

Trauma Informed Workforce Wellness

90-Minute | Facilitator & Supervision Skill Lab

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Regulate



Relate



Reason



Session Focus

- Trauma-aware supervision
- Facilitation under stress
- Micro-skills for difficult conversations
- Practice and peer consultation

How We'll Work Today

- Brief skill orientation
- Breakout practice rounds
- Peer feedback
- Large-group integration
- Take-away tools

Working Agreements

- Participation by choice
- Professional focus
- No pressure to disclose
- Confidentiality
- Practice over performance

Supervision and Workforce Wellbeing

- Supervision shapes regulation
- Supervision shapes judgment
- Supervision shapes retention
- Supervision shapes safety

Regulation and Judgment

- Stress narrows attention
- Regulation restores flexibility
- Supervision influences both

The Five Core Micro-Skills

1. Balancing accountability with compassion
2. Reflective listening
3. Strategic questioning
4. Recognizing stress responses
5. Maintaining your own capacity

Skill 1: Balancing Accountability with Compassion

- Clear expectations
- Emotional awareness
- Behavior separate from character
- Integrated feedback

Skill 1 – *In Practice: ACCOUNTABILITY WITH COMPASSION*

Clear expectations ★ Emotional awareness ★ Behavior separate from character ★ Integrated feedback

Sounds like

"The documentation needs to be complete by Friday. I know you're managing a heavy caseload, what would help you meet this deadline?"

"This is the third time this month you've been late to team meeting. I'm concerned. What's happening?"

"The way you spoke to that client wasn't aligned with our values. I also see you're carrying a lot right now. Let's talk about both."

Skill 1 – *In Practice*: ACCOUNTABILITY WITH COMPASSION

Looks like:

- Stating the standard clearly and directly
- Acknowledging context without lowering expectations
- Offering support alongside accountability
- Following up on commitments made

Avoids:

- Apologizing for having standards
- Assuming you know why someone is struggling
- Making character judgments (*"you're lazy" vs. "this work is incomplete"*)
- Choosing between kindness and clarity

Why it works: Clear expectations reduce defensiveness, and acknowledgment helps people stay engaged enough to follow through.

Skill 2: Reflective Listening

- Listen for emotion
- Reflect before fixing
- Validate impact
- Restore clarity

Skill 2 – In Practice: REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Sounds like

"It sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed by how quickly this all happened."

"What I'm hearing is frustration about the lack of support, and also worry about the client's safety."

"So you're noticing your own irritability increasing, and you're concerned about how that's affecting your work."

Skill 2 – *In Practice: REFLECTIVE LISTENING*

Looks like:

- Pausing before responding
- Naming emotions you hear (tentatively)
- Reflecting content and feeling
- Checking accuracy: "Am I getting that right?"

Avoids:

- Immediately problem-solving
- Dismissing emotions ("you shouldn't feel that way")
- Adding your own interpretation
- Reflecting so much that you never move forward

Why it works: People often can't think clearly until they feel heard. Reflection slows the conversation down enough for processing to happen.

Skill 3: Strategic Questioning

- Expand attention
- Restore agency
- Strengthen judgment
- Support planning

Skill 3: *in Practice: Strategic Questioning*

Sounds like

“What feels most important to focus on right now?”

“What’s within your control here, and what isn’t?”

“What would help you move this forward?”

“Where do you need more clarity before deciding?”

Skill 3: *in Practice: Strategic Questioning*

Looks like

- One question at a time
- Questions that slow the moment
- Questions that widen options

Avoids

- Rapid-fire questioning
- “Why” questions under stress
- Questions with a hidden right answer

Why it works: Thoughtful questions widen perspective and restore agency, improving judgment under pressure.

Skill 4: Recognizing Stress Responses

- Withdrawal
- Irritability
- Rigidity
- Over-preparing
- Presenteeism

Skill 4: *In Practice: Recognizing Stress Responses*

Sounds like

- “I’m noticing this feels heavier than usual.”
- “Something seems to have shifted, let’s pause here.”
- “I’m wondering if the load is getting tight.”
- “What’s making this harder right now?”

Skill 4: *In Practice: Recognizing Stress Responses*

Looks like

- Naming patterns, not diagnosing
- Adjusting pace and expectations
- Responding with curiosity

Avoids

- Labeling behavior as attitude
- Escalating too quickly
- Ignoring early signals

Why it works: Noticing stress patterns early allows supervisors to respond accurately before situations escalate.

Skill 5: Maintaining Your Own Capacity

- Regulation
- Boundaries
- Consultation
- Recovery

Skill 5: *In Practice: Maintaining Your Own Capacity*

Sounds like

- *“I want to come back to this when I can think clearly.”*
- *“I need to reset how much I’m holding.”*
- *“Let me get consultation before we decide.”*
- *“Here’s what I can support, and what I can’t.”*

Skill 5: *In Practice: Maintaining Your Own Capacity*

Looks like

- Pausing before responding
- Naming limits without apology
- Following through consistently

Avoids

- Leading while depleted
- Over-promising support
- Carrying issues alone

Why it works: Regulated supervisors make steadier decisions and sustain clearer leadership over time.

Practice Structure: Choose one way to participate

- **Conversation Leads**
 - Quietly drafts or says one sentence they would use as the supervisor.
- **Response Lens**
 - Considers how the staff member might hear that sentence.
- **Clarity Tracker**
 - Notes what language increases clarity or creates friction.

Scenario 1: Recognizing Burnout

- Missed deadlines
- Irritability
- Reduced presence
- Performance concerns

Skill practice:

1. Accountability with compassion
2. Reflective listening

Your focus ~

- Name observations clearly
- Address performance
- Create space for context
- End with a clear next step

 8 minutes

Scenario 2: Personal Stress Disclosure

- Personal stress
- Work affected
- Boundaries required

Skill practice:

2. Reflective listening
3. Strategic questioning

Your focus ~

- Acknowledge the disclosure
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Explore workplace supports
- Offer options and choice

 8 minutes

Scenario 3: “That’s Not What I Was Hired To Do”

- Role expectations have shifted
- Standards feel unclear or misaligned
- Supervisor must restore clarity and direction

Primary skills in use:

1. Accountability with compassion
3. Strategic questioning

Supporting skills:

4. Recognizing stress responses
5. Maintaining your own capacity

Your focus ~

- Name role drift explicitly
- Anchor expectations and evaluation
- Hold impact while maintaining authority
- Set clear priorities and follow-up

Large-Group Integration

- Patterns noticed
- Language that worked
- Challenges
- Insights

Applying This at Work

- Supervision conversations
- Team meetings
- Performance feedback
- Incident follow-up

Integration

- One skill to practice
- One conversation to shift
- One boundary to strengthen

Thank You

- Steady supervision
- Judgment under pressure
- Sustainable leadership

