



Implementing a Performance Improvement Plan

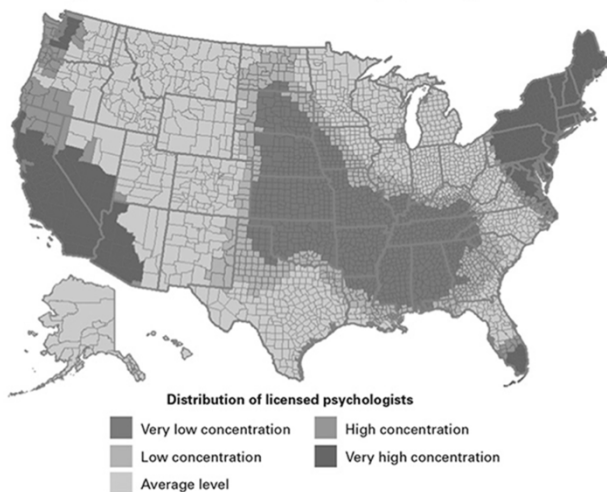
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Trivia!

- How many licensed psychologist are in the USA?
 - ~ 106,000

County-level distribution of licensed psychologists, 2012–15²



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APA Guidelines for Clinical Supervision-Review

- Assessment, evaluation, and feedback are essential components of ethical supervision (Carroll, 2010; Falender et al., 2004).
- For clinical supervision to be effective, assessment, evaluation, and feedback need to be directly linked to specific competencies, to observed behaviors, and be timely (APA, 2010, 7.06; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

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APA Guidelines for Clinical Supervision-Review

- APA outlines the following with regards to assessment, evaluation, and feedback
 - Ideally, assessment, evaluation, and feedback occur within a collaborative supervisory relationship. Supervisors promote openness and transparency in feedback and assessment, by anchoring such in the competency development of the supervisee.
 - A major supervisory responsibility is monitoring and providing feedback on supervisee performance. Live observation or review of recorded sessions is the preferred procedure.
 - Supervisors recognize the value of and support supervisee skill in self-assessment of competence and incorporate supervisee self-assessment into the evaluation process.
 - Supervisors seek feedback from their supervisees and others about the quality of the supervision they offer, and incorporate that feedback to improve their supervisory competence.

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APA Guidelines for Clinical Supervision-Review

- APA outlines the following with regards to assessment, evaluation, and feedback
 - Supervisors aspire to provide feedback that is direct, clear, and timely, behaviorally anchored, responsive to supervisees' reactions, and mindful of the impact on the supervisory relationship.
 - Supervisors are sensitive to: (a) the power differential as a function of the supervisory evaluative and gatekeeping roles; (b) culture, diversity dimensions (e.g., gender, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status) and other sources of privilege and oppression (Ancis & Ladany, 2001; Ryde, 2000; Shen-Miller, Forrest, & Burt, 2012); (c) supervisee developmental level (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010); (d) the possibilities of the supervisee experiencing demoralization (Watkins, 1996) or shame (Bilodeau, Savard, & Lecomte, 2012) in response to the feedback; and (e) timing and the amount of feedback that a supervisee can
 - In instances when a supervisee exhibits problems in professional competence, supervisors are expected to be courageous and provide this difficult feedback, doing so in a direct and supportive manner. Indirect delivery of difficult feedback to supervisees is not associated with good training outcomes (Hoffman et al., 2005).

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APA Guidelines for Clinical Supervision-Review

- Only a small proportion of supervisees in health service psychology programs demonstrate significant problems in professional competence, but most academic and internship programs report at least one supervisee with competence problems in the previous five years (Forrest et al., 1999).
- It is helpful to consider the multiple contexts in which problem behavior is embedded (e.g., cultural beliefs, licensure and accreditation, peers, faculty, supervisors) (Forrest et al., 2008).
- Supervisors give precedence to protecting the well-being of clients/patients above the training of the supervisee. When supervisees display problems of professional competence decisions made and actions taken by supervisors in response to supervisees' competence problems should be completed in a timely manner (Kaslow, Rubin, Forrest, & et al., 2007). They also are guided by the training program's intentional and well-prepared plans for addressing such problems (Forrest et al., 2013).

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APA Guidelines for Clinical Supervision-Review

- APA outlines the following with regards to professional competence problems
 - Supervisors understand and adhere both to the supervisory contract and to program, institutional, and legal policies and procedures related to performance evaluations. Supervisors strive to address performance problems directly.
 - Supervisors strive to identify potential performance problems promptly, communicate these to the supervisee, and take steps to address these in a timely manner allowing for opportunities to effect change
 - Must (a) take into consideration distinctions between normative developmental challenges and significant competence problems (Fouad et al., 2009; Hatcher et al., 2013; Kaslow et al., 2004; Rodolfa et al., 2005) and (b) be attuned to the intersections between diversity issues and competence (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Kaslow, Rubin, Forrest, & et al., 2007; Shen-Miller et al., 2009).
 - Supervisors directly observe and monitor supervisees' work and seek input about the supervisee's performance from multiple sources and from more than one supervisor.
 - Supervisee's professional behaviors and attitudes should be carefully documented in writing with dates and specific behaviors included in the record. Documentation is essential throughout the training trajectory in establishing clarity regarding the performance expectations and the supervisee's attaining the requisite competencies and is important in remediation or in adversarial actions.
 - Once supervisors have identified that a supervisee has professional competence problems, they have an ethical responsibility to discuss these with the supervisee and to develop a plan to remediate those problems (APA, 2010; 7.06). Supervisors do so in a manner that is clear, direct, and mindful of the barriers to assuring that such conversations are effective and likely to maintain the supervisory relationship (Hoffman et al., 2005; Jacobs et al., 2011).

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APA Guidelines for Clinical Supervision-Review

- APA outlines the following with regards to professional competence problems
 - Supervisors are competent in developing and implementing plans to remediate performance problems.
 - In conjunction with the supervisee and relevant training colleagues, the supervisor develops written documentation of areas in which the supervisee has competence deficits, performance expectations, steps to be taken to address deficits, responsibilities for each party, performance monitoring processes, and the timelines that will be followed (Kaslow, Rubin, Forrest, & et al., 2007).
 - The supervisor will follow the steps outlined in this plan, including the development of timely written evaluations that are anchored in the stipulated performance criteria (Kaslow, Rubin, Forrest, & et al., 2007). Supervisors evaluate their role in the supervisory relationship and adjust their role as needed, providing more direction and oversight and assuring that client/patient welfare is not threatened and appropriate care is provided. These responsibilities need to be balanced with both training and gatekeeping responsibilities.
 - Supervisors are mindful of their role as gatekeeper and take appropriate and ethical action in response to supervisee performance problems.

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NPTC Action Plans

- Action Plans are for situations where the concern is related to things not necessarily within the interns' control (being behind in hours) and/or not directly related to intern performance. The action plan could also have a primary focus on the site's responsibilities as appropriate. The intention of this plan is to determine the effectiveness of the steps put in place to remedy the concerns on a short-term basis. The formal oversight of the plan can be removed once the plan is established as effective. These areas include, but are not limited to, hour deficits needed to be addressed by the site.

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NPTC Performance Improvement Plan

- Level 1 Plan
 - Level 1 PIPs indicate problem behaviors or performance worthy of additional oversight and accountability. Such behaviors or performance would be areas of needed improvement but identified as substantially attainable and not related to significant deficits or concerns related to progress toward graduation.
 - These areas include, but are not limited to, being behind in hours (due to intern behavior) and/or paperwork/task timeliness.
- Level 2 Plan
 - Level 2 PIPs indicate problematic performance and/or problematic conduct that pose more significant barriers to graduation progress due to their severity and/or repetitive nature. These areas include, but are not limited to, privacy violation, inappropriate behaviors, repeated failure to follow directives and are considered more serious than Level 1 plans.
 - Depending on the nature, severity or frequency of the incident(s) or circumstances, an intern may progress from a Level 1 plan to a Level 2 plan if it is not successfully completed. Interns may also be placed directly on a Level 2 PIP at the sole discretion of the NPTC Executive Office and Training Site depending on the severity of the concern.

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NPTC Performance Improvement Plan

- PIPs at minimum, need to include the following:
 - level of concern
 - identification of the issue
 - detailed attempts to address the issues
 - listed identifiable and measurable expectations of the intern (i.e. without the use undefined or vague terminology)
 - a deadline to meet expectations

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PIP Plan Best Practices

• Language

- Utilize language that promotes the PIP as a genuine opportunity for growth rather than a punishment-based consequence.
- Interns who view their Performance Improvement Plan as an opportunity for growth, rather than undue punishment or criticism, are more likely to benefit from the plan.
- Promoting the plan as an opportunity for growth might include setting aside time to ensure the intern has buy-in to the growth-based plan, as well as describing problem behaviors as behaviors the intern might be struggling with in a particular moment rather than as inherent aspects of their personality.
- Avoid frequently referring to the trainee by their first as this might feel like accusatory language to the intern. Refer to them as "the intern" or "the trainee" instead

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PIP Plan Best Practices

• Setting Achievable Goals

- When offering an expectation for an acceptable performance, it is important to provide specific goals the intern can reasonably attain. (Think SMART goals, i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely.)
- For example, it is better to list "the intern will respond to emails within 24-hours" as an expectation for acceptable performance rather than "the intern will respond to emails in a timelier manner" since "within 24-hours" informs the intern of the site's expectation for what constitutes "a timelier manner." The intern can then take action steps toward attaining acceptable performance in, for this example, communication and timeliness

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PIP Plan Best Practices

• Helping Meet Goals

- Include any action steps that supervisors or other staff members will take to help the intern meet the goals of the PIP.
- If an intern is not completing reports on time, for instance, a supervisor might ask to review initial drafts of test reports every two weeks to assist the intern in attaining an acceptable performance.
- List any additional resources available to interns that might help them attain an acceptable performance.
- Remember that performance improvement is a collaborative process and supervisors have the responsibility to ensure optimal training opportunities and resources in order for interns to meet their PIP goals.

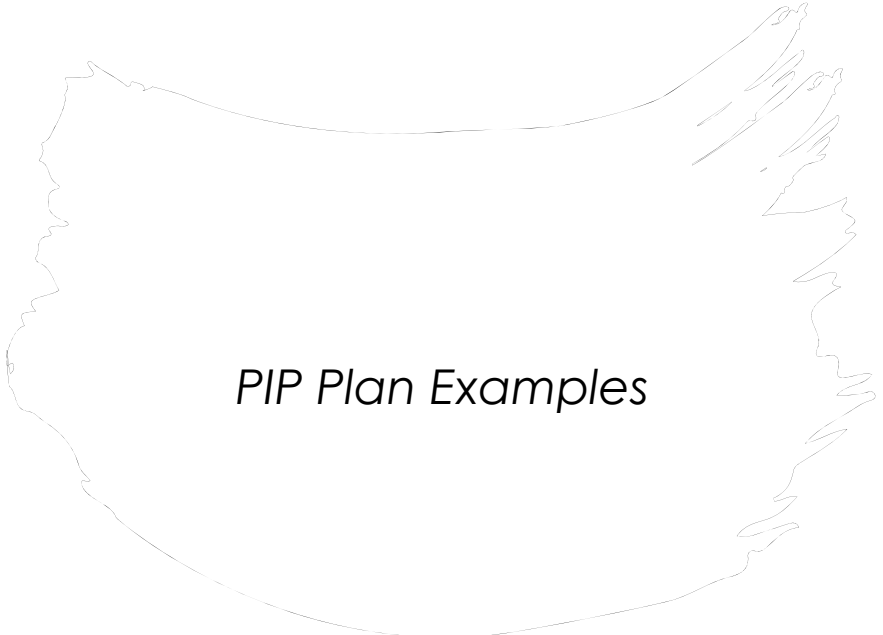
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PIP Plan Best Practices

• Measuring Acceptable Performance

- Explain how the intern will know if they are making progress toward meeting the goal of the PIP.
- Tell the intern when they will be evaluated on progress and what will be measured at the evaluation meeting.
- If communication and timeliness are being evaluated, for example, tell the intern that their ability to respond to emails within 24-hours over a four-week period will be measured at an evaluation meeting.
- Set clear next-steps for further performance improvement if the initial goals are not met at the evaluation meeting.
- It is best to review the PIP with the intern in an evaluation meeting every three-weeks to one-month until the intern is no longer on the plan.
- It is not a good idea to set the end of the intern's PIP to be the end of internship, as this will not result in timely performance improvement and could make the intern feel discouraged at the thought of being on a performance improvement plan for a good portion if not the majority of their internship.
- The final review deadline of the PIP should also take place before the intern's final evaluation is due so that the final evaluation can accurately reflect the intern's progress toward proficiency in the profession-wide competencies after they have completed their PIP.
- The final review deadline of the Performance Improvement Plan should therefore occur before the end internship and before the due date of the intern's final evaluation.

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PIP Plan Examples

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SMART Goals Practice

- Intern has consistently been up to 45 minutes late to clinic multiple days in a month. Lateness has client sessions times and ultimately client care
 - SMART goal for acceptable performance?

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SMART Goals Practice

- Intern has struggled to meet deadlines with regards to documentation and paperwork
 - SMART goal for acceptable performance?