

# Strategies for making supervisory tasks more efficient

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## **Strategy #1: Collaborative Strategy: Don't Reinvent the Wheel**

Compare your processes with other supervisors and units to make mission-critical and mandated activities more efficient. Identify supervisors or managers who can prioritize activities and have streamlined or eliminated non-mission critical or mandated tasks. Consider these supervisors as you complete the activities below.

How to do it:

- 1) Prioritizing Activities
  - a. List factors that contribute to the successful supervisor's prioritization of activities.
  - b. List factors that contribute to your success in prioritizing and eliminating activities, and those which may be contributing to difficulties you are having.
  - c. Consider the differences-- How does the successful supervisor do it differently? What factors contribute to the success? What activities has the supervisor delegated, or eliminated?
  
- 2) Making tasks and processes more efficient
  - a. List your strengths regarding the activity or task you wish to make more efficient. How do you do it well? What about your process is good and why?
  - b. Identify factors that contribute to the successful supervisor's efficiency in the activity:
    - What is the successful supervisor doing you are not?
    - What resources does the supervisor have that you do not?
    - What are you doing that the successful supervisor does not do, that may be contributing to your current ineffectiveness and inefficiency in that activity?

Supervisors have strengths in specific work areas. By examining differences in process and resources, you can build upon your own strengths and adapt activities for more efficiency. Using this strategy, supervisors share personal workload management tools and strategies

that can help reduce time spent on administrative activities and free time for educational and supportive supervision.

**Strategy #2: Mine the Unit Experts**

Ask your unit staff. Who better to consult with on prioritizing and streamlining supervisory functions that affect unit staff? You have identified supervisory activities, unit forms, processes and procedures that duplicate effort, or need to be more efficient, and your casework staff may have ideas about how to streamline activities and undoubtedly give recommendations for activities that can be stopped. This collaboration can be valuable for team building and staff morale; and staff participation in the process will promote their support of changes.

**Strategy #3: Planning and Organizing**

In casework supervision, organizing is the process of sorting, arranging, classifying and systematizing people, programs, physical space, and activities to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The supervisor must organize his/her personal workload, and also the unit's work.

Planning is key. Casework supervisors should set aside planning time each week, to revisit priorities, plan to address emergent issues, etc. As you prioritize and strategize to make tasks and processes more efficient, planning will help you keep on track about changes you are making. Using a system similar to the example here, you can identify each activity and possible strategies for organizing the work and reducing time.

Priority work activities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Systems/strategies to organize work and reduce time

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Strategy #4: Reduce Contributors to Wasted Time and Ineffective/inefficient Performance**

Several factors contribute to wasted time and ineffective/inefficient work processes. Rate yourself on each factor using the following scale: *excellent/satisfactory/needs work*. Then, do the same for your agency.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Self/Unit</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Failure to plan		
Duplication of effort (too many staff assigned to a task)		
Failure to assign critical work to people who have the time and capacity to complete it (not enough staff, or wrong staff, assigned to a task)		
Failure to track work completion in accordance with plans or deadlines		
Constant interruptions		
Unclear expectations and instructions		
Shifting priorities		
Failure to prioritize so most important and urgent things get done first or, doing things that may not have to be done at all		
Lack of coordination between staff, units, or departments working on the same tasks or functions		
Poor communication - unclear, one way, no feedback		
Too many discrepant/competing tasks in one job description		
Refusal to delegate		

Once the assessment is completed, you can see which factors you need to work on and which need to improve within the agency. Take action to address the factors you can control and advocate within the agency to change factors that interfere with your ability to complete your tasks efficiently and effectively.