Ability or Motivation? Which Issue Should I Address?

Adapted from Crucial Accountability

OMBUDS

Personal

Ability

Without supervision, would this person have the skills, knowledge and fortitude to do the work?

- ✓ Sounds like "I don't know how...", "I was never taught...", "I have tried many times, but..."

- ✓ TIP: Address ability issues before motivation issues

Motivation

Without supervision, would this person WANT to engage? Do they find purpose in it? Do they hate it or enjoy it?

- ✓ Sounds like: "I don't enjoy...", "That's not who I am...", "That's not fun for me."

Social

Ability

Do others provide or withhold help, resources, information?

- ✓ Sounds like "I am still waiting for my supervisor to approve this...", "I was supposed to be trained by Lisa but she keeps canceling...", "I never received the report needed to complete this..."

Motivation

Are others encouraging the right behavior? Wrong behavior?

- ✓ Sounds like: "My boss told me to do this...", "My coworkers are doing this...", "My director expects us to submit our timesheets at the end of each month..."

Structural

Ability

Consider "things"

Does your workplace encourage good or bad behavior? Think: tools, workspace, policies, information.

✅ Sounds like: "My computer is 10 years old...", "It takes years for something to get approved...", "When I need new technology, my boss immediately approves..."

Motivation

Consider nonhuman motivators

What are the rewards or perks that are in place to encourage the right behaviors, discourage the wrong ones?

✅ Sounds like: "They won't write me up for that...", "That is not in my job description...", "You could be terminated for..."

For more tips around conflict, check out the system-wide Ombuds Blog: https://ombuzz.blog/

www.ucdenver.edu/ombuds