

**SUPERVISION AS A TOOL FOR BUILDING
RELATIONSHIPS:**

A Curriculum for Home Care Agencies
That Support Consumers with Disabilities

Prepared by the
Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute (PHI)

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INTRODUCTION FOR TRAINERS

The Need for This Curricula

Supervision as a Key to Worker Retention and Consumer Satisfaction

Home care supervisors—including care managers, service coordinators, and nurse supervisors—have challenging jobs, in which they must manage both a large number of tasks and people. Ensuring that clients have appropriate help each day; that workers are providing quality care and submitting appropriate documentation; and that relationships between the clients, workers, and the agency all run smoothly is difficult indeed.

Although supervisors have the opportunity to play a major part in helping workers succeed on the job and ensuring that consumers are given quality support, little attention is paid to the critical role of supervision in home care. Most direct-care workers are initially drawn to the field by the potential to form quality relationships with consumers, but in an agency setting, it is often *the quality of the relationship between the supervisor and the worker that keeps them there*. This is partly due to the fact that home care workers often feel a lack of respect from others for their work, reflected in low wages, few benefits, unbalanced workloads, and minimal on-the-job support. Without supportive supervision, these factors create stress and low self-esteem for the workers and, thereby, contribute to vacancies in the workforce.

Shift from a Medical to a Consumer-Directed Services Model

In addition to the stress related factors discussed above, home care workers and supervisors alike may find themselves increasingly challenged by the needs of consumers with disabilities. Home care agencies in the past have largely provided services to older people, emphasizing medical care based on nurse-directed “care plans.” Many home health workers are trained in the medical model, which assumes that clinical experts know what patients need.

Now these same agencies and workers are serving increasing numbers of consumers with disabilities, many of whom are operating from a “support” rather than “medical” model. The support model is based on the assumption that consumers know best what they need and that their preferences should be respected. While many home care supervisors and workers may understand the need for a more “consumer-directed” approach in working with people with disabilities, it is often difficult and confusing for those who are accustomed to the more traditional nurse-directed approach to adapt to this new model. Workers, especially, may feel their authority and self-esteem being further eroded.

Skills-Building for Intermediary Supervision

Just as the needs of consumers with disabilities require a different model for the delivery of services, home care agencies can also benefit from shifting their *supervisory* model, to meet both the support needs of consumers and the personal assistance workers who assist them. Specifically, supervisors can be trained to perform an *intermediary* role, by understanding and balancing the needs of both consumers and workers. In this shift,

communication skills are vital to helping each party see the other's perspective and empowering them both to work out solutions to problems together.

Field Tests of the Curriculum

PHI field-tested this curriculum in three pilot sites in 2003 in order to test its effectiveness with different constituencies. The field tests included:

- Staff from a home care agency in New York City
- A group of home care providers and staff from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission in Boston, Massachusetts, and
- Staff from an independent living center (and some home care supervisors) in Philadelphia

Based on the positive response to the training, each agency has plans to continue using the curriculum in new staff orientations, as well as incorporating the material into in-service updates for current staff.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of this workshop is to increase participants' effectiveness in helping direct-care workers and consumers to resolve issues that get in the way of developing quality support relationships. This curriculum has two key objectives: (a) to heighten the awareness of home care agency staff regarding the perspectives of consumers and direct-care workers and (b) to help agency staff develop a specific set of communication skills related to supervising staff who work with consumers.

Specifically, by the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

- Describe the needs of workers and consumers,
- Explain how an intermediary approach to supervision of workers can help address those needs,
- Listen and respond without making judgments, and
- Practice applying communication skills in problem-solving situations with consumers and workers

Although this curriculum is designed to help home care agency staff develop a specific set of skills related to supervising home care aides and personal assistants who are working with younger consumers with disabilities, the skills gained will have a positive affect on the way supervisors work with all those they supervise.

The Curriculum

Content

The curriculum is designed in two modules. The first segment of the training is devoted to heightening awareness of the perspectives and particular needs of consumers with

disabilities, as well as the needs and perspectives of the workers who support them. Building on this understanding, participants will then reframe the role of supervisor as an intermediary—working to balance and strengthen the relationship between the worker and consumer. The second module focuses on developing the skill-set required for this new role, particularly communication and problem-solving skills, using real work-related problems.

<p>Module One: Perspective and Awareness [2 hours]</p> <p>Introduction and Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Training approach is interactive, focusing on assumptions and problem-solving skills ◆ Participant introductions <p>First Experience with Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Exercise about personal experience, assumptions, and stereotypes ◆ Small and large group processing <p>Worker and Consumer Real Plays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Demonstrating worker and consumer perspectives ◆ What went wrong? <p>The Agency Role: Intermediary Supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Mediating role of supervisor ◆ Skills required 	<p>Module Two: Communication and Problem-Solving Skills [3 hours]</p> <p>Communication Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Active Listening ◆ Pulling Back ◆ Paraphrasing <p>Problem-Solving Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Using communication skills to solve problems, through eight-step process ◆ Demonstrating problem-solving skills through role-play <p>Evaluation and Closure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Written evaluations ◆ Group closing
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Timing

This curriculum can be taught in one day or as two half-day workshops planned over several weeks.

Course Approach and Training Methodologies

The training approach used in this curriculum is highly interactive and learner-centered. Content will be taught using a variety of participatory training methodologies, including large- and small-group work, interactive discussions, role-plays (scripted and unscripted), partnering activities, and scenario-based problem-solving (case studies). This approach was found to be highly successful in the field tests of this curriculum.

Target Audience and Settings

Due to the interactive approach to this workshop, the minimum number of participants should be 8 and the maximum 20.

This curriculum is targeted to anyone who supervises workers that provide direct care to persons with disabilities. This could include: home care supervisors, care managers, service coordinators, and nurse supervisors.

Trainers should be aware that some participants will be individuals with disabilities themselves. See **Overall Training Tips**, below, for ideas about maximizing the comfort and participation of all participants.

This curriculum can be used in a variety of settings, such as home care agencies, seminars for provider associations, as well as independent living centers and managed long-term care programs.

Trainers

A team of at least two trainers should always present this workshop. These may include experienced educators/trainers or social workers, home care agency staff, or consumers with group and/or training experience. Trainers need to be skilled in interactive, participatory training techniques, and at least one of the pair of trainers needs to be very comfortable with performing and conducting role-plays.

For the greatest effectiveness in presenting these activities, at least one of the trainers should be someone who has personal experience with a disability.

Overall Training Tips

Respect for privacy and individual differences: The interactive approach to this workshop involves a lot of personal sharing. Allow people to have their own style in terms of the amount of detail they provide. Some will share a great deal; others will share only a little.

Room set-up, comfort, and time: With the knowledge that some participants will be individuals with disabilities, trainers need to be aware of mobility and comfort issues while selecting the space and planning the activities for this workshop. Rooms must be accommodating of wheelchairs to allow free moving for pairings and other active techniques. Assigning participants for small-group work, plus large-group exercises that involve movement, may require more time to move people around.

Do not be afraid to ask participants if they need assistance in moving around or getting what they need.

Temperature control is also very important, especially with participants whose disability increases their sensitivity to temperature.

The Training Package

This trainer's manual consists of this introduction, a detailed curriculum with activity guides, and handouts.

The detailed curriculum is organized in modules. Each module has a summary that identifies the following information:

- Goal of the module
- Time for each activity and training methodology
- Materials needed
- Advance preparations that will help to make the workshop run more smoothly

The summary page is followed by guides for each of the training activities. Each Activity Guide has the following components:

- Learning Outcomes
- Key Content
- Training Steps
- Training Tips

The **Learning Outcomes** are concrete, measurable behaviors that the participants should have adopted or demonstrated by the end of the session. These give the trainer a sense of why each activity is important, as well as provide a basis for feedback regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum and the training.

Key Content contains the basic ideas and important points to be covered during the activity. These are not to be read to participants, but rather should be worked into discussions as the activity unfolds. If necessary, the trainer can use these points to help summarize the session at the end, but again, they should not be simply read aloud.

A time is estimated for each activity. **Training Steps** are suggested as a guide to help the trainer move the activity along in a logical sequence. With activities that involve many steps or different training methodologies (e.g., small-group work, followed by large-group discussion), a time is suggested for each training step. However, trainers should also be mindful of the needs and interests of the participants and adapt both the steps and the time required in order to meet those needs. **Training Tips** give suggestions for how to make particular training steps work best. These are based on experiences with field-testing this curriculum.

Training Materials, Supplies, and Equipment

This workshop requires several flipchart pads with easels, a selection of colored markers, masking tape, pens and/or pencils, paper for participants, and nametags.

In addition, during presentations and discussions, it is often important to have a visual aid to help focus the attention of participants. Trainers have a choice of two ways to present information visually and to record responses: flipchart and overhead projecting with

transparencies. Both ways have special features, advantages, and disadvantages for the trainers to consider.

Legibility: Printing on flipchart paper should be large and clear. Likewise, with printed overheads, the Arial font at a minimum size of 14 pt is recommended.

Evaluation and Follow Up

In the field tests, participants completed a fairly comprehensive written evaluation for each seminar (a sample form is included with the handouts). There was also time allotted at the end of each workshop for verbal feedback, focusing particularly on what participants found most useful and areas that needed improvement. In sites where it is anticipated that the training will be conducted more than once, this would be a valuable tool for continuously improving on the workshop.

To determine if the training has achieved its goal of improving the communication and problem-solving skills of participants, and if they have been able to apply those skills in their work, some form of follow up is necessary. This could be done either through follow-up visits, phone calls, or emails with individual participants, or through periodic meetings of participants, which could take the form of a supervisory “support group,” with on-going skills-building and sharing of challenges and lessons learned.

MODULE ONE: PERSPECTIVE AND AWARENESS

Goals

- To heighten the awareness of home care agency staff regarding the perspectives of consumers with disabilities and direct-care workers; and
- To explore an intermediary model of supervision by agency staff.

Time

	Training Activities	Methodology	Time
2 hours, with 15-minute break	1. Overview	Presentation	15 min.
	2. First Experience with Disability	Pairs and small-group exercise with discussion	30 min.
	3. Consumer and Worker Real Plays	Role play and discussion	35 min.
	4. The Agency Role: Intermediary Supervision	Presentation and discussion	25 min.

Materials

- Handouts: *Seminar Goal and Objectives*, *Real Play Script*
- Name tags
- Flipchart easel, paper, markers, tape
- Paper and pens or pencils

Advance Preparation

- Copy all handouts for participants.
- Prepare a flipchart sheet with the seminar agenda.
- With only 45 minutes for lunch, arrangements should be made to offer lunch on-site.
- Set up the workshop space to allow for interactive sessions, keeping in mind the physical needs of participants

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain the rationale for improving the quality of consumer support and worker satisfaction by strengthening supervision.

Key Content

- ◇ The goal of this workshop is to increase participants' effectiveness in helping direct-care workers and consumers to resolve issues that get in the way of developing quality support relationships. This curriculum is designed to heighten the awareness of home care agency staff about the perspectives of consumers and direct-care workers, to help them explore an intermediary model of supervision by agency staff, and to help them develop a specific set of communication skills related to supervising staff who work with consumers with disabilities.
- ◇ Home care agencies in the past have largely provided services to older people, emphasizing medical care based on care plans. Now these same agencies are serving increasing numbers of consumers with disabilities, who tend to be younger and to have needs for on-going *support* in their daily lives, rather than medical *care*.
- ◇ Little attention is paid to the critical role of supervision in home care, even though supervisors have the opportunity to play a major part in helping workers succeed on the job and ensuring that consumers are given quality support. Most direct-care workers are initially drawn to the field by the potential to form quality relationships with consumers; but, in an agency setting, it is often *the quality of the relationship between the supervisor and the worker that keeps them there*.
- ◇ In situations where communication is key, there may be benefits to shifting the supervisory approach to emphasize the **intermediary role** of the supervisor—understanding and balancing the needs of both consumers and workers.
- ◇ To prepare agency staff to better meet the needs of both workers and consumers, this curriculum is organized in two modules: **Perspective and Awareness** and **Communication and Problem-Solving Skills**. By the end of this seminar, participants will:
 - ◆ Develop a clearer understanding of the needs of both workers and consumers and the role of agency supervisors in addressing those needs,
 - ◆ Strengthen their ability to listen and respond without making judgments, and
 - ◆ Practice applying these skills in problem-solving situations with consumers and workers.

Training Steps

Presentation

1. Welcome participants. Introduce yourself (and any other trainers). Ensure everyone's comfort.
2. Explain the goal and rationale for this seminar. Distribute handout and read seminar objectives. Ask if there are any questions, and briefly answer.

⇒ **Training Tip**

The tone set in this overview session should be open, welcoming, and non-blaming. Note that the style of the training is interactive, and that there will be a great deal of participation and very little lecture.

3. Post agenda flipchart; review and agree on timing of breaks and lunch. Address any logistical/space issues.
4. Ask participants to introduce themselves. If they are not known to each other already, they can briefly note where they work and what they do there.

⇒ **Training Tip**

If the group is larger than 15, do not ask for individual introductions, but indicate that people will have an opportunity to meet one another through the interactive activities.

ACTIVITY 2. FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH DISABILITY

10:15 – 10:45 am

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify the earliest messages that they remember getting about people with disabilities and the assumptions they made based on those messages.
- Describe how they or others have moved beyond stereotypical notions about people with disabilities.

Key Content

- ◇ This activity involves personal reflection and sharing. It is deliberately designed to engage participants in thinking about their own experience, so that they are prepared to examine and question their own assumptions about people with disabilities.
- ◇ It is important to do this in a non-blaming way. We all take on assumptions about people because the notions are “out there” in our social environment and we learn them, often before we even know we can question them. It is not our fault.
- ◇ However, it is our responsibility, especially if we are relating in any way to people with disabilities, to move past learned assumptions and see real, individual and unique human beings. It is important for participants to see that people with disabilities have to deal with many oppressive assumptions and fears about them, just as people of color, women, or other oppressed people do.
- ◇ A stereotype is a myth, an untruth, or a *distortion* of a cultural reality. It is important to understand the difference between a stereotype and a cultural reality. For example, a cultural reality would be that *some* people with disabilities, particularly those not born with the disability, experience anger about their dependence and society’s treatment of them. It would be a stereotype (and not true) to say, “*all* people with disabilities are angry.”
- ◇ Usually, the way individuals overcome stereotypes is through personal experience. As home health care providers, we need to be aware of our *old* assumptions, pay attention to the *new* lessons about people with disabilities that we have learned through our own experience and through interacting with others, and consciously delete or update those old assumptions.

Training Steps

Pair and small-group exercise (20 minutes)

1. Ask participants to partner with someone that they don’t work with every day.

2. Ask participants to think about the first experience they remember with a person with a disability, or the first time they remember being aware of disabilities or people with disabilities. Ask them to share the story with their partner and discuss what they “learned” from this experience about people with disabilities (it may or may not be true). Explain that they will have five minutes for both people to speak.

⇒ **Training Tip**

- Remind people that our early experiences and the assumptions we make from them are not good or bad they are just part of our individual and collective background and part of what shapes our society’s understanding of disabilities.
- To prepare participants to open up to this experience, the trainer should share from his or her own background. It is most helpful to share a story in which the trainer does not appear politically correct or righteous—this will allow participants also to risk being real about their first or early assumptions and impressions. For example: “The earliest experience I remember is at 6 years old, with a 10-year-old girl who had had polio. I was scared of her, terrified of seeing her legs under the blanket in her wheelchair, and was told to feel sorry for her.” **(Use your own example.)**

3. Each pair has **five minutes** to share their stories and what they learned about people with disabilities.
4. Pairs partner up with another pair, so that there are four people in each group. Ask them to consider *what assumptions or messages about people with disabilities they got from these early experiences*. Have the groups spend **five minutes** sharing their learning. Each group should choose a recorder to list the messages. Remind them that they are to focus on the assumptions or messages—there won’t be time to repeat the whole story they told in their pairs.
5. Ask the recorder from one group to share *one* message they got, or *one* assumption they had about people with disabilities. Summarize what they say into a word or short sentence—e.g. “abnormal,” “to be pitied,” “courageous,” etc. Record on a flipchart page.
6. Ask each subsequent group to share words that are not already listed. Keep going around the groups until all of their messages have been listed.

⇒ **Training Tip**

Write each group’s words in different colors—you can fit more words on a page that way.

Discussion (10 minutes)

7. Ask participants what the word “stereotype” means to them. After a few responses, explain that a stereotype is a myth, an untruth, or a distortion of a cultural reality. (See **Key Content** for more ideas about stereotypes.)
8. Ask the group to review the words on the flipchart page. How many of these words could be considered stereotypes of people with disabilities? How do these stereotypes affect the way we work with people with disabilities?

⇒ **Training Tip**

- A great deal of sensitivity needs to be put into the discussion of the list of stereotypes. Stereotypes may be based on reality, but they are not reality and they are often very hurtful to those to whom they are applied. The trainer needs to note stereotypes at the same time as taking a non-blaming approach to those who list them. See the **Key Content** box for ways to address this issue and points to be raised during the discussion.
- Additional sensitivity will be required with this exercise as a whole if people with disabilities are present in the room. Attention should not be focused on them as “experts,” but attention should be paid to how the activity is presented by the trainer (e.g., “your first experience with disability could be your own awareness of yourself as having a disability”) and to debunking stereotypes. Invite comments from participants with a disability only if they indicate an interest —don’t put them on the spot.

9. Ask volunteers in the large group to share what helped them personally move beyond the stereotypic notions we have about people with disabilities. Invite a few stories.
10. Make a link to the next activity (Real Play) by explaining: *Peoples’ views generally change over time, and people in the room may have had experiences that shifted their perspectives about people with disabilities. Some may have been on the job, getting to know people with disabilities or dealing with your own disability. In the next session, we will be presenting a simulated situation involving a worker and a consumer. We will be asking you to watch your reaction, as you see this situation from different angles, and to think about the assumptions and stereotypes that may be factors in this situation.*
11. **Before taking the break**, ask for **eight** volunteers to read roles in the “real play” in the next session. Assign roles and distribute the real play scripts. Note that all they have to do is read what is written, but that it may help them to glance over their role during the break, in order to give some feeling to their part.

BREAK

10:45 – 11:00 am

ACTIVITY 3. CONSUMER AND WORKER REAL PLAYS

11:00 – 11:35 am

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify the different perspectives of consumer and worker in a simulated situation, and
- Explain the importance of communicating to resolve problems they may have with each other.

Key Content

Note: This content should emerge through the activity rather than be stated upfront.

- ◇ Both workers and consumers with disabilities may be dealing with significant problems that make it challenging to manage their lives.
- ◇ When people are stressed, they often take it out on the people closest to them or the people they most depend on.
- ◇ We don't know the story behind people's behavior until we hear what's going on for them.
- ◇ In this scenario, there is a problem with Milton and Diana that could be avoided with more effective communication. Communication is necessary for agencies, workers, and consumers to stay on the same page.
- ◇ Listening to the cause of a problem from both the worker's and consumer's perspectives can help to lay a foundation so that the supervisor, direct caregiver, and consumer can work together to find satisfactory solutions.

Training Steps

Role-play and discussion: Demonstrating consumer perspectives (15 min)

1. Explain that a “real play” is a role-play that simulates “a day in the life.” Note that this real play will be performed in two “acts,” with the first being a day in the life of a consumer, Milton. Explain that one trainer will play the role of Milton, the central character in the first act.
2. Have the four volunteers for the first act stand toward the side of the “stage” —the front of the room. Introduce them in their roles to the rest of the participants as they appear in the play. After each player has read their part they go back and sit with the rest of the audience. Play out each scene with Milton reacting appropriately, with increasing anger and frustration. Cue each new “actor” and remind the audience what role this person is playing.

⇒ **Training Tip**

Make sure to stage the play somewhere in the room where all participants can see and to remind “players” to speak loudly enough for all to hear.

3. At the end of the real play, thank the players and ask for a round of applause for them. Then use the debriefing questions at end of the real play script to guide a discussion.

⇒ **Training Tips**

- This activity is intended to demonstrate a slice of life from the perspective of a consumer and then from the perspective of his support worker. This is designed to generate empathy for the consumer, and later the worker, but it is also likely to elicit judgments about the consumer, the worker, and others in the story. It is important to get these opinions out in the open— they serve as a barrier to effective supervisory intervention and are the material we will work with in the communication section later.
- Notice assumptions or stereotypes that are expressed during the discussion. Gently, without putting the speaker on the spot, make the connection with the previous activity and ask how these may be influencing the situation in the real play.

Role-play and discussion: Demonstrating worker perspectives (15 min)

4. Explain that we will now see the same scenario from home care aide Diana’s perspective. Note that Diana will be played by another trainer, and that Teresa, the coordinator, re-appears in this scenario, played by the same participant. Ask the remaining four volunteers to sit on the side at the front of the room. Introduce them in their roles to the audience.
5. Play out each scene with Diana reacting appropriately, with increasing frustration and depression.
6. At end of real play, thank the players and ask for a round of applause. Then use the debriefing questions at end of the real play script to guide a discussion.

Summary closing (5 min)

7. Ask participants what they learned from these two real plays. Reinforce the key content points. Note that these characters, especially Milton and Diana, will serve as reference point throughout the seminar.

ACTIVITY 4. THE AGENCY ROLE: INTERMEDIARY SUPERVISION

11:35 – 12:00 am

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe the challenges and struggles of both workers and consumers, the ways their respective needs can clash in home care situations, and the role of home care agency staff as mediators for both perspectives; and
- Define “intermediary supervision”

Key Content

- ◇ People with disabilities and the workers who support them are central to the long-term care system, yet they often have very little voice or power to improve their quality of care or working situation.
- ◇ Individuals with disabilities often struggle throughout their lives to prove that they are competent and in fact have the capacity to live their lives to the fullest. Many require assistance with activities of daily living. While agencies are generally doing the best they can, in attempting to access services, people with disabilities too often experience a lack of respect for their personal wishes, preferences and needs, and when assistance is offered, it tends to come in the form of demeaning “care” instead of empowering support. This has the unintended effect of robbing people with disabilities of their hard-won self-confidence, demonstrating a lack of respect for their autonomy, and sometimes eroding their will to accomplish what they can do independently.
- ◇ Similarly, the frontline workers, who provide the majority of the hands-on services and support for those individuals, struggle with negative images both within and outside the long-term care field. Workers experience this lack of respect for their work in minimal on-the-job support and unbalanced workloads, plus low wages and few benefits—which leave many full-time workers eligible for public assistance. These factors create stress and low self-esteem for the workers and contribute to vacancies in the workforce.
- ◇ While people in these groups have much in common, sometimes the consumers’ need for self-determination and autonomy clashes with the workers’ need to be respected for their training and experience. Many home health workers are trained in the medical model, which assumes that clinical experts know what patients need. However, many consumers are operating from a support rather than medical model, which asserts that consumers know best what they need and that their preferences should be respected. Most people with disabilities prefer not to be regarded as “patients” as they are not sick, but are rather in need of support to live their lives.
- ◇ A home health supervisor who recognizes these realities—for both worker and consumer—is in an ideal position to assist workers and consumers when their communication gets stuck. When supervisors are able to hear each person’s

perspective and understand some of the underlying issues, supervisors will be best able to help the consumer and personal assistant work together to figure out a solution that meets both parties' needs. This approach to supervision, which emphasizes communication and problem-solving skills, can best be described as "intermediary supervision."

- ◇ "Intermediary supervision" can be defined as "a relational, mediating approach to working with frontline employees and consumers that helps workers and their clients to think critically about problem situations, prioritize, and communicate effectively."

Training Steps

Presentation (10 min)

1. Give a brief presentation on the struggles of both workers and consumers, covering the key content (above). Refer to the real play scenario for examples. Stop at key points and ask participants about their experience.

Discussion (15 min)

2. Ask participants to consider the role of the home care agency, and specifically their role as supervisors of home care aides/ personal assistants—how do they see their role in helping both consumers and workers to resolve problems? What kinds of issues come up in working with aides and consumers?
3. Suggest a reframing of the role of the **supervisor as an intermediary**—that is, mediating between worker and consumer, being able to see and articulate both points of view. Ask: *How would this affect the situation for Milton and Diana? Would it be better or worse? How is this different from what they are currently doing? How is it similar?*
4. Note that after lunch they will be working on skills required to manage this role effectively.

LUNCH

12:00 – 12:45 pm

MODULE TWO: COMMUNICATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

Goals

- To demonstrate an approach and skills for applying the concept of intermediary supervision; and
- To begin developing the communication and problem-solving skills required for this role.

Time

	Training Activities	Methodology	Time
3 hours and 15 minutes, with a 15-minute break	5. Communication Skills: Active Listening	Role plays in pairs	30 min.
	6. Pulling Back and Paraphrasing	Large-group exercise, discussion, small-group work, role play	60 min.
	7. Eight Steps to See the Whole Picture	Presentation and discussion	20 min.
	8. Case Scenario	Role play and discussion	45 min.
	9. Evaluation and Closing	Large group	25 min.

Materials

- Handouts for participants: *Ambiguous Picture, Supervisor as Intermediary: Communication and Problem Solving Skills, Pull Back Exercise Sheet, Coaching Case Scenario, Evaluation Forms*
- *Trainer Guide: Back Story* (for Case Scenario)
- Flipchart easel, paper, markers, tape
- Paper and pens or pencils

Advance Preparation

- Copy all handouts for participants
- Copy *Trainer Guide: Back Story* for all trainers
- Prepare a flipchart with the definition of “Intermediary Supervision” (from Module Four) and flipchart sheets for Activity 6.
- Set up the workshop space to allow for small-group work, keeping in mind the physical needs of participants

⇒ **Training Tips for Module Two**

- It is critical to the success of this module that the trainer be comfortable with and able to use role playing to demonstrate the value and use of the skills that are taught in the seminar. Depending on the group, instructors may choose to play roles themselves, or ask for volunteers. If you ask for volunteers, you will need to have some confidence in the ability of the persons

to play the role and demonstrate the skill, and you will need to prepare them in advance (i.e., during lunch or breaks).

- Using small groups for activities helps to create safety in personal sharing and allow for more participation.

ACTIVITY 5. COMMUNICATION SKILLS: ACTIVE LISTENING

12:45 – 1:15 pm

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain the importance of listening as the communication skill that underlies all others in intermediary supervision.
- Experience the difference between listening and non-listening and describe the impact of poor listening vs. active listening in any interaction.

Key Content

- ◇ This **Communication and Problem-Solving Skills** module is the skills-building unit of the curriculum. It uses role-play situations to demonstrate an approach and techniques for intermediary supervision. The main approach of intermediary supervision is to mediate between the consumer and the worker—to hear both sides and make it possible for each party to understand the other’s perspective and see a bigger picture than they are generally able to do alone, helping them to find a solution together.
- ◇ Good listening is essential to clear, effective communication and is of primary importance in intermediary supervision.
- ◇ “Body language” refers to the way people communicate non-verbally, through postures, facial expressions, gestures, and movement. Body language often communicates more clearly than words. Since people often respond to our body language rather than to our words, we must become more aware of our body language and learn to control it.
- ◇ “Active listening,” i.e., listening with full attention to the other person—including attentive body language—is the underlying skill in intermediary supervision for the following reasons:
 - ◆ Being listened to attentively feels caring and helpful to the speaker. Not being listened to, or being listened to in an inattentive manner, feels hurtful and unhelpful.
 - ◆ When we listen with our full attention, we remember and understand more of what is being communicated. On the other hand, when we listen inattentively, we miss a great deal of what is being communicated.
- ◇ Listening with full attention to another person requires constant, conscious effort. Active listening is a skill that must be learned and practiced since it is not something we were taught or often experience.

Training Steps

Demonstration role-play (10minutes)

1. Explain that this part of the seminar introduces the primary tool used in intermediary supervision—listening. Good listening is crucial to any relationship and to effective communication. Although participants may feel that they are already good listeners, intermediary supervision requires a more conscious level of listening, called “active listening.” Define active listening (referring to the handout). Point out that most of us rarely use active listening, because we have not been taught how to do it and are not in the habit of doing so.
2. Briefly explain the importance of body language in active listening (see **Key Content**).
3. To demonstrate nonverbal poor listening, Trainer 1 tells Trainer 2 about something that is going on in his/her life—something very important. It can be something positive or something he/she is struggling with. Trainer 2 should exaggerate nonverbal poor listening skills by becoming increasingly distracted. For example, she could keep looking at her watch, keep glancing away, get fidgety, etc.

⇒ **Training Tips**

- If two trainers are not available, choose a participant to help out and prepare him or her during the lunch break.
- This activity works for participants only if they are sharing something that is current and important to them, so Trainer 1 has to model this in the demonstration. Also, it works only if the non-listening behaviors are really exaggerated, so Trainer 2 needs to be quite obviously **not** listening.

4. Debrief with the following questions.
 - Ask participants: *Do you think Trainer 2 was listening? How could you tell?* Write participants’ responses on flipchart labeled “Poor Listening.”
 - Ask Trainer 1 how it felt for her to not be listened to.
 - Ask Trainer 2 if she could remember anything the speaker told her. Emphasize here how little information Trainer 2 was taking in.

⇒ **Training Tip**

Remember that the focus is not simply on how good it feels to be listened to, but also on the importance of listening in order to clearly understand the information being shared.

5. Repeat the same role-play (with the same topic), only this time Trainer 2 should focus on her nonverbal active listening skills.
6. Debrief with the following questions.
 - Ask participants: *Do you think Trainer 2 was listening? How could you tell?* Write

- participants' responses on flipchart labeled "Active Listening."
- Ask Trainer 1 how it felt for her to be listened to.
 - Ask Trainer 2 if she can retell the speaker's story.

Role-plays in pairs with large-group discussion (15 minutes)

7. Explain that participants will now have a chance to experience for themselves how poor vs. active listening feels for a speaker and to practice active listening skills. Quickly put participants in pairs.
8. Give the following instructions: *In your pairs, agree on one partner to be the speaker, the other the listener (the roles will be switched later). The speakers should think of something to share that is important to them. The listeners should **really** exaggerate their nonverbal non-listening, referring to the "Poor Listening" flipchart. Role play for two minutes. The speaker should share for the full two minutes.*

⇒ **Training Tip**

Some participants may get angry when they are blatantly not being listened to. Be prepared to acknowledge the anger and remind participants that it is an exercise—the non-listeners are simply doing what they were told.

9. Debrief with the whole class (*about two minutes*).
 - Ask the speakers: *How did it make you feel to **not** be listened to?*
 - Ask the "non-listeners": *Do any of you remember what you were told?*

⇒ **Training Tip**

You can use flipchart pages to keep an ongoing record of the debriefs—(i.e., both a list of the feelings and experiences of not being listened to and a list of the feelings and experiences of being listened to well).

10. Repeat the exercise, this time asking the listener to use effective nonverbal active listening skills and to pay careful attention. Ask the same debriefing questions and give people an opportunity to talk about how this felt and how it was different.
11. Ask the pairs to switch roles and repeat both the ineffective and effective non-verbal listening skills. Debrief after each one, allowing people to share their experiences.

⇒ **Training Tip**

It is important to switch roles and repeat the exercise so that everyone can have the experience of not being listened to. Only through this experience can they fully understand how hard and frustrating it can be. You will probably find, however, that the debriefing periods can be much shorter.

Summary discussion (5 minutes)

12. Because you have been debriefing all along, wrap up the session by reviewing the primary points that participants have been making (i.e., feelings that came up when not being listened to and the importance of feeling listened to).
13. Ask participants: *What do you think is the role of active listening in intermediary supervision?*
14. Emphasize that active listening is an essential skill that requires self-awareness and lots of practice. Encourage participants to strengthen their skills by trying to be effective listeners all the time.

ACTIVITY 6. PULLING BACK AND PARAPHRASING

1:15 – 2:15 pm

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain the importance of recognizing different points of view in a situation and trying to see the complete picture as a supervisor;
- Describe the difference between a “problem to be solved” and a “difference to be managed,” including the different skills required for each approach;
- Describe the problem-solving skill of “pulling back” and how to use it in supervision;
- Identify pulling back strategies that they and others have used in work situations;
- Describe the communication skill of paraphrasing; and
- Identify examples of pulling back and paraphrasing from a role-play.

Key Content

- ◇ Most of us have been in a discussion or an argument in which we are convinced that we are right. When we are convinced that we are right, we are generally also convinced that the other person is wrong. This pattern is very common for us as humans, but often blocks effective communication.
- ◇ When it happens between workers and consumers—each has a story and each is convinced that the other is in the wrong—it is very helpful when there is someone outside of the dynamic who can see both sides (e.g., the goblet and the faces ambiguous picture). This is your role as supervisor.
- ◇ We all have opinions, and it is easy to be attached to the rightness of our opinions and perspectives. However, seeing the whole picture includes seeing that both sides of a story are right, in the sense that they are the perceived reality of the person telling the story. It means not becoming attached to the truth of one side or another, but appreciating that there is more than one way to see what happened.
- ◇ As a supervisor, you can view disagreements or disputes between consumers and workers as a “problem to be solved” or a “difference to be managed.” When you see it as a “problem to be solved,” this means you believe that the situation is not ongoing and that there is a solution, which involves choosing between one or more options. This requires qualities of quick thinking, decisiveness, and the ability to act.

- ◇ On the other hand, if the dispute situation is a “difference to be managed,” this implies that it is an ongoing issue and that there are various perspectives to be considered, with no one right answer. The skill sets for this approach include listening and paraphrasing, pulling back, and the ability to see and communicate the whole picture.
- ◇ When we treat a difference as a “problem to be solved,” it doesn’t really get “solved,” doesn’t go away, and often re-emerges in another form. Supervisors are often good problem-solvers, so there is a tendency to treat all issues as problems to be solved.
- ◇ Paraphrasing is stating in your own words what you think someone just said. It is helpful in clarifying and gathering information, using active listening and reflecting back what you have understood. Three main benefits of paraphrasing are that people appreciate feeling heard and understood, it can prevent miscommunication, and it can help you remember what was said.
- ◇ “Pulling back” is a technique for gaining emotional control in stressful work situations. It is the ability to pause, get your emotions under control, and clearly observe and assess the situation. It involves three steps:
 - ◆ Notice your internal reaction and judgments.
 - ◆ Freeze-frame your reaction—put it aside.
 - ◆ Put your attention back on the other person.

Training Steps

Large-group exercise (5 minutes)

1. Distribute the *Ambiguous Picture* handout to participants. Ask for volunteers to say what they see in the picture. Some will see a wine glass or goblet, others will see two people in profile facing each other. Ask how many see the goblet, how many see the people. Ask which one is right. While some participants may want to argue that what they see is correct, most will recognize that *both* are right. Both pictures are there, it just depends on what jumps out at you first.

⇒ Training Tip

If you get only one answer for what people see in the picture, probe for the other perspective—it may be that others feel that they might be wrong and are reluctant to give that answer.

2. Ask participants if they have ever been in a discussion or an argument in which they are convinced they are right. Most will raise their hands. Make the following point: *When we are convinced that we are right, we are generally also convinced that the other person is wrong. This pattern is very common for us as humans, but often blocks effective communication. When it happens between workers and consumers—each has a story and each is convinced that the other is in the wrong—it is very helpful when there is someone outside of the dynamic who is not “caught” in one or another perspective but can see both sides—the goblet and the faces. This is your role as*

supervisor. We will be working in the afternoon on communication strategies and skills to be effective in this role.

Large-group discussion (10 minutes)

1. In advance, prepare three flipchart pages, as follows:

<p>BEING RIGHT</p> <p>IS EASY</p>	<p>IT'S MUCH HARDER TO BE COMPLETE—</p> <p>TO SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE</p>	<p>WHEN AN ISSUE EMERGES INVOLVING A CONSUMER AND A WORKER, IS IT A PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED?</p> <p>OR</p> <p>A DIFFERENCE TO BE MANAGED?</p>
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2. Post the first flipchart page (“Being Right”). Ask participants what it means to them. (See **Key Content** for points to be addressed during this discussion.)
3. Now show the next page (“It’s Much Harder”), and ask participants what it means to them.
4. Show the third page (“When an Issue Emerges”). Ask for ideas about the difference between “a problem to be solved” and “a difference to be managed.”
5. Distribute the handout *Being Right is Easy* and refer to page three, which lists some distinctions between a problem to be solved and a difference to be managed. Give some examples from the morning’s real play.

⇒ **Training Tip**

When Diana called out, another worker had to be found to provide service for Milton. That is a problem—it is short term and requires a solution. Problems like that come up every day. In the real play with Milton and Diana one example of a difference to be managed would be the situation where Milton asked Diana to iron his pants five times.

6. Ask: *What happens when we treat a difference as a “problem to be solved”? [It doesn’t really get “solved,” doesn’t go away, and often re-emerges in another form.]* Note that supervisors are often good problem-solvers, so there is a tendency to treat all issues as problems to be solved. But another set of skills is required to manage a difference. Note the skills listed in the handout and explain that we already worked on “listening” and will now address the other skills.

Small-group work (30 minutes)

7. Ask participants to look at page 4 in the handout. Note the two Ps—pull back and paraphrase—and explain that you will start with pull back. Ask one participant to read the definition for “pull back.” Ask the group why pulling back is so important in seeing the whole picture. *[If you react emotionally and get triggered by one person or perspective, it will be very difficult to hear the other side.]* Ask participants to take turns reading aloud the bulleted points on the *Pull Back* handout.
8. Refer participants to the *Pull Back* exercise in their handout. Tell participants that they will be working in small groups talking about what “drives you crazy”—behaviors, people, or situations that “get you hooked,” “push your buttons,” or trigger feelings that get in the way of listening. Review the items listed and share those that apply to you as trainer.

⇒ **Training Tips**

- It is important for you to share your own list of behaviors, people, or situations that get you hooked *and* to model how to do this in a positive way, in order for participants to feel safe to share personal stories.
- Note that the purpose of this exercise is *not* to vent or complain about others, but to consider your own reactions to people or situations—you can change your own reactions if you are aware of them.

9. Divide participants into groups of three to five. Ask each person to talk about people or situations, particularly at work, that trigger their emotions.
10. Ask participants, still in their small groups, to talk about their pull-back strategies—techniques they use to stay calm when confronted with a difficult person or situation. Examples might be taking a deep breath, counting to ten, shifting position in a chair, etc.
11. Back with the large group, ask for peoples’ pull-back strategies. List them on a flipchart page. Indicate that these strategies will be really important in the practice situations that follow.

Discussion (10 minutes)

12. Review the definition of “paraphrasing” from the handout and the importance of reflecting back as a listening tool. Go over the handout briefly. The assumption is that participants are familiar with paraphrasing but don’t always remember to do it.

Role play (10 minutes)

13. Create a scenario based on the morning's real play in which Milton and/or Diana has come to tell you about a problem with the other that makes them difficult to work with. Explain the scenario to the participants.

⇒ **Training Tip**

For example, what if Diana and/or Milton had come to tell you about the situation with Milton asking Diana to iron his pants five times? Can you imagine a story each would tell in which they would be convinced of their rightness and the wrongness of the other?

- Milton believes that he was giving Diana clear instructions about the way he wanted his pants ironed, and she was deliberately not listening and not doing it the way he asked. So he kept asking her to do it again. He should not have to deal with someone who refuses to listen to instructions on a simple task and thinks she knows better.
- From Diana's point of view, Milton kept telling her to iron the pants so that there was a crease down the middle, but he kept insisting that she lay the pants down on the ironing board in such a way that it was impossible to get a clear crease. She kept telling him it wouldn't work that way and doesn't he think she knows how to iron pants? But she did it the way he wanted, and then he made her do it again, the **same way**, over and over again. She doesn't think she can continue to work with him if he keeps this up.

14. Conduct a role play with a trainer playing Diana's supervisor, and a participant or second trainer playing Diana or Milton. The supervisor is using pull back and paraphrase skills to listen to Milton (or Diana) talking about the situation and to help him/her get clear about what their perspective on the situation is.
15. Ask participants what they noticed. Focus on the quality of the supervisor's listening, pull-back, and paraphrase skills and the impact on Milton (or Diana).

BREAK

2:15-2:30 pm

ACTIVITY 7. EIGHT STEPS TO SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE

2:30 – 2:50 pm

Learning Outcome

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe the three phases and eight steps for helping consumers and workers to reach a resolution of differences.

Key Content

- ◇ In helping workers and consumers to see each other's perspectives and come to a common resolution of differences, supervisors can think in terms of eight steps, in three phases:

Walk a Mile in Their Shoes

1. Don't contradict their reality.
2. Confirm their reality.

Help Them See the Whole Picture

3. Paraphrase their perspective.
4. Present another point of view for consideration.
5. Ask if hearing the other side has an impact on their view of the situation.

Move Toward Resolution

6. Paraphrase again what you understand about their current perspective.
7. Ask for ideas about what to do to resolve the difference.
8. Encourage them to choose the best option.

Training Steps

Presentation and discussion

1. Ask participants to turn to the last page of the handout—*Eight Steps: Helping Workers and Consumers See the Whole Picture*. Discuss each step, using examples (perhaps from the real play) so that it is clear to participants how the sequence works. Ask participants to reflect on how this might work in situations they are faced with where there is a conflict or disagreement between a worker and consumer.

ACTIVITY 8. CASE SCENARIO

2:50 – 3:35 pm

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Give examples of ways that active listening, pulling back, and paraphrasing can be used in supervision; and
- Describe how the eight-step process can be used to help consumers and workers resolve differences.

Training Steps

Role play and discussion

1. Note that in this case scenario participants will have the opportunity to see the communication skills and problem-solving techniques played out in a role-play situation. Distribute the handout of the case scenario **without** the “back story,” which describes what was happening for each party. Only the trainers have the back story.
2. Ask a participant to volunteer to read the scenario out loud (or assign each paragraph to a different participant to read).
3. Divide participants into small groups. Ask people in their groups to talk about what they think is happening in this scenario. Is it a problem to solve or a difference to be managed? How they would approach addressing it?
4. After about ten minutes, ask each group to share with the full group what they think was happening and how they would address it.
 - After they report on what they think is going on, discuss our tendency to make up stories that we believe are real. *How do we check the reality of our stories?*
 - Ask: *How would you use the communication strategies to discover what is going on with each person and to work towards resolution.*
5. Ask for a volunteer to play the supervisor, or choose someone you think will have the skill to play this out. Trainers will play the worker and consumer roles (because the trainers have the back story with each individual’s perspective on the situation).
6. Play out first the consumer and supervisor. The supervisor has called or is visiting the consumer in order to get a clearer understanding about why the consumer wants a change. Remind the “supervisor” to do her/his best to use the communication skills you have been discussing.

⇒ **Training Tips**

- Hopefully, the participant playing the role of supervisor will use active listening, pulling back, and paraphrasing to encourage Anita to share her back story—that she has this new relationship she is really excited about, and she thinks the worker is out to steal her man. However, the trainer who is playing the role of Anita should only respond to the communication cues that she gets from the supervisor and not offer any information that is not asked for.
- If the participant gets stuck and is not able to elicit information from the “back story,” you could call a time-out and let him/her do a “case conference” with the other participants, getting feedback and suggestions on what to say.
- The same approach should be taken by the trainer playing the role of Anne (below).

7. Now the supervisor, played by the same participant, plays out a conversation with the worker and tries to determine what her perspective is on the situation.

⇒ **Training Tips**

- The participant playing the role of the supervisor should use active listening, pulling back, and paraphrasing with Anne as well, in order to learn that there is a new boyfriend and she feels really uncomfortable with his leering attention, in addition to the consumer now deciding it's okay to change her routine because he is around. She asked for a leave of absence because she couldn't think of anything else to do. She doesn't really want to leave the consumer.
- One possible “ending” for the scenario: The supervisor uses the eight steps to hear Anne's perspective, and then presents the consumer's perspective. The worker is really surprised to hear that the consumer thinks she is interested in her man, and admits that it is really good to see her so happy and alive. She vows she won't let a man come between them, and that she will talk directly with the consumer about the situation, assuring her that she is not after her man and asking that they create a situation where she and the boyfriend are not there at the same time, at least for the immediate future.

8. Thank the participant who played the role of the supervisor. Then ask for feedback about what the “supervisor” did well, focusing on use of the communication skills and the eight steps. Ask for what could have been improved.

9. Ask people to reflect on what happened in the role-play, and what might have happened without the use of the eight steps. Summarize with a statement about the value of communication skills and the intermediary role for the supervisor.

ACTIVITY 9. EVALUATION AND CLOSING

3:35 – 4:00 pm

Training Steps

1. Explain that we have now come to the closing of the workshop, which is a time to reflect on what was learned and how this learning can be applied. Ask participants:
 - *What is the most important things that you feel you have learned today?*
 - *How do you think you can apply what you have learned today?*
 - *What kind of follow-up activities would you like to see to reinforce what was covered today?*
 - *How do you think this workshop should be used in the future?*
2. Thank everyone for their feedback and participation. Then distribute evaluation forms and ask each participant to fill it out. Explain that these will be useful in improving any future use of this workshop and in planning for follow-up.
3. Celebrate, as appropriate.