



Strengthening ABI Practice: Practical Leadership and Person- Centered Support

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At Taproot, we acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded territories of Indigenous Peoples and are committed to supporting their healing and self-determination through our work and Spirit, our Indigenous-led initiative. We are grateful for the opportunity to work on this land and committed to advancing reconciliation in our practices.

A photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a green and white striped shirt, smiling warmly at a young child with dark curly hair. They are indoors, with a window and foliage visible in the background. A dark purple banner is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

Leadership Isn't About Having All
The Answers



Leadership Isn't About Having All the Answers

When your staff leaves your shift, do they leave with clearer judgment, or simply more instructions?



Today's Goal

By the end of this conversation, you should leave with practical tools for:

- Leading staff confidently
- Supporting complex ABI clients
- Improving documentation
- Strengthening accountability
- Building healthier teams



Part One

Understanding the Supervisor's Real Job



What is your primary job?

People usually answer:

- Scheduling
- Staffing
- Reports
- Incidents
- Meetings

Those are RESPONSIBILITIES!

Your real job is this: Creating CONSISTENCY

Because clients with ABI heal inside consistency. Not perfection. Consistency



Why is consistency the responsibility?

Because brain injury often affects:

- Executive functioning
- Emotional regulation
- Memory
- Sequencing
- Impulse control

If staff change expectations every shift, clients experience confusion instead of stability.

One inconsistent staff member can undo an entire week's progress.



Understanding the Supervisor's Real Job

Leadership Principle: Clients should experience one program—not five different staff personalities.



Consistency = Safety

Consistency creates



Predictability



Trust



Emotional Regulation



Skill Development



Independence



Interactive Question

“What are some inconsistencies you’ve seen create challenges?”



Part Two

Person-Centered Practice



Person-Centered Practice

What does person-centered really mean?



Person-centered doesn't mean...

Giving people whatever they want.

It means understanding:

1. Who they are
2. What matters to them
3. How they learn
4. What supports success



Example

Old approach: “They’re non-compliant.”

Person-centered approach asks:

- Why?
- Sensory?
- Pain?
- Memory?
- Fear?
- Trauma?
- Loss of control?
- Executive dysfunction?

The behaviour becomes information.



The ABC Lens

Before correcting behaviour asks:

A

What happened before?

B

What behaviour happened afterward?

C

What happened afterward?

This simple framework changes conversations from **blame** to **curiosity**.



Leadership Reflection

Good supervisors ask

“What happened?”

Great supervisors ask

“What made sense to the person?”



Part Three

Coaching Staff Instead of Correcting Staff



Section 3

The COACH Model

Clarify

Observe

Ask

Coach

Highlight





Example

Instead of: “You documented this wrong.”

Say: “I noticed this section is missing... walk me through what happened.”

Huge difference.

One creates fear.

One develops thinking.



Activity

Scenario: A staff member repeatedly forgets to complete behavior tracking. How would you coach them?



Part Four

Documentation Matters



If it wasn't documented, it didn't happen. But good documentation isn't about protecting ourselves, it's about protecting continuity of care.



Four Principles of Documentation

- Objective
- Specific
- Relevant
- Timely



Example

Poor

“Client had a bad day.”

Better

“Client declined scheduled outing at 10:00 AM, stating ‘I’m too overwhelmed.’ Client remained in bedroom for approximately 45 minutes before participating in lunch with verbal encouragement.”



Avoid

Avoid Assumptions.

Avoid Diagnosing.

Describe observable behaviour.



Part Five

Accountability Without Fear



Framework

High Expectations

+

High Support

=

High Performance



Accountability Without Fear

What kind of leader helped you become better?



Part Six

Cultural Responsiveness



Cultural Relations

People don't experience disability apart from culture.

Cultural influences

Communication

Family Expectations

Decision Making

Food

Faith

Privacy

Trust

Healing



Ask... Don't Assume

Ask:

“What would help us support you well?”

“What is important for us to understand about your family?”

“What cultural or spiritual practices matter to you?”

Simple questions. Powerful impact.

Remember...

Treating everyone the same isn't equity. Supporting everyone according to their needs is.



Final Remarks



Closing



Leadership Changes Lives

Not because supervisors are extraordinary. But because ordinary decisions repeated consistently become extraordinary care.

FIVE REMINDERS

1. Create consistency
2. Lead with curiosity
3. Coach instead of control
4. Document with excellence
5. Never forget the person behind the diagnosis



SECTION

Final Challenge



Questions/Thoughts

Thank you

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Taproot Community Support Services