



## SELF-CARE FOR supervisors

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The role of a supervisor can be rewarding, challenging, fulfilling, demanding, fast-paced and ever changing. Supervisors need to be able to develop and guide their teams, manage projects and deadlines, quickly adapt to and guide others through change, and positively influence a healthy workplace culture. It has been said that for most employees, their main reason for staying with a job or leaving is greatly influenced by their relationship with their supervisor. With the current challenges facing most organizations, the pressures of being a supervisor have only increased.

Self-care for supervisors is critical to maintain optimal functioning, avoid burn-out and compassion fatigue, role model health and wellness, and positively influence a healthy work environment. Here are some tips for enhancing your self-care. If you are feeling overwhelmed, just start with one idea and build your self-care habits as you can.

### CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF REGULARLY.

As a supervisor, people look to you to gauge how well things are going. How you show up has a great influence on the team. If you are not self-aware, stress can build, anxiety can increase, and despite our best efforts to conceal our stress, others can see, sense, and react to it.

We need to take a moment to honestly look at where we are to determine how we proceed. Start by asking yourself these questions, with a spirit of curiosity, not judgment.

- How am I feeling emotionally?
- How am I feeling physically?
- What am I telling myself?
- Where is my stress level?

An added benefit of self-awareness breaks is that as you check in with yourself, you activate the part of your brain that releases calming chemicals. Two minutes of self-reflection throughout the day can ease stress and anxiety.

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## 2. PRACTICE SELF-COMPASSION.

This is an important self-care strategy that can be powerful, effective, and easy to use, but is often overlooked. Self-compassion is simply offering ourselves the same kindness and encouragement that we would offer others who are struggling.

Once you have checked-in with yourself (step 1), ask yourself, “How would I respond to a friend or colleague who was feeling this way?” Give yourself the same pep talk that you would give them.

We offer kindness and encouragement to others because it works. It helps them to feel seen, valued, and supported, and it gives people the motivation to keep going. Self-compassion gives us the same benefits.

## 3. SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES AND INVEST IN YOURSELF.

To avoid burnout, we need to continuously refill our tank with healthy choices that give us good energy. That means setting aside time in the day/week for activities that replenish us. Give yourself permission to step away from work mentally and physically when the workday is over. Schedule time for activities (guilt free) that ease stress, help you relax, connect, and have fun. These include but are not limited to:



- **Getting adequate, quality sleep**
- **Exercise/physical movement to release stress and maintain physical wellbeing**

- **Social interactions and quality time with people we love**

- **Healthy eating for optimal energy and health**



- **Creative outlets and activities we enjoy**

Start by noticing where you spend most of your time and what areas of your life have been neglected. Pick one area to work on and grow from there. For example, if I know my life has become a series of “to do” lists, and I have not allowed myself time to relax or connect with others, my priority this week might be spending quality time with family or friends. If I have not been sleeping and am feeling exhausted, my goal for the week might be to develop a better sleep hygiene routine.

## 4. KNOW YOUR ROLE AND CREATE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

As supervisors, we wear many hats, and we care about the people we work with. There are times when we can become overwhelmed trying to balance departmental needs/goals with the individual needs of our team members while keeping up with the rapid changes impacting our organizations. We want to be a friend, fixer, counselor, cheerleader, sage, and expert to all who seek us out. But our desire to be all things to all people can overwhelm and confuse everyone involved and make us feel like a failure.

Remind yourself that people look to you to supervise and lead. By staying in that lane – leading with compassion and professionalism – you are giving them the structure and guidance they need to be successful at work and feel supported.

By knowing your responsibilities and your limits, you can then develop the tools and resources to help you in your role and provide your employees with the appropriate resources and support for issues that fall outside your role.

Which leads to the last tip ...

## 5. KNOW THE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO YOU.

Being a supervisor can feel lonely at times. It’s important to develop a network of support to assist you in your role and to give yourself permission to access them.

- Look to your company leaders and Human Resource department for guidance and direction on company policies, staff development, and organizational culture.
- Develop a network of supervisors and peers who can support, problem-solve, and encourage one another. Schedule times to meet regularly.
- Join professional organizations and attend trainings that help to fill your tank and expand your resources and knowledge.
- Access The Village EAP for resources and services. We are here to help! Familiarize yourself with the services we provide for supervisors, employees, and household members. To get started, visit our website at [www.VillageEAP.com](http://www.VillageEAP.com) (use case-sensitive password VillageEAP) or call the Supervisor Helpline at 1-800-627-8220.

Investing in your self-care has lasting effects not only for you, but for your employees, your department, and your company.



### DENISE HELLEKSON

As the Program Supervisor for The Village Business Institute, Denise provides guidance to EAP counselors, as well as counseling services to adolescents, adults, couples, and families with concerns regarding anxiety, depression, trauma, grief/loss, relationship issues, self-esteem, life stress, workplace issues, and personal growth and well-being enhancement. She incorporates mindfulness and self-compassion practices into her work where appropriate and is also trained to provide Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). Denise received a Master of Science degree from St. Cloud State University with a double emphasis in Community Counseling and Vocational Rehabilitation

Counseling. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor, a Licensed Independent Social Worker, a Certified Employee Assistance Professional, and a trained mediator.

# CISM:

## WHAT SUPERVISORS *need to know*

When a crisis happens in the workplace or your community, it can have a ripple effect. Whether it's a serious accident, illness, death, mass layoffs, a criminal act or natural disaster, the negative consequences of a critical incident can quickly overwhelm employees' coping skills and lead to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and potentially workplace accidents or other costly mistakes.

The Village EAP's Crisis Management Services, including pre-planning and consultation, large-group briefings, and trauma response interventions, can help people effectively deal with crises.

If you or your employees are directly affected by a work-related traumatic event, **Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)** can be an invaluable resource.

### WHAT IS CISM?

Critical Incident Stress Management, or CISM, is an intervention protocol developed specifically for dealing with traumatic events. The model offers individual, group, and organizational interventions designed to provide timely assessment, information, and support. It is a structured process for helping those involved in a critical incident to share their experiences, vent emotions, learn about stress reactions and symptoms, and be given referral for further help, if required.

### HOW DOES IT HELP?

The CISM process is intended to reduce the stress and impact of trauma on employees and managers. It is not psychotherapy. Trained facilitators provide information and emotional "first aid," so staff are able to process and move forward more quickly.

First developed for use with military combat veterans and then civilian first responders, CISM has now been adapted and used virtually everywhere there is a need to address traumatic impact in peoples' lives.



### WHEN IS CISM APPROPRIATE?

Anytime that there is a work-related traumatic incident. This could be an accident, life-threatening injury, or death in the workplace.

### HOW SOON SHOULD CISM BE SCHEDULED?

Depending on the nature of the crisis, critical incident stress debriefings are most effective when implemented 24 hours to 7 days after the crisis.

### WHY ARE THESE SERVICES IMPORTANT?

Work-related traumatic incidents directly affect the physical safety and emotional well-being of employees. Trauma in the workplace is not only a threat to organizational productivity, but it can also negatively impact employee perceptions of their own relationship with the organization.

### HOW DO I SCHEDULE CRISIS MANAGEMENT SERVICES?

If a crisis affects your workplace, The Village's fully trained CISM professionals will respond immediately to your call. Our toll-free number is staffed 24 hours a day. Call 1-800-627-8220.