

Communication Guidelines for Supervisors

Communicating difficult or challenging news for individuals facing restructuring, reassignment, furlough or job eliminations.

Guidelines for decision regarding staffing levels focus on three primary principles:

- Make selections of position elimination based on the functionality of positions.
- Communicate in a respectful and humane fashion that considers affected staff and those remaining.
- Preserve, promote and retain diversity when possible, reinforcing the UI Core Values

Once the decisions have been made, it is critical that you communicate those decisions well to the individuals affected and remaining staff. The supervisor needs to be the individual who communicates with the affected employee(s). The way to do this is through open and caring communication. Confidentiality is important throughout the process. The individual should not hear rumors of the decision prior to the supervisor communication.

Consider the following:

- Private room and adequate one on one time allocated 30 – 60 minutes. Be considerate of timing as it relates to staff working off shifts.
- Have written letters and frequently asked questions that are appropriate for the individual completed and reviewed prior to the meeting.
- Practice the conversation; be prepared to provide a rationale for the decision.
- Emphasize that the decision is related to factors other than performance.
- Consider the impact of this decision on the individuals' personal and professional life. Practice empathic listening.
- Provide a packet of resources for the individual to take with them, including job opportunities, resume and interviewing information, free and confidential one on one counseling through the EAP program and general information that could support the transition.
- Be prepared for a variety of responses, anger, guilt and denial. The UI Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can be of assistance to supervisors.
- Encourage questions or concerns. Offer an additional follow-up session once the individual has had the opportunity to review the information that you have shared.
- Set up and EAP appointment at 335-2085 if the individual desires, prior to them leaving the office.
- Set up a time to communicate with the rest of the staff as soon as feasible once the person(s) has been notified.

Notify other staff members in the unit of resources that are also available to them. Make efforts to support and rebuild the morale of the work unit. Human Resources/Organizational Effectiveness (335-2085) can offer additional support for the transition.