

WORKFORCE RESOURCE ONE-PAGE SUMMARY #1: Supervision

Resource: Mor Barak, M.E., Travis, D. J., Pyun, H., & Xie, B. (2009). The impact of supervision on worker outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Social Service Review*, 83(1), 3-32.

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

This resource provides a **meta-analysis of research articles regarding the impact of supervision on worker outcomes**. Published between 1990 and 2007, the 27 articles reviewed include a combined sample of more than 10,000 workers in child welfare, social work, and mental health settings.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

Workers who receive effective supervision reciprocate with positive feelings and behaviors toward their jobs and organizations. Three supervisory dimensions act as protective, proactive, or preventive factors in ensuring a positive work environment that can contribute to worker effectiveness and quality service delivery: **task assistance; social and emotional support; and interpersonal interaction.**

- *Empowerment, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and retention* are realized when supervisors provide tangible, work-related advice and instruction to workers.
- *Workers' well-being, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction* improves when they receive support of their emotional needs and job-related stressors from their supervisors.
- There is a link between a worker's perception of the quality of the supervisory relationship and worker outcomes such as *sense of competence, sense of personal accomplishment, organizational citizenship behavior, and job satisfaction*.



Of the three dimensions, task assistance had the greatest impact on positive worker outcomes, while supportive supervision and quality supervisory relationships were associated with reduced worker *anxiety, stress, depression, somatic complaints, burnout, intention to leave, and turnover*.

*Limitations include a small number of available studies for inclusion, and in each worker outcome category; lack of research regarding the relationship of task assistance to detrimental worker outcomes; lack of consistency in the studies' measurement of various predictor and outcome variables; and reliance solely on study respondents' reporting.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

- Organizations should **stress the importance of effective supervision** and develop an organizational climate that supports **positive supervisor-supervisee relationships** and allows for **frequent, mandatory supervisory sessions**.
- Organizations should **provide supervisory training on providing effective task assistance, building strong supervisory relationships and increasing supervisory support for workers**.