

## Mental Health Without a Wellness Budget Toolkit

### Communication and Resilience Tips:

#### **Supervisor Guide: Applying Behavioral Techniques to Strengthen Team Performance**

##### **Purpose**

This guide helps supervisors apply **behavior-based techniques**—rooted in the research of David McClelland—to effectively lead teams, identify performance patterns early, and support employee success through objective, consistent practices.

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#### **1. Core Principle: Focus on Observable Behavior**

##### **Why it matters:**

Behavior—not assumptions, intentions, or personality—is the most reliable indicator of performance.

##### **Supervisor Mindset Shift:**

- From: “I think they’re disengaged.”
- To: “I’ve observed a change in participation and missed deadlines over the past two weeks.”

##### **Key Practice:**

- Anchor feedback and decisions in **specific, observable actions**
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#### **2. What to Look For: Identifying Patterns & Shifts**

Supervisors should consistently observe and document patterns in:

##### **Performance & Productivity**

- Missed or met deadlines
- Quality and accuracy of work
- Changes in output over time

##### **Engagement & Communication**

- Participation in meetings

- Responsiveness to emails/requests
- Tone and clarity in communication

### **Collaboration & Team Dynamics**

- Conflict management
- Willingness to support others
- Inclusion in team discussions

### **Reliability & Attendance**

- Schedule adherence
- Patterns of leave or tardiness

 **Tip:** A single instance may not indicate an issue—**patterns over time do.**

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## **3. From Observation to Action: Using Behavioral Conversations**

When addressing performance, use a **behavior-based conversation model**:

### **Step 1: Describe the Behavior (Fact-Based)**

- “Over the past month, I’ve noticed three missed deadlines and limited participation in team meetings.”

### **Step 2: Explain the Impact**

- “This has affected the team’s ability to complete projects on time.”

### **Step 3: Invite Dialogue**

- “Can you share what’s been going on from your perspective?”

### **Step 4: Align on Next Steps**

- “Let’s identify strategies to help you meet deadlines and stay engaged in meetings.”
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## **4. Apply the STAR Method Beyond Hiring**

The **STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result)** isn’t just for interviews—it’s a powerful **coaching tool**.

**Use STAR to:**

- Help employees reflect on past situations
- Reinforce successful behaviors
- Identify areas for improvement

**Example:**

- “Can you walk me through a recent project (Situation/Task), what steps you took (Action), and the outcome (Result)? What would you do differently next time?”
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**5. Strengthening Teams Through Behavioral Supervision**

✓ **Be Proactive, Not Reactive**

- Address small behavioral shifts early
- Prevent escalation into larger performance issues

✓ **Be Consistent**

- Apply the same standards and observation methods across all team members

✓ **Be Objective**

- Avoid assumptions or personal interpretations
- Focus on “what happened,” not “why you think it happened”

✓ **Be Supportive**

- Use observations to coach—not criticize
  - Partner with employees to find solutions
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**6. Documentation Best Practices**

Maintain clear, objective records to support:

- Performance evaluations
- Coaching discussions

- HR compliance and consistency

**Effective documentation includes:**

- Date and time
  - Specific behavior observed
  - Impact on team/operations
  - Any follow-up actions
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**7. Common Pitfalls to Avoid**

- **✗** Relying on memory instead of documentation
  - **✗** Addressing only extreme behaviors, ignoring early warning signs
  - **✗** Using vague or generalized feedback
  - **✗** Making assumptions about intent or attitude
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**8. The Outcome: What Success Looks Like**

Supervisors who use behavioral techniques will:

- Identify performance trends early
- Provide clear, actionable feedback
- Build trust through fairness and transparency
- Strengthen team accountability and engagement

**Quick Reference: Supervisor Checklist**

- ✓ Observe and document behaviors regularly
- ✓ Look for patterns—not isolated incidents
- ✓ Address issues early with specific examples
- ✓ Use structured conversations (Behavior → Impact → Dialogue → Action)
- ✓ Apply STAR for coaching and reflection
- ✓ Stay objective, consistent, and supportive

## **What Resilience Really Means:**

Resiliency is not about always saying “yes”; it’s about knowing how to sustain yourself so you can continue showing up effectively over time.

## **4 Areas Within Your Control:**

### **1. Mindset**

- Shift from Why is this happening to What is within my control
- Control Circle Practice
- 3 things out of my control
- 3 things inside my control
- Daily Purpose/Gratitude
  - Who did I help today?
  - What problem did I prevent?
  - What impact did I make that may go unseen?

### **2. Energy (not just time)**

- Burnout is often energy depletion
- Energy Protections:
  - Work in 60-90 minute focus blocks
  - Take 5-minute reset breaks
  - Pause before responding when stressed
  - Close unused tabs/windows
  - Hydrate and stand between meetings
- Micro-Reset
  - Box Breathing (Inhale for 4 counts| Hold for 4 counts |Exhale for 4 counts)
  - Name 3 facts (not fears/worry)
  - Consciously loosen your jaw and drop your shoulders

### **3. Communication**

- Clarity reduces anxiety. Ask:
  - What is the priority?
  - What is the deadline?
  - What outcome are we aiming for?
  - What can wait?
- Lead with curiosity instead of assumption. Questions like “What challenges are you running into?” or “What support would help most right now?” encourage collaboration.

- Avoid urgency overload. Not everything is an emergency. Being intentional about tone and timelines helps prevent additional stress for others.
- Keep perspective during difficult conversations. Not every tense interaction is personal; often people are responding to pressure, uncertainty, or competing demands.

#### 4. Boundaries

- Boundaries are sustainability tools; not resistance.
- You Can:
  - Define your work hours
  - Delay non-urgent email responses
  - Turn off notifications during focus time, vacation, ***and*** times outside of your work hours
  - Modeling boundary-setting ourselves gives others confidence to do the same.
- Give permission to those around you to uphold their boundaries
- Use auto/delay send features (in apps, email, etc.)
- Intentionally acknowledge others work hours, out of office notices and preface email “when you return, hope you had a fantastic trip, I was reaching out...”
- Healthy boundaries are not barriers to teamwork—they are tools that help prevent burnout and support long-term engagement.
- Giving people permission to maintain healthy boundaries is not lowering expectations—it’s creating the conditions for sustainable success.

### Building Team Resilience From Any Position Within the Organization

Resilience is not built solely through leadership titles or formal authority—it is strengthened through everyday actions, interactions, and the way people support one another across an organization. Every employee has the ability to positively influence team resilience.

Ways to help build resilience from any role include:

- **Communicate with clarity and consistency.** Clear communication reduces uncertainty and helps teams stay focused during stressful or changing situations.
- **Model adaptability.** Being open to change, problem-solving, and learning new approaches helps create a culture that can respond effectively to challenges.

- **Support healthy boundaries.** Encouraging balance, respecting capacity, and recognizing when others may need support helps prevent burnout and promotes long-term sustainability.
- **Lead with empathy and respect.** Small actions—listening, checking in, offering assistance, or acknowledging someone’s efforts—can strengthen trust and team connection.
- **Stay solution-focused.** Resilient teams acknowledge challenges honestly while also focusing on what can be controlled and what steps can move the work forward.
- **Encourage collaboration.** Sharing knowledge, helping coworkers, and asking for help when needed builds stronger and more connected teams.
- **Promote psychological safety.** Teams are more resilient when people feel comfortable asking questions, sharing concerns, and speaking up without fear of judgment.
- **Recognize progress, not just outcomes.** Celebrating effort, growth, and perseverance helps maintain motivation during demanding periods.
- **Take care of your own wellbeing.** Resilience is strengthened when individuals prioritize rest, boundaries, and sustainable work habits. Modeling this can positively influence others.

Resilience is often built in small moments—through patience, communication, flexibility, and support. Regardless of position or title, every employee contributes to the culture and resilience of the organization.