

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: A Translation for Every Day Use

The current rules require staff to be competent. This is done by, according to the rules, by demonstrating knowledge, skills, and abilities. One of the key questions has been, and remains, how is this done?

This document is an attempt to simplify the answer to this question.

The first step that must be taken is to think about what it is we are really trying to accomplish. As simply as possible:

- 1) We are trying to assure that our staff does the right thing when it is needed. We are trying to influence their “hands”.
- 2) The only way to get their hands to do the right thing is for them to know what the right thing to do is. Thus, we are trying to influence their “heads”.
- 3) The best way to get someone to chose to do the right thing is to make sure that they understand why this is the right thing to do. Therefore, we must influence their “hearts”

In summary: We are trying to get the staff to understand why they are doing what they are doing so they will be able to do it correctly. This translates to our need to influence their hearts, their heads, and their hands. Another way to think of this is: Effective *motivation* leads to proper *memory* and *motion*.

To affect the heart, we need to help our staff understand:

- the value of people,
- the value of doing things well, and
- the importance of making the right decisions

When we have accomplished this the staff will want the information that enables them to do things well and make the right decisions.

To affect the heads, we must teach our staff:

- how to solve problems and critically evaluate risks and benefits;
- how to follow specific support and therapeutic/habilitative plans, and;
- how to empower those they are working with to be as self-directing and self-sufficient as possible.

To affect the hands, we must give our staff:

- opportunities to observe the specific skills being demonstrated in a low threat environment;
- opportunities to practice the specific skills being demonstrated in a low threat environment;
- opportunities for evaluation, feedback, and corrected attempts in a low threat environment, and
- opportunities for on-going support and development through supervision.

When we have done the above we will have competent staff that have the right knowledge (motivation in their hearts), skills (memory in their heads), and abilities (motion in their hands).