goals. It provides accountability and motivation for completion of tasks. And by engaging in a continual process of performance conversations, it helps show employees they are valued by their managers.

I love this meme from The Office. "I really enjoy being judged," said no one ever. The performance review is not a space for judging employees. You also do not want to make it the ticket for firing people. You also don't want to tell the employee everything they do is wrong. What is motivating about that? Not a thing. If an employee is performing poorly, you should be talking to them all the way along and not bottling it all up for one big dump of information.

We want to show you an example of what a bad performance review looks like. It may be humorous, but sadly, this stuff happens.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- Hey, Britney. Would you come in here, please? It's time to do your annual performance appraisal.

- Right now?

- Yes, yes, yes. I have a couple of minutes, and I'm hoping you have a couple of minutes so we can just get this out of the way. You know, it's this--

- Uh, sure.

- --annual performance appraisal thing that HR makes us do every year, all this paperwork. I don't know, just an exercise for them so they have something to do so they can justify being here.

- Oh, OK. That's great.

- So anyway, so I filled out the form. This is the form they send. I know some supervisors give it to their employees and ask them to fill it out in advance so they have a self-evaluation. But we don't need to do that.

So look at-- these were your goals from last year. And I rated that you completed them satisfactorily because you know you do a good job here. You do a really good job around here, except for that report that you turned in two weeks ago. What a mess that was. But anyway--

[PHONE RINGING]

Oh, excuse me. Excuse me. Hello? Yes. Yeah. Where are you going to get it from? Oh, OK. That's a great deli. OK. Yeah. How about tuna on rye? Yeah. Yeah, mayo, lettuce. Yeah, yeah, yeah. OK. All right. I'll see you then. Thanks. Bye.

- Sounds like a really yummy lunch.

- Yeah, yeah. We got to have lunch every day. We have to eat, you know.

- That's true.

- So where was I here? Oh, yeah, that report. Yeah, but you know, I know you'll fix it up. You always come around and do a good job. And you need to get to work on time. I noticed that you--

- I've been trying. The traffic and stuff going on--

- I know it's a challenge. I know it's a challenge. But I'm telling you, and I know you'll work on it. So let's get back to the form. So these are the different categories. And basically, what I did was I rated you as-- there are three-- there are five categories, one through five.

I rated you as a three. I think you meet expectations at everything. You're a good employee. Plus, if I rate you too low or too high, I have to make all kinds of comments in the comments section. And I really don't want to spend all that time doing all that.

- You had me as a three here in customer service?

- Yeah.

- I did really well. I've never had a complaint. I always fix the issue that's going on.

Oh, all right, all right, all right, all right.

- I really think that I deserve higher.

- Look, look, look, look, look, look, look. Oh, I'll change that one.

- OK.

- All right. Should I make it a four or a five? What do you want?

- I think I do really well.

- Five? Yeah, I'll give you this five. Yep, yep. No problem. No problem. All right. Yep. And everything else, I think you're really good. And then goals-- goals for next year.

I'll tell you what. Why don't you-- let's sign the form. And then I'll ask you to go ahead and come up with goals for next year. You decide what you want to do for next year. And then you need to link them to the strategic plan. So here's a copy. Here's a copy of the strategic plan. So you take that, and you come up with three goals for next year.

- Wonderful. Sounds like a great idea.

- But first, I just need you to sign there. Sign there for me.

- OK.

- All right. That just acknowledges that you and I met so I can get this form off to HR, and they can do their thing. OK. There you go. All right. And how about if you get that back to me in like two days so I get this to HR on time, OK? All right. Thanks for coming in, Brit. You do a great job.

- Thanks. Have a great day.

- OK. Bye. Bye. Yep, yep, yep. Yep. So she's nowhere-- customer service a five? No way. I'm changing that back to a three. There we go. Yeah. She signed it, and I'll sign it right here. And then-- hey, Becky, you need to get this form to HR.

- All right.

[END PLAYBACK]

CAROL PANKOW: Nichole, why don't you just tee us up for a more positive experience?

NICHOLE TICHY: Sure thing, Carol. And thanks for sharing that example with us. It can certainly be helpful to review examples of a negative review process, even if it seems extreme.

Now we want to share with you an example of a positive review process. While not everyone's review process will look like this or even should look like this, it can be helpful to see this process in action and take away little nuggets to start implementing into your practice methods.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[PHONE RINGING]

- This is Karen. OK. OK, send her in. Thanks. Hi, Britney.

- Hi, Karen. How are you?

- How are you?

- Oh, good. How are you?

- Thanks for taking time to come in--

- Thank you.

- --and go over your performance appraisal. Thanks so much for completing the self-evaluation form and sending it in on time. I really appreciate it.

- Sure, sure.

- And I have to tell you, in looking at your ratings, I think we're right on target with each other. So that was very good. As you know, the performance appraisal process is a very important process here at Keystone College because it provides us with an opportunity to talk about what's going on in your work. It gives you a chance to tell me if you have any concerns or issues.

And it also provides me with an opportunity to share with you how you are supporting the whole strategic planning process, the strategic goals of our department and of the college, and to show you that you really do play an integral part in the success of the department and the college. So with that, let's look at first your goals from last year. You did an excellent job on the department report.

- Thanks. I worked really hard on that.

- I could tell. I could tell. The column headings clearly describe the material, and the calculations in the report were all correct and in an easy-to-read format. Excellent job. And you submitted it early. So that was a bonus, too. So that was awesome.

As you know, this particular goal supports the strategic plan in regard to monitoring retention, which is critical to the success of Keystone. We have to keep the students that come here. So you know how important that is.

So moving on, let's look at the different categories here that you also rated in your self-evaluation form as well. For customer service here, I rated you as meets expectations. I have noticed that sometimes when you come to the window when you're greeting students that you seem rushed.

- Really?

- Yes.

- I didn't even realize that was happening. The problem that the student has-- I want to figure out what it is, get it solved, and move forward. I didn't even realize I was rushing them.

- OK. Well, and when we greet students, if we're not smiling and have a happy tone in our voice, sometimes they can perceive that as that they're not important.

- That makes sense.

- Yes. And as you know, they are the most important thing here at the college. Without them, we wouldn't have our jobs. And I know sometimes we get so wrapped up in a report or our own work. And the phone rings or someone comes in. Sometimes we can view that as a distraction.

But we have to remember that a big part of our job is customer service and that we always want our customer, whether it be somebody else on the campus, inside, outside, or student, to really feel valued here. So good. I'm so glad that you'll work on that.

- Absolutely.

- In regard to teamwork, I have that you have done an above-average job because you have worked with-

- let me take some of this from your evaluation that you wrote. You had worked on a project where you filled in as the team leader. You took the team leader role.

And you actually had the department work on this major transaction goal, and you accomplished that. And it took leadership skills and communication skills for you to get everybody else to cooperate and work with you and accomplish that. And you did an excellent job with that.

- Thank you. I appreciate that.

- Let's see. For the accountability and responsibility, I have that you did meets expectations for those. And for attendance and punctuality, I have that you missed one day this past year and that you're on time every day. And you're back from lunch every day on time. So thank you for doing that.

And then when we come to initiative, I have that you exceeds expectations. Because when Julie was out on her leave when she had her appendix removed, you worked through some lunches. I know you skipped breaks and so on just to help get her work done.

- Make sure everything's done, yep.

- Yeah. So really, really appreciate that. Very, very good. Do you have any concerns in the department, anything that you see that we need to talk about? I know we talk all the time. But this provides a really formal opportunity for us to talk.

- Not that I can think of offhand. I appreciate you asking, though. But if I think of something, I'll let you know.

- OK, OK. Then the last piece of this is for us to talk about goals for next year. So I noticed here that you had, in your self-evaluation, talked about the desire to create a brochure for students, explaining to them how to apply for loans and grants and so on. And I think that's a wonderful idea. That way, you can give them something. We can also post it out on the website, where they can download it.

And I want you to know, in looking at the strategic plan, I went back and looked. And that fulfills goal three, objective two because it deals with retention of students. So that's how you will be supporting the college's goals. Excellent.

Now, one goal as we were talking that came to mind is the goal of greeting students with a friendly tone and smile. Would you be willing to consider that as a goal for this year?

- That definitely makes a lot of sense, yeah. I will work on that.

- OK. And again, that would fall under goal three. And I'll write that in goal three, objective two because, again, it deals with retention. And that is so important. OK. Very good.

All right. So with that, I calculated the average for section 1 as 3.75. Adding these up and dividing and getting an average for section 2 is 3.38. And then your overall rating is 3.57.

Now on our rating scale here, you can see we have five, four, three, two, and one. And there's an explanation of each one. A three-- now, remember, you're a 3.5. Three is performance meets expectations in most areas of responsibility. And you are doing more than that.

And a four is performance consistently meets expectations in key areas of responsibility and exceeds expectations in some areas. So you're right in between these two. And you've only been here about a year and a half now, right?

- So I'm doing OK for a start now?

- Yes. You're doing an excellent job.

- That's good.

- So what we want to do is move towards a four because you are doing such a good job. You've shown initiative and so on. And you're willing to work on the issue with greeting the students and so on, which

shows that you're cooperative and so on, Britney. So you're doing a good job here. And we want you to continue doing a good job.

So I just need you to sign this form here. And then I will personally make a copy of this for you and drop it off for you because I consider it to be a confidential form. And then I will make sure that HR gets it in a confidential envelope.

- Great. Yeah, that sounds good.

- All right. And if you have any questions or concerns at any time, please stop in and see me. OK?

- All right. Thanks. I appreciate it.

- All right. Thank you.

- Have a great day.

- You too.

[END PLAYBACK]

NICHOLE TICHY: Earlier, Carol provided us with some great information about what the performance process is not. Additionally, we have alluded to the fact that the overall performance management process is more than just the review. Remember that collage that was presented at the very beginning of this presentation? The word "evaluation" actually wasn't included. And it wasn't included for a reason.

The performance review and the performance review process are so much more than just the evaluation. It is a chance to train new employees or even provide the opportunity for more senior staff members on your team to learn new things that speak to their interests. It's about investing into your team and discovering their talents, developing the relationships to create meaning and purpose within the workplace.

But most of all, performance reviews are a conversation. And they provide an opportunity for growth or even expanding responsibilities, potentially based on new skills or an individual's interest.

So now that we have tried expanding the concept of the performance management process to more than just the evaluation or yearly review, let's take a look and compare the two and see some of the differences. Hey, Carol, can you kick us off on this comparison as we start to help folks navigate how to move from a once-a-year review process to a more engaged process?

CAROL PANKOW: Thanks, Nichole. So let's compare this traditional performance review to a modern performance review. This chart shows the changes being made to revolutionize the performance review process.

In a traditional review, they were held annually. In a modern performance review, they're held quarterly or even monthly. In a traditional performance review, it was definitely a one-way conversation. You just sat there and listened while the boss was talking at you. In a modern performance review, it's a two-way conversation.

In the traditional review, you would review past performance. In a modern review, you review recent performance and coach to impact development and growth. In a traditional review, the boss had a closed-door policy. In a modern performance review, your boss has an open-door policy and invites you to come in any time to talk about how things are going.

In a traditional review, there's little to no transparency. And in fact, you often walked out and wondered, where in the Earth did they even get this information? In a modern performance review, it's transparent and collaborative.

In a traditional review, it's based on subjective manager opinion. It may even be things like they don't like what you wear or they don't like your hair. In a modern performance review, it's based on rich and real-time employee data.

And in a traditional review, it resulted in a rating and minimal follow-up. In a modern performance review, you'd like to conclude with next steps and follow-up. From this, you can clearly see that the modern performance review process is clearly preferable to the traditional way.

So let's chat about some performance review best practices. Let's take a little bit of time and go over some biases that you can bring to this process. I think we all underestimate our own biases. The first is the recency bias. This is the tendency to focus on the most recent time period instead of the total time period being reviewed. We also call this the "what have you done for me lately" bias.

If someone recently rocked a presentation or flubbed an eligibility, that recent performance is going to loom larger in a manager's mind. Why is that? Because it's easier to remember things that happened recently.

Here's an example. Imagine there's an employee named Joe. At the beginning of the year, Joe was rocking it and helped several individuals to get into high-quality employment. But in the past two months, his performance has slipped. Unfortunately, Joe's manager focused only on the recent events of the past few months during Joe's performance review and didn't acknowledge his incredibly valuable contributions from earlier in the year.

To limit the impact of recency bias on your performance data, develop a habit of collecting feedback on employees at different points in time throughout the year. This is where your handy-dandy Word document you can keep on each employee can help you keep notes on all the events from the past year.

Primacy bias is a tendency to emphasize information learned early on over information encountered later. In performance reviews, managers often fall for primacy bias when they let a first impression affect their overall assessment of that employee.

For example, if I'm a jerk to you when we first meet, and I buy you a coffee the next day to make up for it, you're going to see that nice gesture as some sort of manipulative tactic and think, this jerk thinks she can buy me off with coffee. However, if I make a great first impression and buy you coffee the next day, then you're likely to see it as an act of goodwill and think to yourself, wow, they're a really nice gal.

Preventing primacy bias is similar to preventing recency bias. By putting together performance snapshots that include feedback from multiple points in time, you can dampen your tendency to weigh a first impression too heavily.

The halo-horns effect bias is the tendency to allow one good or a bad trait to overshadow others, like letting an employee's sense of humor override their poor communication skills. After all, we all have our own pet peeves and turn-ons. Sometimes those quirks and inclinations can overshadow our ability to assess people overall.

For example, a particular manager may have a soft spot for proactive, outspoken individuals. If one of their staff tends to be quiet and withdrawn during meetings, the manager may end up giving that person a lower score, even if the individual offers other valuable qualities and contributions.

To dampen the effect of the halo-horns effect bias, evaluate performance on multiple dimensions of performance instead of leaving it open to interpretation. Are you rating individual achievement but failing to look at the way people contribute to the success of others? Does this person happened to have a particular set of highly sought-after technical skills, but they don't finish their work on time? To get a

holistic view, make sure to assess at least two to three different aspects of performance so that one awesome or awful trait or skill doesn't overshadow everything else.

Centrality bias is a tendency to rate most items in the middle of a rating scale. While moderation is great in most things, high-stakes situations like performance reviews often require taking a stand. When everybody receives the same rating, it's difficult to distinguish the low-performing employees from the top-performing employees.

Here's an example. Manager hands in his annual performance evaluations, and almost everybody on the team scored in the middle of the scale. If the agency is working on a five-point rating scale, that means everybody got a three. This is a common occurrence, as many managers don't like being extreme and trend moderate in their reviews.

A way to prevent this is to look at the ways the scales are designed. The simplest way is to eliminate the neutral option from the rating scale, such as switching from a five-point scale to a four-point scale. That way, evaluators have to make a choice one way or the other.

Leniency bias occurs when managers give favorable ratings even though they have employees with notable room for improvement. Like many biases, leniency bias can weaken the objectivity of the data. The truth is some employees do outperform others. Giving everybody a four out of a five-point rating scale makes it challenging to distinguish who is truly top performing. On top of that, it becomes difficult to identify who deserves a promotion, and it can leave your top talent feeling disgruntled.

For example, Alex and Jamie are both managed by the same person. Alex consistently produces average-quality work. While it's not bad, he rarely goes above and beyond what's asked of him. Jamie, on the other hand, is consistently one of the top-performing employees. She goes the extra mile on her projects, always raises her hand to take on more responsibility, and delivers outstanding outcomes. Despite these differences, their manager gives them the same rating of above average on their performance review to avoid hurting anyone's feelings. As a result, Alex and Jamie stand similar career trajectories, leaving Jamie to wonder if anybody notices her hard work. Instead of making above average the top possible rating, try using a rating scale that builds in more spread.

The similar-to-me bias is the inclination to give a higher rating to people with similar interests, skills, and backgrounds as the person doing the rating. Simply put, we like to like people that are like us. In addition to making performance reviews tricky, similar-to-me bias can make your workplace feel less inclusive. And it may even affect how diverse the overall makeup of the organization is.

An example of this is imagine there's a manager that attended a top-ranked school they love. When they're conducting a performance review for someone who also went to that same school, the manager may rate them higher because of the inflated impression of the school and people who graduated from that school.

Reduce the effect of similar-to-me bias by requiring specificity in a manager's assessment. In three separate studies, Yale researchers found that when you first agreed to the criteria used in an assessment, and then you make the evaluation, you are less likely to rely on stereotypes, and your assessments are less biased.

Finally, the idiosyncratic rater bias occurs when managers evaluate skills they themselves are not really good at very highly. Conversely, they rate others lower for skills that the manager is great at. In other words, managers weigh their performance evaluations based on their own personal eccentricities.

Idiosyncratic rater bias presents a huge problem in performance data because the score often tells us more about the rater than the person being rated. Let's say there's a manager who excels at the people part of the job but knows very little about technology. As a result, she unknowingly gives higher marks to those who are good at technology and lower marks to those who are good at relationship-building or other skills that are similar to her own.

Why? Because the manager is good at relationship-building, she's more likely to have higher standards for this skill and compare the employee to herself. On the other hand, since she's unfamiliar with technology, she's less familiar with the standards for the performance and is likely to be more lenient. In other words, her feedback reflects more on her own skills than her employees'. Nichole, back over to you to tell us about diversity, equity, and inclusion considerations.

NICHOLE TICHY: Thanks, Carol. It is certainly important to reflect on biases and how these might impact the evaluation process. You certainly have provided some great examples of the different types of bias and how they might show up throughout the performance management process. Reflecting on our own processes and recognizing potential biases puts us on the right track to reducing them. But how do we reduce bias and inequality in ratings or outcomes?

First, consistent, documented conversations provide a way to review the progress of coaching and mentoring between managers and their direct reports throughout the performance review cycle.

Secondly, clearly defining goals and expected behaviors, as well as proper training around both, sets the employee and manager up for success by avoiding assumptions and incorrect expectations.

Lastly, DEI training may be an ideal choice for any organization size. Keep in mind, however, true diversity, equity, and inclusion practices do not end with just participating in training, but must be an integral part of company culture. To eliminate personal and systemic biases, thinking, behavior, and shifts in power dynamics must occur at the personal and systemic level.

While implementing changes relative to DEI in the workplace can seem like a daunting task, it doesn't have to be. Any type of organizational change starts with baby steps. We were able to find a useful blog that provides simple steps for changes that can be made to promote DEI and reduce bias. A link to the specific blog is included on this slide.

First, set clear goals to base performance on facts, not opinion. Remember those SMART goals that we mentioned earlier? It is important to base a review on something observed or that can be measured rather than how you might feel or what you might think about a person.

Second, use multiple feedback sources to limit bias-- for example, using other office employees or other community providers to set a tone and serve as a review of subjective feedback, sort of like a fact check. This can be a great method to ensure that any potential biases are eliminated from the feedback provided to the employee.

Third, nudge people into using inclusive language. Language is one of your most powerful tools for creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, respected, and included. Be mindful about your language, and consider the possible reactions of the person you're giving the feedback to. Avoid words, phrases, and tones that may offend or stereotype the person based on attributes like ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and age. If in doubt about how to phrase something, simply ask for help.

Four, reinforce inclusive behaviors. The blog included on this slide comes from Small Improvements, an example of a performance management provider. And based on some of their interactions with organizations and large companies, it has been observed that inclusive leaders demonstrate specific

characteristics and behaviors that support DEI. For more information on inclusive leadership, we encourage you to check out the resource provided on this slide or others at the end of this presentation.

Five, ask employees how they feel. When asking employees how they feel relative to DEI measures, this is more about getting a pulse. What you are really trying to do here is gather specific information about if employees feel welcomed at work. This can often be assumed, or interactions can be perceived as welcome. But to get the facts, the only way is to gather information straight from the source. Back over to you, Carol.

CAROL PANKOW: Well, thanks for those tips, Nichole. Another best practice is to prepare ahead of time. It is so important to prepare ahead of time. And you can't do an effective review if you're just whipping this out off the cuff.

Gather information. This could be those 360 reviews, peer feedback, customer feedback, the employee's feedback, and your own notes. Gather specific examples that support your feedback. Figure out the right time and the right place for the performance review meeting. And look at last year's review and goals made, along with information from any progress review check-in meetings that you've held.

Prepare yourself the day of the review, and set a tone. You want to clear your mind. Maybe you had some really bad news. Or you just had a rotten commute into work, and someone almost sideswiped you. You need to find a way to put that out of your mind, or it will carry into the review.

Prepare mentally. Maybe you need to deliver some tough feedback. Run that through in your mind, and anticipate the ways that may be received. Practice how you say it, and be ready for various reactions. And prepare yourself to handle that.

Get rid of distractions, including your own personal stuff. Put your cell phone on silent. And do not answer your office phone in the middle of the review. And definitely do not order that tuna sandwich we saw in the video earlier. If you're feeling rushed, take a deep breath and calm yourself down. And do come with a deep level of empathy.

Tactful communication can go a long way. Choosing your words carefully and with kindness is a skill that takes practice to perfect. You want to watch the language that you use. Whether you're giving a positive or a negative review, leave the unprofessional language, even the "way to gos," for those informal meetings in the hall.

Instead, focus on using professional language in your report. For example, instead of simply saying, good job, you might want to say, the employee demonstrated an expert understanding of determining eligibility. If you're writing a negative review, don't say things like, the employee doesn't know how to do their job. Instead, write that they didn't show satisfactory progress and completion of the assigned task.

Avoid using extremes, words like "always" and "never," in employee appraisals. Employees rarely always or never do something, whether it is a positive or a negative. Using extremes can leave you open to employees who want to argue and prove that they did what you accused them of never doing.

When assessing an employee's performance, also avoid using terms like "excellent" or "poor" since these terms are often too general. Instead, use those specific action words and phrases like "prepares." The employee prepares for meetings with consumers. "Assists"-- this employee assists coworkers. "Encourages-- the employee encourages consumers, too. "Motivates"-- the employee motivates everyone on the team. Or "understands"-- this employee understands all aspects of the job.

Use of subjective words like "you feel," "you believe," "you think" are obvious signs you're being subjective in the review. That is why you want to track and relate what you state back to what is real and show examples. Even when the feedback is not great, try to present it in as positive a light as possible.

And speaking of asking questions, it's most effective to think about feedback-related conversations as a two-way street. Invite your employees to collaborate with you by asking follow-up questions, getting their input, and even brainstorming solutions. Rather than positioning the conversation as a platform for you to deliver your judgment, position it as an opportunity for the two of you to work on solving some challenges together.

We all realize that not all employees will be high performers or exceed expectations. Giving negative feedback takes an intentional effort and practice. And we have a few tips to help you prepare for this scenario.

I touched on this briefly before. Prepare your talking points. You want to plan out what you want to say and how you will say it. You can even practice with a colleague to get perspective on how your feedback comes across. Have you covered the who, what, why, where, and when of the situation? And are you giving a concrete, specific example?

Keep it professional, and avoid getting personal. Negative feedback should never be directed at an employee's personality. It should be about actions or behavior. For example, instead of telling someone they're too slow and not keeping up with everyone else, you can say, I noticed you were struggling to meet the deadlines in completing the IPEs or invoicing or insert whatever the task is that is not getting done. Let's talk about what's blocking you from getting that task done.

Ask questions and listen carefully. You can ask them, how do they think things are going right now with completing IPEs on time? Have they ever had an issue like this in the past with meeting deadlines? And if so, how did they deal with that? Do they have ideas for how to improve the current situation or avoid it in the future?

Be direct and genuine. Don't let the person walk out of the room thinking, what just happened here? You want to state the feedback clearly and directly without being rude or uncaring. And you want to discuss solutions and set next steps. It helps to close the loop and not leave this hanging out there.

Definitely consider your own experiences with negative feedback. Think about the parts that you liked and the parts you didn't like. We all learn from experience. So, Nichole, why don't you tell us about the importance of listening?

NICHOLE TICHY: Thanks, Carol. You know, I really like how you spoke about feedback-related conversations as a two-way street. For me, that means equal exchanges of talking and listening. For some, it can be difficult to use this style of engagement when providing an employee review. However, it is just as important for you as the manager or supervisor to receive feedback.

Therefore it is crucial to give your undivided attention, to hold your tongue. Avoid interrupting speakers, especially in one-on-one conversations. Let others get through the facts and emotions. Often, just spilling their guts or frustrations can be cathartic and is enough to make them feel better. And then you get to be the hero for listening and not saying a word.

Be focused. If managers have an important task to accomplish, they should make note of it before they start a conversation with someone. That way, they can stop thinking about that call they need to make, that email that needs to be sent, a report to finish, et cetera. And they can focus on the conversation at hand.

Withhold judgment. Put aside any unrelated personal feelings about people and their circumstances when listening to them. Instead, focus on the facts and acknowledge emotions.

Be open to opinions. Leaders sometimes don't agree with what employees, coworkers, clients, and customers might say and stop listening because they're focusing on their rebuttal. Instead, they should continue to listen and note their points when it's their turn to talk.

And finally, ask questions to get the employee to talk about ways they can improve and what they like about their job. Some sample questions include, what goals do you have for the next year? What accomplishment or accomplishments from the last year are you most proud of? What obstacles are standing in your way of achieving your goals? How do you feel about your place in the team? And how can I improve as your manager?

In addition to listening, another best practice for the review process is to give examples for both good work and areas for growth. However, in order to do this, it is important to remember some of the models that we mentioned earlier, as this often involves monitoring of progress or tracking employee information through a Word document or a file folder, as we mentioned earlier. In doing such measures, this enables you, as the manager, to keep up-to-date information.

To make regular notes of employee performance-- vague, cliche, or generalized feedback, especially negative, can leave employees feeling frustrated. Include notes on how the employee can improve. And be direct. Provide examples with clear expectations that can serve as potential teachable moments. Offer guidance to help them work towards objectives. But overall, using specific examples of both the good things and the areas for growth show employees that you, as the manager, are not only paying attention, but are invested in their success and well-being within the organization.

We keep emphasizing the importance of tracking an employee's progress in order to provide a thorough and purposeful evaluation or performance review. Setting measurable goals to track progress over time-- earlier, we mentioned the use of SMART goals-- can provide a great way to track this progress over time. Additionally, try asking and answering some of the following questions. Do you see positive progression for measurable goals? Has the employee performance improved declined or stayed steady? Has employee morale increased, decreased, or stayed steady? Is the employee more confident than they were in past reviews?

Looking at goals and progress over time helps provide a clear picture of performance. For example, say you have an employee who has the goal for x number of closures by the end of the year. Conducting regular check-ins provides more information and more opportunity for intervention or reward rather than at the end of the year, and the employee doesn't meet their intended goal. These check-ins can serve to ask questions about needed support or barriers to accomplishing this goal, which leads us into making changes in goals as needed in order to promote success.

OK. So now that we know how to engage employees with their performance review and even add some new skills to ensure continuous engagement and support, Carol, what are some things that we can do with this information once the actual review process is complete?

CAROL PANKOW: Well, thanks, Nichole. You want to remember the review is only a small part of the performance management process. You want to make sure that you schedule follow-up meetings, you use on-the-spot coaching all throughout the year as things come up. You want to be approachable, have that open-door policy.

You want to check in regularly. And follow through on support you identified in the review. If you said you would support sending the person to training and would give them time to go, you want to get that schedule.

Here are a few dos and don'ts of reviews. We talked about all of this information earlier in the presentation and have collapsed in this into a nutshell.

You do want to review face-to-face, even Zoom face-to-face with the camera on. You do want to get employee input. You do want to give direct feedback. You do want to give reviews to everyone and not just your problem people. Do make the review a two-way street. And do focus on the future.

Things you don't want to do-- don't dump the review on the employee's desk and ask them to sign it. That's just not fair. You need to set that time to talk. Don't ask employees to write their own reviews and use only that. You can certainly get employee input. But if you're using an employee's review they wrote themselves and you just hand it back to them, that is just plain lazy.

And don't rush it. Schedule ample time for discussion. Don't give unfounded feedback. You don't want to go off of the gossip mill. You want actual facts. Don't store up feedback over a whole year and dump it all out. Employees should not be surprised when they walk into the review. They should have heard that feedback all along.

And don't use the review for discipline. And finally, don't be distracted. Now, Nichole, I know everyone watching this webinar did not come from a counselor background. But there are some clinical supervision concepts that are really applicable here. Can you share those with us?

NICHOLE TICHY: Carol, you are absolutely correct. There are certain concepts within the realm of clinical supervision. First off, I want to point out that no matter the role, research suggests that supervision practices are often well-defined in the master's training level. However, practices in the field are less systematic and undefined, especially across the rehabilitation counseling profession.

Additional research from Herbert, 2018, regarding clinical supervision notes the existence of two specific roles of a clinical supervisor in rehabilitation counseling, the administrative and the clinical roles. Each role performs two different evaluative functions. In the administrative role, the focus is on ability to complete administrative tasks, follow policy, et cetera. The clinical role is more focused on the counseling skills and client engagement.

The evaluation of these two counselor responsibilities should be separate and are even applicable to employees outside of the counselor role. As we have mentioned throughout this webinar, providing ongoing feedback and opportunities for training or improvement often fall under the administrative role of supervision.

For those watching this webinar who are certified rehabilitation counselors, we just want to provide a very brief snapshot of the ethical importance of supervision, specifically section 8 of the CRCC Code of Professional Ethics regarding supervision, training, and teaching. Ladany et al., 1999, found that inadequate evaluation is the most common ethical complaint leveled against supervisors. Supervisor reluctance to give negative feedback is one plausible explanation for this complaint.

While this is not a webinar focused on ethics, we simply wanted to provide a reminder that certified rehabilitation counselors have an ethical responsibility to evaluating supervisees through ongoing feedback regarding performance, addressing of limitations that impact performance, making decisions regarding appropriateness of supervisees, and the ability to improve their performance.

Since the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, WIOA, common performance measures have been implemented. While this webinar does not specifically focus on the WIOA common performance measures, we simply wanted to plug this information here to serve as a reminder of their importance within vocational rehabilitation. Additionally, our colleagues are currently working on more in-depth training to cover weaving in the common performance measures into the evaluation process. Self-efficacy. The concept was originally proposed by the psychologist Albert Bandura, who believed that self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their capacity to act in the ways necessary to reach specific goals. Just as a counselor needs feedback to improve performance, managers and supervisors need feedback, too. Without feedback, supervisors do not have sufficient information to gauge progress and identify areas of improvement.

But what does this feedback look like? It is a statement with an explicit or implicit evaluation component that refers to attitudes, ideas, emotions, or behaviors of the trainee or two aspects of the trainee-client relationship or the trainee-supervisor relationship. Feedback does not include questions or observations that lack an explicit or implied evaluation of the trainee on the part of the supervisor. Research suggests that supervisors who receive more supervision training and have more experience have higher levels of self-efficacy than those with less training and experience.

Finally, we have included a sample self-efficacy instrument to assist in evaluating self-efficacy for yourself as the manager, as well as your employees. This can serve as an aid in relationship-building and engagement in the goal-setting process. Carol, now back over to you.

CAROL PANKOW: Thanks, Nichole. So as you're taking all of this in, we know you're probably feeling that, oh my goodness, evaluations can often seem subjective rather than objective. And it can make completing evaluation forms difficult. So you might want to consider adding additional content aside from the number scale, which means go back to your handy-dandy Word document and all that information you've recorded.

You can also look at how the goals are framed. Are they SMART goals, as Nichole discussed earlier? When rating skills, define a baseline. And you could communicate that baseline to everyone. You can also elicit feedback from other team members. What are they observing? And how does that person presents to others? Bottom line, you want to do a thorough and complete job. This takes intentionality and practice.

Finally, if your agency doesn't have a performance management system or y'all just want a new one, there are a lot of options out there. There's the management by objectives. It's the appraisal method where managers and employees together identify, plan, organize, and communicate objectives to focus on during a specific appraisal period.

There's the 360-degree feedback. It's a multidimensional performance appraisal method that evaluates an employee using feedback collected from the employee's circle of influence, namely managers, peers, customers, and it could be direct reports. The assessment center method enables employees to get a clear picture of how others observe them and the impact it has on their performance.

There also is the Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales, BARS. It brings out both the qualitative and quantitative benefits in performance appraisal process. Bars compares employee performance with specific behavioral examples that are anchored to numerical ratings.

Psychological appraisals come in handy to determine the hidden potential of employees. And this method focuses on analyzing an employee's future performance rather than their past work. And there is a human

resource cost accounting method that analyzes an employee's performance through the monetary benefit that they yield to the company.

There are many other resources out there. And we've seen many states looking at their more traditional review methods and moving into a more modern approach. As we conclude this presentation, we want you to have access to all the resources we used to help put this training together. And the next three slides list all of those resources.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

And finally, we hope you found some nuggets that will help you as you prepare for and conduct performance reviews. Thank you for participating, and we wish you the very best in your future endeavors. Remember, practice makes perfect. Both CIT-VR and the VRTAC-QM are here to support you as you embark on your supervisory journey.