



REGION VII HEAD START TA SYSTEM Tip Sheet

Enhancing Staff Development Through Effective Coaching

PURPOSE: Provide rationale and guidance for grantees as they enhance their staff development support system. Programs that utilize multiple techniques increase opportunity for staff success in learning job duties and improving/increasing job competencies.

ISSUES: A well developed, comprehensive staff development system incorporates training that includes: modeling, shadowing, mentoring and coaching techniques. These techniques enhance opportunity for staff to succeed in all aspects of their job requirements.

THINGS TO CONSIDER: 1304.52 (i) and 1304.52(k) (1)-(3) address regulations for promoting staff development that assist staff in improving their skills and professional competencies. Many methods can effectively assist programs in meeting these requirements. Coaching is one such method that allows high functioning staff to enhance their skills, expand their understanding, or increase their current level of competencies within their work. It can also assist staff with skill development that can increase work performance while maintaining their self-esteem.

Coaching holds to certain assumptions:

- Staff is the expert and the coach guides the staff to their own self discovery.
- All staff is creative and resourceful and capable of developing their own plan for change, coaching merely supports their plan.
- It is about what the staff knows and wants not the coach.

When coaching, the coach must remember that it is the staff responsibility to determine their goals and their action plan to accomplish it. Coaches act as a partner and guide staff through the process.

The benefits of coaching are:

- Highlighting what people can readily achieve, given the right support.
- Simplifying what might be a difficult situation.
- Improving individual and team performance and increased levels of motivation.

Tips for Coaches:

- Help staff identify self improvement goals and action steps.
- Offer encouragements.
- Make sure staff identify and see their strengths.
- Provide guidance as staff work through their plan.
- Provide accountability through checking back with staff on their progress
- Resist the temptation to ask, "Why?" Asking why generally is seen as a blaming or fault-finding question. Instead of "Why didn't you ...?" try "What got in your way and how can you deal with it next time?"
- Never de-motivate the trainee/staff.
- Ask the trainee for feedback about your coaching performance. Model appropriate behaviors for receiving feedback and change your behavior during your next coaching conversation.
- Don't over-plan and over-rehearse your coaching session if you want to avoid appearing to be rigid and obsessive. Have a general idea of your goal and invite the trainee to suggest the specific process.
- Never sit across the table from the person you are coaching because this suggests an adversarial relationship. Sit side by side or at right angles to each other.
- Set up regular one-to-one meetings to develop a relationship and give the employee an opportunity to share with you.
- Practice building relationship skills particularly listening.

Web Resources:

<http://www.coachu.com/> Coach University Newsletters

<http://www.peer.ca/coach.html> Resources and workshops

Books:

Adaptive Coaching: The Art and Practice of a Client-Centered Approach to Performance Improvement, Terry R. Bacon and Karen I. Spear

Executive Coaching: Practices and Perspectives, Catherine Fitzgerald and Jennifer Garvey Berger



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