COACHING EMPLOYEES WITH TEAMWORK, MORALE, AND/OR COOPERATION PROBLEMS

Leadership Through Fully Engaged Employees
Chapter 7

VIEWPOINT
A Total Care Perspective
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through participation in this session, you will be able to:

1. List the advantages of taking decisive action when faced with employee performance problems.
2. Identify performance expectations for the essential areas of teamwork, morale, respect and cooperation.
3. Name the three criteria for a disciplinary write-up and be able to recognize examples of effective write-ups.
4. Describe the keys to conducting a successful coaching or disciplinary discussion with an employee.
5. Know the VPH resources available to assist you with the disciplinary process.
THE SUPERVISOR’S DILEMMA

Too often as supervisors we assume if an employee has good technical skills, but causes teamwork, morale and/or cooperation problems, that our hands are tied, that we cannot successfully discipline them. This assumption is incorrect! Our organizational values require us to confront these performance problems. **Good employees look to you, their supervisor, to stop demoralizing problems from continuing within their department.**

Nothing can undermine a work team or department faster than backbiting, turf protection and negativity.

**Teamwork doesn’t happen by accident.** It takes courageous leadership that addresses and resolves conflicts and disagreements constructively. By doing so, teamwork will thrive and employees with diverse personalities and roles will have greater respect for the contributions of co-workers.

Supervisors know if they confront the problem the disruptive employee possibly:

- Will not want to hear it and won’t like what you tell them.
- Will want to defend their position and challenge yours.
- Will want to shift the issue by attacking your performance on another issue.

**Hesitating to confront these problems has significant negative consequences.** Failing to implement necessary discipline actions sends the wrong message that management doesn’t take seriously the need for professional conduct.

Ultimately managers will receive the performance they are willing to tolerate.

**One of the most damaging complaints a good employee can express is, “My manager doesn’t fix the problems within his/her control.”**
THE SOURCE OF OUR RELUCTANCE

Why are we sometimes reluctant to coach or discipline employees who are causing teamwork, morale or cooperation problems?

- These problems are sometimes “fuzzy” and difficult to quantify.
- We do not like confrontations.
- We are not experienced enough, or are not comfortable with our skills in this area.
- We are hoping the problem will “go away” or fix itself.

ADVANTAGES OF MOVING DECISIVELY

What are the advantages of moving decisively through the coaching and discipline process?

- Reinforces that the needs of our clients and customers come first. Our employees’ jobs are important and worthy of hard work and long-term commitment.
- Sets the tone that VPH is so serious about performance standards that it serves no purpose to test a manager’s resolve.
- If the employee is not going to meet the performance standards, then they may choose to resign to avoid future termination.
- In the long term, consistent enforcement of performance standards results in the need for less disciplinary actions.
- You will have more time to spend on coaching and developing good employees to become even better.
THE POWER OF CLEAR PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

For performance coaching or discipline to succeed, we must have standards in place. When we develop clear, specific, measurable performance standards and communicate them to current and new employees up front:

✓ Employees know what we expect from them.

✓ Employees know what to expect from each other.

✓ We have a mechanism to evaluate employee’s performance.

This “no surprises” approach gives us an opportunity to earn a reputation for being:

✓ Firm, but fair.

✓ 100% committed to our employees’ professional growth.

✓ 100% committed to providing teamwork work environment.

Development focused leaders achieve high productivity through motivated, growing, committed employees.

To begin the process, identify a task force to draft department specific teamwork standards.

CLARIFY KEY PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

To prepare for coaching or disciplinary actions identify the behaviors, issues, or qualities that need to be addressed with the employee to improve teamwork, cooperation and/or respect.

Review your Department standards that relate to the issue(s) you will be addressing.

Build from your standards so that you are describing in clear, specific, observable terms the behaviors you will be expecting the employee to demonstrate in the future.
EXAMPLES OF STANDARDS

Our Department Standards are:

**Client Service**: Demonstrate that we will be exceptionally responsive.

We will…
- Create a courteous, welcoming, helpful environment.
- Anticipate needs and respond with timely, effective action and/or communication.
- Present a professional image.
- Strive for personal, professional, and clinical excellence.

**Teamwork**: Embrace partnership as the guiding principle in all we do.

We will…
- Work cooperatively as members of a team.
- Practice effective conflict resolution.
- Address negativity and redirect inappropriate conversation.
- Trust, respect and support each other.
- Welcome new employees by sharing information and knowledge.

**Attitude**: Make a great first impression.

We will…
- Choose a positive attitude.
- Display a “can do” spirit.
- Practice empathy and reflective listening.
- Accept accountability without excuses or blaming.

**Respect**: Recognize the value of each person.

We will…
- Smile, make eye contact and greet with the appropriate title.

**Protect privacy and maintain confidentiality**.

- Demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness to cultural differences.
- Treat clients and families as partners and members of the health care team.
ACTION STEPS FOR DEVELOPING DEPARTMENT SPECIFIC TEAMWORK STANDARDS

Step One: As a leadership team, identify your fully engaged employees who exemplify the teamwork behaviors you want the employees throughout your department to focus on for the next 12 months.

Step Two: The task force should meet and identify the key areas for your department to focus on to improve teamwork. Use the enclosed examples to select items that help promote discussion.

Step Three: Using the ideas you generated in Step Two, write a first draft of department specific teamwork standards.

Step Four: Share draft teamwork standards at department staff meeting. Provide employees a couple of weeks to share recommended changes.

Step Five: At next department staff meeting share final teamwork standards and have employees individually sign the standards. Post copy of standards and put individually signed standards in employee’s file.

The following pages provide examples of department teamwork standards to assist the task force in developing teamwork standards that have the greatest impact in the department.
TEAMWORK THROUGH RESPECT AND COOPERATION
PERFORMANCE STANDARD

1. Cooperates with others to accomplish common goals. Works well with employees within and across his/her department to achieve shared goals.

- Achieves standard by…
  - Working harmoniously and effectively with wide variety of people in difficult situations.
  - Putting good of the team above own priorities, consistently willing to help others, real team player.
  - Views success in relation to group’s success, works toward team’s goals without consideration of personal effort.
  - Does what is asked without objection, volunteers to help others, looks for ways to help the team.

- Doesn’t achieve standard by…
  - Displaying lack of cooperation when asked to take on new tasks. Motivated more by his/her own priorities than those of the team. Projects “in it for myself” attitude. Conveys reluctance to help others. Overly selective about where they put their energy.

2. Treats others with dignity and respect and maintains a friendly demeanor; values the contribution of others.

- Achieves standard by…
  - Redirecting inappropriate conversations. Treats others with respect and consideration. Avoids gossip and promotes professionalism.
  - Solving problems without unnecessary conflict or drama. Sensitive to the perspectives and needs of others. Builds bridges of understanding. Empathetic.
  - Effectively communicating in a clear, concise, tactful, and diplomatic manner.
• Doesn’t achieve standard by…
  o Occasionally getting caught up in the negativity of others.
    Through gossip and unhelpful comments inadvertently
    furthers tension within the team.
  o Using absolute terms such as always and never to overstate
    and polarize positions.
  o Making poorly chosen comments which unnecessarily adds
    to the intensity of situations.

I have read and understand the Teamwork standards. I agree to comply with these standards
while at work. I support our commitment to each other, to teamwork and accountability.

Name ________________________________ Signature___________________ Date______
DEPARTMENT TEAMWORK STANDARD

To minimize the potential for misunderstandings, the following are key teamwork expectations for our department.

1. Take personal responsibility for interactions with others, promoting a work environment conducive to cooperation and respect for co-workers.

2. Manage personal feelings about others professionally so they do not negatively affect the workplace.

3. If you have a disagreement or issue with a co-worker, you are to discuss it with them in a constructive and professional manner versus discussing it with uninvolved co-workers.

4. Accept accountability for your communications to co-workers without excuses or blaming others. Willingly listen to feedback constructively with the intent to learn from it to enhance cooperation within the department.

5. Improve the quality of work life for fellow employees. Treat people with dignity and respect, not engage in conduct that could diminish a person’s self-worth or sense of well-being.

We are never to undermine or diminish others. We are not to be:
- abrupt, curt, or rude
- belittling, antagonistic, defiant, or intimidating
- condescending, demeaning, or disrespectful
- conduct unbecoming of a VPH employee
- discouraging, undermining, sabotage, undercut or negative
- disruptive, over-reactive, unduly upset, or loud
- domineering, bullying, or aggressive
- gossiping, spreading rumor(s), or sharing private information about a co-worker
- harsh, callous, or unfeeling
- insinuating, suggestive, or provocative
- intruding within others’ space
- offensive, abusive, or use profanity
- sarcastic, biting, or smug
- whining, complaining, or involved in whispering campaign

I have read and understand the Teamwork Standards that were developed by the employees in my department. I agree to comply with and practice these standards while at work. I support our commitment to each other, to teamwork and accountability.

Name _________________________ Signature________________ Date_____

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DEPARTMENT TEAMWORK STANDARD

Date(s) initial Teamwork Standard shared with employees __________________________

Date(s) of revision to department teamwork standard – nature of changes _____________

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COACHING EMPLOYEES WITH TEAMWORK PROBLEMS

Department-wide teamwork standards reduce many problems, but unfortunately they don’t eliminate all teamwork problems.

For continued problem situations, identify the behaviors, issues, or qualities that need to be addressed with specific employee(s).

Build from your standards so that you are describing in clear, specific, observable terms the behaviors you expect the employee to demonstrate in the future.

When coaching an employee, our role is to:

- sensitize employees to how their communication is being perceived by others
- the problems their words or actions can cause if continued
- the department standard
- the positive consequences of meeting the standard
- the negative consequences of not meeting the standard

The following is an example of a coaching letter to share when meeting with an employee.
Dear ________________.

The purpose of this letter is to summarize the key points we discuss in this meeting. My hope is that over the weekend and the coming days you will refer back to this letter and that it will be a helpful resource for growth and development.

This information is being shared with the expectation you will listen to this feedback constructively with the intent to learn from it and enhance your contribution to our department.

I don’t know if anyone’s ever told you this before, but from my vantage point as your supervisor, your communication style can be somewhat (negative and demoralizing). You may not realize it, but you tend to (whine) and (complain). Let me share a recent example. (When co-workers shared at our staff meeting we are upgrading our process, you immediately conveyed your lack of confidence in ________________, before your co-workers were able to share useful information. You appeared to be undermining co-workers’ efforts by saying how much you like the way it was in the past. By talking on and on about the past, I’m not sure you realized that your display of frustration and dissatisfaction was perceived as negative and counter-productive by many on the team.)

______________, as an employee of VPH you are responsible for the perception you create based on your words and actions.

When people associate you with negativity and view you as a complainer, your effectiveness in the workplace diminishes.

I need you to really think about the impact you want to have on your co-workers and on the morale and teamwork within our department. Do you want to be a positive and constructive team member who’s valued or do you want to be a negative, limiting, complaining individual who resists change and is pessimistic toward things that initially appear challenging?

It’s up to you. You have the opportunity to define who you are. If you weren’t aware of how you were coming across at work, then this conversation will help sensitize you to how others see you from time to time.

As the supervisor of our team, I need to let you know that negative comments have the potential to pull down morale, and I just can’t let that happen anymore. I want you to think about this over the weekend. Let’s meet Monday at 10 a.m. and let me know what you’ve decided. I’m here to help and coach our team members. I’m holding you to the same standards as everyone else on our team. I hope you will agree with me and work to make improvements that will benefit you, your career, and the rest of us in the department.

Do I have your commitment that you will think this through seriously over the weekend and come back on Monday to discuss some solutions we can implement?

Sincerely,
EXAMPLES OF PERFORMANCE STANDARDS RELATED TO TEAMWORK, COOPERATION, AND RESPECT

Performance Standard Example. Promotes Teamwork within the department:

- At VPH we are expected to…
  - Support our co-workers and look for ways to help them.
  - Be organized and complete work assignments in a timely manner.
  - Volunteer to take on additional assignments when need arises.
    - Offer to help others. Ask, “How can I help you?” rather than say, “it is not my job.”
    - Check with the supervisor to see if you should assist other co-workers.
  - Maintain a professional approach under stress. Consistently support our department and your co-workers. Always remember we are unified with our co-workers to accomplish a common goal.
  - Redirect inappropriate conversations; reduce negativity.
    - When a co-worker begins to share gossip with you, inform the person that you are uncomfortable with the conversation and ask them to refrain from gossiping.

Performance Standard Example. Responds positively to changes regarding work. Promotes cooperation with new processes and methods:

- At VPH we are expected to be…
  - Cooperative toward one another, promoting positive morale.
  - A positive influence on others. Recognize you have the power to choose how you approach each day. Choose to “make their day” for your co-workers and clients. Approach team members with a positive, professional response and ensure your facial expressions and tone-of-voice are consistent with your positive words.
  - Accept and adjust to changes in work assignments, without complaining or using negative body language. Do not, for example, frown or walk away in an abrupt manner when told assignments for the day have changed.
  - Keep an open mind toward changes and new ideas. Successfully integrate new ideas with current approaches. Give new ideas sufficient time to be successful. During the implementation of new methods, do not voice negative comments such as “I know it won’t work.” Be patient and non-judgmental.
  - As a health care professional know your work matters, and as a result, be passionate about your work and our department. Be committed to making a positive difference.
Performance Standard Example. **Consistently demonstrates respect for co-workers:**

- As health care professionals we are expected to solve problems, not create them. I expect you to demonstrate a commitment to open communications and promote a friendly, cooperative work environment.
- I expect you to manage your personal feelings about others so that negative feelings do not spill over into the work place.
- If you have a disagreement or issue with a coworker, I expect you to discuss it with them in a constructive and positive manner vs. discussing it with uninvolved parties.
- I expect you to avoid a “we vs. them” approach.

**COACHING EMPLOYEES TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN IMPROVING THEIR PERFORMANCE**

The following coaching example is designed to gain the employee’s agreement to change specific behaviors.

**Step 1 – Describe Employee’s Actions in Clear, Specific Observable Terms.**

- “_________________________ I’ve got a problem, and I need your help.” Or
- “_________________________ there’s something that’s concerning me and I need to talk to you about it.”
- “Sometimes you do the following __________________________________________.”

Then provide a full description of the employee’s actual behavior in clear, specific, observable terms.

- “This could impact our department by ____________________________.

Other employees have needed to step in to make sure _____________________ tasks have gotten done.

If it continues it will cause customer service and morale problems.”

(Convey the business reasons why the problem needs to be solved.)
Step 2 – Express your concerns.

“I’m concerned for you. I know you understand our department’s standards. But, sometimes you are not following them.”

Seek the employee’s perspective through an open-ended statement.

“Fill me in. Tell me about it.”

- Wait For Response
- Hear the employee’s initial response and explanation.
- Give the employee ample opportunity to respond.
- Listen to determine if the actions you plan to recommend are appropriate.

Step 3 – Convey The Specific Behaviors You Expect To See In Future

- “This is what I need to see going forward…”
- Convey the performance standard in clear, specific, observable terms. Indicate the actions/behaviors that need to stop.

Step 4 – Ask For The Employee’s Ideas

- “What can you do from now on to help yourself meet this standard?”

Ask follow up questions to help the employee clarify and share what they will be doing differently in the future.

- “Please elaborate.”
- “What other actions will you take?”
- “Please go into more detail.”

Reaffirm The Employee’s Plan

- Restate the employee’s solution.
- “Let me summarize. I appreciate your commitment to …”
- “Since it is so important for you to improve, please summarize the key points of our conversation in an e-mail to me this week with your plan to address this concern.”
- “I will schedule a follow-up meeting for us in 30 days.”
SOME FOLLOW UP THOUGHTS ON KEY WORDING IN THE COACHING MEETING

________________________ I’ve got a problem, and I need your help.”

• By beginning a coaching meeting with an “I statement” you reduce the defensiveness that would result if you began with an accusatory “you statement.”

“Sometimes you do the following __________________________.”

• By using balanced terminology remind the employee that they have the experience and abilities to draw from to meet the standard.
• The expectation of consistently meeting the standard requires growth but is achievable.

“This could impact our department by

______________________________.”

• By stating the business reasons why the behavior needs to change, the employee can understand why management is going to be persistent in enforcing the standard.

“Let me summarize. I appreciate your commitment to …

• By being patient and persistent in the coaching meeting, management is hopefully able to get the employee to verbalize and then commit to implementing the employee’s plan to meet the standard.
• Because the employee developed and shared their improvement plan, the employee’s commitment to meet the standard has significantly increased.
• If the problem continues, the employee can be reminded that they have not yet lived up to their agreement, which explains the formal disciplinary action.

Key to successful outcomes in coaching or disciplinary situations is when the employee accepts personal responsibility for their actions.
ADDRESSING SIDETRACKS

Although it would be ideal if people would accept constructive feedback in an open supportive manner, let’s be prepared for some defensiveness. The following are the most common sidetracks and appropriate coaching responses.

The Stall or I’ll Try

The stall usually occurs after you have stated the specific behavior you expect. The stall sounds like “OK.” “Sure.” “That’s a good idea.” “I’ll work on it.” Or “I’ll try.”

Ask the employee follow-up questions so that the employee conveys what changes they will make or actions they will take to meet the standard.

“I’m glad to hear you will work on it. What specific changes will you make, so you will be successful?”

The Victim

The employee conveys, “I’m doing the best I can. “I can’t help it, I have always acted this way. This is who I am.” The key is to recognize the sidetrack and focus on the standard and the future.

“What I need to see is … How are you going to make this happen?”

The Attack

In this sidetrack the employee attacks your authority or your performance.

“That is easy for you to say. You’re not the one out here doing the work.” Or “You are not perfect either, why do you expect so much from me?” This can be a tough situation to handle gracefully, because you are being verbally attacked. The key is to remain calm and continue with the 4 step coaching approach.

“I’m sorry you feel this way. What are you going to do to meet the standard?”
NOTES FROM CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK COACHING MEETING

Employee ____________________________  Date __________________________

1. Describe the event or behavior(s) that warranted constructive feedback.

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2. Convey the employee’s response.

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3. Indicate the employee’s plan to meet the standard.

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4. Indicate management’s response to the employee’s plan, for example date scheduled for follow up meeting.

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Supervisor’s Signature _________________________________ Date ___________
COACHING

In most cases, your first response to a performance problem is to give the employee feedback on their performance. This is often all that is required to bring performance up to the standard. In situations where feedback and coaching are not working, the supervisor needs to move to the disciplinary process.

CHECKLIST FOR DISCIPLINARY WRITE-UPS

All disciplinary write-ups should accomplish these three things:

1. Convey in clear, specific, observable terms the actions or behaviors that were unsatisfactory. (What would an independent observer accept as evidence that the employee causes teamwork, morale or cooperation problems? What were the actual words the employee said or behaviors that were displayed?)

2. Convey the performance standard.

3. Convey the consequences to the department and the consequences to the employee if the sub-standard performance continues.
EXAMPLES OF DISCIPLINARY WRITE-UPS

EXAMPLE #1 - Employee not supporting the team or being a team player

*Description of employee’s actions in clear, specific, and observable terms:*

As a healthcare professional, it is necessary for us all to work together as a team in meeting the needs of our clients.

At times you have made comments that do not promote teamwork within our department.

You have made sarcastic and disrespectful remarks about a co-worker. Specifically you called your fellow employee ___________ and ___________. Co-workers have confirmed your actions.

You have made disparaging remarks to the team. Specifically, you have said on three occasions, “It’s time for my break and I’m taking one whether you think I should or not.” Co-workers have confirmed your actions.

*Performance Standard – Promotes teamwork within the department:*

You are expected to support the team and look for ways to help others. When you have completed your assigned tasks, offer to help others.

Before you take a break, ask your co-workers if there is anything they need assistance with. Do not leave the unit without first checking with your supervisor.

You are expected to prevent personal negative feelings about a co-worker from interfering with teamwork within the unit.

*Future consequences:*

If you meet our department’s performance standards, no further disciplinary action will be taken. Meeting this standard will contribute to a friendly cooperative work environment and increase the level of teamwork among co-workers.

This will make a positive impact on the operations of our department and promote positive work relationships with your co-workers.

If this problem or a similar type of problem occurs again, you will be subject to further disciplinary actions up to and including discharge.
EXAMPLES OF DISCIPLINARY WRITE-UPS

EXAMPLE # 2 - Employee rude and unprofessional to co-worker

Description of employee’s actions in clear, specific, and observable terms:

Today you displayed unacceptable conduct when you were asked a simple question by a co-worker.

You were rude, argumentative and unprofessional in front of clients and co-workers.

You were sarcastic; you placed your hands on your hips in a defiant manner and rolled your eyes expressing an uncooperative approach.

Your conduct has deteriorated over the past several months.

In the past week, several of your co-workers have complained about the abrupt manner in which you treated them.

Performance Standard – Demonstrates respect for co-workers:

As a health care professional, you are expected to solve problems, not create them. You are expected to demonstrate a commitment to open communications and promote a friendly, cooperative work environment.

You are to manage your personal feelings about others so they do not spill over into the work place.

If you have a disagreement or issue with a coworker, discuss it with them in a constructive and positive manner instead of displaying negativity in your words or body language.

Future consequences:

If this behavior or a similar type of problem occurs again, you will be subject to further disciplinary actions up to and including discharge.
EXAMPLES OF DISCIPLINARY WRITE-UPS

EXAMPLE # 3 - Employee being uncooperative, not willing to help co-workers.

_Description of employee’s actions in clear, specific, and observable terms:_

Our department is dedicated to maintaining a cooperative and teamwork friendly work environment.

Yesterday you displayed a lack of cooperation and teamwork when you expressed resentment about doing ____________________________.

You performed the task reluctantly and unwillingly after expressing your dissatisfaction by stating, “Don’t you know how busy I am? I don’t have to do your work for you.”

Witnesses confirmed that your behavior was uncooperative and inappropriate. They stated you became unduly upset and complained so loudly that clients heard you.

Your manner and tone of voice was belittling, antagonistic and unnecessary.

_Performance Standard – Responds positively to change. Willingly takes on additional work._

At VPH, we are all expected to be cooperative toward one another, promoting teamwork and positive morale.

I expect you to promote cooperation and teamwork within our department. You are to assist co-workers in completing the department’s tasks and to treat others with understanding and respect.

As a healthcare professional, you are expected to look beyond your assigned tasks. You are to willingly cooperate and assist others. Our responsibilities do not end where our co-workers responsibilities begin. Customer service is our first priority.

When it is appropriate to assist a team member, you should do so. Do not say, “It is not my job.” If indeed you feel that you are being asked to do something that is not your responsibility, you are to discuss it directly with me, your supervisor, not with co-workers.

_Future consequences:_

If this behavior or a similar type of problem occurs again, you will be subject to further disciplinary actions up to and including discharge.
KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL DISCIPLINARY MEETING

Begin with the purpose of the meeting. Start the discussion immediately by explaining why you asked the employee to meet with you. Avoid small talk or discussing other subjects, as it will only make it more awkward to bring the discussion around to the real purpose for the meeting.

Convey your concerns and inform the employee of preliminary information that is relevant to the discussion. Provide specific dates, times, observations of the behaviors or actions that are a concern.

Hear the employee’s explanation. Give the employee ample opportunity to present his side of the situation. Ask the employee for their ideas on how they will improve.

It is important the employee know that:

- Before you decided on discipline you thoroughly investigated the situation.
- You didn’t rush to judgment.

If necessary, reconvene later in the day so you clearly separate the information-gathering meeting and the meeting in which you communicate your disciplinary action.

When you meet again, state the specific corrective action.

“Here’s what needs to be done differently in the future.” Specifically convey:

- Here is what happened. (Describe the unsatisfactory actions or behavior in clear, specific terms.)
- Here is what we expect. (Convey the performance standard.)
- There is a difference between the behavior we expect of you as an employee and your actions at work; you do not meet the expectations and this must be corrected.
- This is the impact on our department if this type of behavior is permitted to continue. Discuss the likely impact on teamwork, morale, and/or cooperation if this behavior is permitted to continue.
- Here is what will happen. (Convey the consequences to the employee if this problem continues.)

Schedule a follow-up meeting on a specific date and time in one or two months. Let the employee see you writing it down in your calendar and explain you will send an Outlook appointment as a reminder. This will re-enforce our long-term commitment to enforcing our performance standards.

To solve problems effectively, we must describe the specific behavior we want. It is then the employee’s responsibility to close the gap between the expected and actual performance.
The Employee Disciplinary Report provides helpful and constructive information for you to improve your performance.

**Offense:**

1. **Excessive unscheduled absences and/or tardiness. Examples:**
   - A. Excessive Number of Absences Occurrences
   - B. Excessive number of unscheduled absences or tardiness.
   - C. Other series, periods or numbers of unscheduled absences, which are excessive.
   - D. Failure to follow the department’s call in procedures.

2. **Violation of organizational or departmental performance standard or rule. Work conduct problems or poor work quality or productivity.**
   - A. Discourteous behavior to clients, families or visitors.
   - B. Unprofessional or uncooperative conduct with fellow employees or supervisor.
   - C. Failure or refusal to perform assigned tasks.
   - D. Failure to follow policies and procedures.
   - E. Other:
Description of incident and performance standard expected in the future: (Use additional paper if necessary.)

Comments:
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Please note: If this problem or a similar type of problem occurs again, you will be subject to further disciplinary actions up to and including discharge.

I have read this disciplinary report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Supervisor/ Director Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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cc: Employee  
Human Resources Department  
Manager/Director
Respecting Co-Workers Joint Understanding - Living Our Values Daily

We are committed to respecting the intentions, privacy, and self-esteem of our co-workers.

We are committed to promoting teamwork in all we do. When we have a concern about a co-worker we will either discuss it directly with them or discuss it with our supervisor.

As employees we are not to complain or gossip to our coworkers.

When we have a complaint about a co-worker, our job, a client, a customer, or anything else, we are to bring the issue up with our Supervisor or to someone in a position to address the complaint. When we share the complaint we will also share one or two workable solutions to the complaint as well. As team members we are not to complain to other team members about a co-worker.

I have read and understand the Respecting Co-Workers understanding.
I agree to comply with and practice this expectation while on duty. I support our commitment to excellence through teamwork.

Name ______________________________________ Date _____________________
Print Name _________________________________ Department ________________
Harmless Venting or Potentially Negative/Destructive Complaining Handout

Please go through the following examples and differentiate between examples of harmless venting and examples of potentially negative/destructive complaining.

Then we will discuss them as a group with the hope we can arrive at a consensus on the differences between the two categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Harmless Venting</th>
<th>Potentially Negative/Destructive Complaining</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Complaining about the weather.</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Speculating that a co-worker’s personality may be why that person is divorced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Complaining that my elderly frail parents need more of my time and attention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Indicating a co-worker is too emotional that he/she takes things too personally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Complaining that long tenured employees are being taken for granted and that new younger employees lack our work ethic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Complaining that the price of groceries keep going up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Speculating to co-workers that a fellow employee leaves all the hard work for us and he/she takes all the easy assignments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Complaining that the reason a co-worker is slow learning new computer applications is that he/she may be too old to be working in this department.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Complaining that days off go by too quickly.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Complaining that the unemployment rate is staying too high and that the economy keeps going down.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Complaining about how hard it is to lose weight and how easy it is to gain weight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Complaining that a co-worker took 3 days for Bereavement Leave when another employee took only 1 day.</td>
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1. What differentiates potentially negative/destructive complaining from venting?
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2. Why is gossiping about a co-worker’s work ethic potentially destructive to morale and teamwork?
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1. **What differentiates potentially negative/destructive complaining from venting?**

   Harmless venting involves complaining about factors clearly beyond the control of co-workers, management, clients/customers - such as the weather, the national economy etc…

   Potentially negative complaining involves speculating about a co-worker’s work ethic, values, personality etc…

2. **Why is gossiping about a co-worker’s work ethic potentially destructive to morale and teamwork?**

   As people it is natural to be hurt when a co-worker questions our work ethic, values, or personality. When we are hurt too often we verbally retaliate and the cycle of negativity increases, causing work enjoyment and teamwork to suffer.

   We, our co-workers and our department benefit when we stop complaining to those who do not have the ability to help solve problems.

   Complaining for complaining sake serves no positive purpose and damages morale, energy, and performance.

   Non-productive complaining cultivates negativity and adversely affects the complainer and the person hearing the complaining.

   By re-directing ourselves and our co-workers to identify workable solutions to the problems we identify we move from being problem identifiers to **problem solvers**.

   In meetings with your supervisor share your solutions to problems.
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESPECTING CO-WORKERS JOINT UNDERSTANDING

1. When I’m tired and stressed I sometimes say negative things I later regret saying, am I now expected to be perfect all the time? Is this realistic?

   A. You make a good point, none of us are perfect. Once we make a mistake we should apologize and work to continue to grow and improve.
      The hope is those we apologize to will accept our apology and not share the negative comment(s) we made in error to other employees.

2. I don’t have a problem being respectful towards co-workers who have similar personalities, values, and work ethic as I have.
   Why is it expected that I respect all co-workers?

   A. Respect is a core value we are expected to live out regardless of the specific circumstances.
      We are not in a position to know or understand the challenges co-workers are facing in their private lives.
      We are not in a position to judge the intentions of our co-workers.

3. Is the expectation that we ignore inappropriate behavior by co-workers?

   A. No. We are to share our concerns either with the employee in a constructive manner or with our supervisor.

4. Gossip seems so natural for me; why should I make a concerted effort to change this habit at work?

   A. The work you and your co-workers do is too important for teamwork and morale to be undermined over time.
      As healthcare professionals, it is important we treat all with respect and dignity.

5. Does VPH have higher expectations than average organizations?

   A. Yes. It is a privilege to work in an organization committed to core values.
      VPH is blessed with many employees committed to help our departments and organization move to good successful teams.
Blank Forms
TEAMWORK THROUGH RESPECT AND COOPERATION
PERFORMANCE STANDARD

1. Cooperates with others to accomplish common goals. Works well with employees within and across his/her department to achieve shared goals.

- Achieves standard by…
  - Working harmoniously and effectively with wide variety of people in difficult situations.
  - Putting good of the team above own priorities, consistently willing to help others, real team player.
  - Views success in relation to group’s success, works toward team’s goals without consideration of personal effort.
    - Does what is asked without objection, volunteers to help others, looks for ways to help the team.

- Doesn’t achieve standard by…
  - Displaying lack of cooperation when asked to take on new tasks. Motivated more by his/her own priorities than those of the team. Projects “in it for myself” attitude. Conveys reluctance to help others. Overly selective about where they put their energy.

2. Treats others with dignity and respect and maintains a friendly demeanor; values the contribution of others.

- Achieves standard by…
  - Redirecting inappropriate conversations. Treats others with respect and consideration. Avoids gossip and promotes professionalism.
  - Solving problems without unnecessary conflict or drama. Sensitive to the perspectives and needs of others. Builds bridges of understanding. Empathetic.
  - Effectively communicating in a clear, concise, tactful, and diplomatic manner.
• Doesn’t achieve standard by…
  o Occasionally getting caught up in the negativity of others. Through gossip and unhelpful comments inadvertently furthers tension within the team.
  o Using absolute terms such as always and never to overstate and polarize positions.
  o Making poorly chosen comments which unnecessarily adds to the intensity of situations.

I have read and understand the Teamwork standards. I agree to comply with these standards while at work. I support our commitment to each other, to teamwork and accountability.

Name ___________________________ Signature____________________ Date______
DEPARTMENT TEAMWORK STANDARD

To minimize the potential for misunderstandings, the following are key teamwork expectations for our department.

1. Take personal responsibility for interactions with others, promoting a work environment conducive to cooperation and respect for co-workers.

2. Manage personal feelings about others professionally so they do not negatively affect the workplace.

3. If you have a disagreement or issue with a co-worker, you are to discuss it with them in a constructive and professional manner versus discussing it with uninvolved co-workers.

4. Accept accountability for your communications to co-workers without excuses or blaming others. Willingly listen to feedback constructively with the intent to learn from it to enhance cooperation within the department.

5. Improve the quality of work life for fellow employees. Treat people with dignity and respect, not engage in conduct that could diminish a person’s self-worth or sense of well-being.

We are never to undermine or diminish others. We are not to be:

- abrupt, curt, or rude
- belittling, antagonistic, defiant, or intimidating
- condescending, demeaning, or disrespectful
- conduct unbecoming of a VPH employee
- discouraging, undermining, sabotage, undercut or negative
- disruptive, over-reactive, unduly upset, or loud
- domineering, bullying, or aggressive
- gossiping, spreading rumor(s), or sharing private information about a co-worker
- harsh, callous, or unfeeling
- insinuating, suggestive, or provocative
- intruding within others’ space
- offensive, abusive, or use profanity
- sarcastic, biting, or smug
- whining, complaining, or involved in whispering campaign

I have read and understand the Teamwork Standards that were developed by the employees in my department. I agree to comply with and practice these standards while at work. I support our commitment to each other, to teamwork and accountability.

Name _________________________________ Signature__________________ Date______
DEPARTMENT TEAMWORK STANDARD

Date(s) initial Teamwork Standard shared with employees __________________________

Date(s) of revision to department teamwork standard – nature of changes _____________

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7-4
NOTES FROM CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK COACHING MEETING

Employee ______________________________ Date __________________________

1. Describe the event or behavior(s) that warranted constructive feedback.

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2. Convey the employee’s response.

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3. Indicate the employee’s plan to meet the standard.

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4. Indicate management’s response to the employee’s plan, for example date scheduled for follow up meeting.

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Supervisor’s Signature ________________________ Date _____
The Employee Disciplinary Report provides helpful and constructive information for you to improve your performance.

**Offense:**

3. **Excessive unscheduled absences and/or tardiness. Examples:**

   - **A.** Excessive Number of Absences Occurrences
   - **B.** Excessive number of unscheduled absences or tardiness.
   - **C.** Other series, periods or numbers of unscheduled absences, which are excessive.
   - **D.** Failure to follow the department’s call in procedures.

4. **Violation of organizational or departmental performance standard or rule. Work conduct problems or poor work quality or productivity.**

   - **A.** Discourteous behavior to clients, families or visitors.
   - **B.** Unprofessional or uncooperative conduct with fellow employees or supervisor.
   - **C.** Failure or refusal to perform assigned tasks.
   - **D.** Failure to follow policies and procedures.
   - **E.** Other:
Description of incident and performance standard expected in the future: (Use additional paper if necessary.)

Comments:

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Please note: If this problem or a similar type of problem occurs again, you will be subject to further disciplinary actions up to and including discharge.

I have read this disciplinary report.

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cc: Employee
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    Manager/Director