

CONGRATULATIONS! “YOU ARE NOW A SUPERVISOR!”

House Supervisors are expected to be totally responsible and accountable for everything in the house. Yet they have few rights and little authority. They are unlikely to be supported by line management when attempting to set, monitor and maintain direct care staff work value within departmental care policies, standards, guidelines and values, and within staff job descriptions!

If a House Supervisor comes into the house at times when not “rostered-on”, stays after their shift, comes in early or phones staff at the house when he or she is not on duty.... This is frequently grounds for a successful harassment complaint by direct care staff with HACSU support against weak DHS management who are also intimidated by direct care staff into not visiting a house without giving prior notice to staff.

So although held responsible and accountable, a House Supervisor is rarely permitted to be a pro-active and responsible supervisory person. And, is not sufficiently empowered to address the needs and aspirations of the residents for whom he/she is responsible

People promoted to the position of supervisor should be made aware that:-

“Although you are now officially a House Supervisor, under no circumstances should you attempt to supervise!” This is because:-

1. In most circumstances, you are unlikely to be supported by your line management!
2. You will have to fight the public service management issue-avoidance bureaucracy alone, in every way, to support your residents to receive the care and quality lifestyle set by the department’s own care policies, standards, guidelines and values.
3. At any time you could have HACSU supported, militant direct care staff undermining any attempt you make to have residents receive quality care and support. These staff wish to have “leisure time at work”, and will claim you are bullying them if you make any attempt to direct them, or question their actions!
4. Management will most likely cave-in to your subordinates complaints and demands, no matter how unreasonable or unfounded these may be!
5. Management will almost certainly make you the scapegoat, to help make the problem/s go away, and to cover their own backsides!

Are you still feeling lucky in getting the position? No! Maybe? Well, see how you feel after attempting to do just a fraction of what is in your job description!

Even with good staff, you are likely to battle every day against the entrenched management attitudes and practices described above. With entrenched staff - forget it! Either keep your head low and ignore what is going on around you, or move to the NGOs.