



# ND Child Welfare Supervision

## LEADERSHIP IS A RELATIONSHIP

Research has identified that the #1 driver for life satisfaction is relationships. Relationships are important in all areas of our life. We want to have strong relationships with our children, families, friends, co-workers etc.

Changes in the informational age have created a barrier for developing strong relationships at work. Changes in the information age have changed how we consume information, how we initiate/maintain relationships, how we communicate, how we shop/travel and get around, how we spend our time and lastly how we lead.

If we compared our same jobs today compared to twenty years ago our jobs would look very different. E-mail on our phones, which makes us available more often, communicating via text versus talking on the phone, zoom meetings instead of in person meetings all these factors make developing relationships more difficult.

Have you experienced a time at work when you are talking with a co-worker, and they are distracted by the texts they are receiving on their phone? Or maybe you are having supervision with a staff member, and you are both distracted by your technology devices. How does this impact building or having a relationship with that co-worker or staff member?

Recently I read a book by Mike Irwin and Will Devoll titled *“Leadership is a Relationship: How to Put People First in The Digital World”*. In his book they describe relationships as the foundation of our lives and as a leader we need to build relationships with our staff members for many reasons. They had listed seven key areas when we lead with relationships. Listed below are the seven key areas along with the takeaways they had detailed for each area.

## SEVEN KEY AREAS WHEN WE LEAD WITH RELATIONSHIPS

### 1.Accountability

- Accountability isn't just a top-down system of assessment and punishment. It's a daily practice of reliability, trustworthiness, and achievably high standards. When we share a strong relationship with someone, they can hold us accountable more effectively than someone who we don't know and trust.
- Exhibiting accountability over time is a gateway to trust. When we see something acting with accountability, we gain the evidence we need to trust them.
- Introspection is one of our best tools for increasing accountability. By better understanding ourselves and those around us, we can better diagnose problems, have more specific conversations about fixing them, and improve our shared situations.

### 2.Forgiveness

- Forgiveness isn't just something we do when we've been wronged. It's much more powerful when we infuse it into our relationships and plans, however well they're going.
- A culture of forgiveness often yields a culture of bravery. When people know that they're free to try audacious, creative, and risky things.
- Forgiveness is one of the most effective ways to lead by example. When forgiveness spreads from person to person, it creates a culture where people can acknowledge and learn from failure, rather than hit it out of fear of punishment or exclusion.
- Owning up to your mistakes often increases the chance that you'll be forgiven rather than punished.

### 3.Resilience

- Although resilience has become a trendy virtue to encourage individuals (especially children), it's best understood as a feature of healthy, thriving groups. We are the most resilient in the community.
- We can act with resilience after all kinds of setbacks. Dramatic, life-defining events aren't prerequisite for fostering a culture of resilience and preparing for the inevitable hard times to come.

## 4. Trust

- Seemingly trivial changes to the words we use can build or erode trust.
- Sharing uncomfortable vulnerability with someone is a shortcut to having them see you as a fellow person and begin to trust you.
- Reciprocity can help leaders narrow the power imbalance between them and others. Flipping the privileges of leadership paves the way for trust.

## 5. Coalition Building

- Coalition-building combines diverse interests into a single group that can advocate for change. Coalitions don't create themselves, though: leaders create them one person (and one conversation) at a time.
- Vibrant coalitions aren't just useful in politics. They're often the only way to take an ambitious, improbable plan and put it into action.
- Although coalitions require common ground among their members, they also require strong relationships to come into being and stay together over time.

## 6. Loyalty

- Loyalty is a long game. It only works when we commit to other people without an expectation of material gain and continue to nurture that faithfulness over the years.
- Like so many other benefits of relationships, loyalty isn't just about two people. It often swells beyond an individual relationship to include other people or even entire communities.
- Sometimes being loyal to someone means serving someone else entirely. In cases where we can't directly pay back a favor, we can still honor that loyalty by paying it forward.

## 7. Stability

- Stability isn't just minimizing turnover. It's about creating a culture that's calm, healthy, and productive for the people in it -whether they stay for life or not.
- Stable environments aren't necessarily static ones. Even in chaotic circumstances, relationships can give us solid ground from which to address crazy challenges.

*Adapted from: Erwin, Michael, S., Devoll, Willys. Leadership is a Relationship: How to Put People First in the Digital World. 1st edition (2022)*

# ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION TRAINING

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