Chapter 3

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Description

This chapter reviews the principles of managing human resources in humanitarian emergencies. The aim is to help field managers and supervisors increase their- understanding about the major concerns of their subordinates. It also outlines problem-solving techniques that can be used to improve the standard of human resource management (HRM) in relief operations.

Learning Objectives

- To characterise the scope of human resources problems in relief operations.
- To describe the needs of employees and reasons for employees leaving their jobs.
- To discuss leadership, team-building, and motivation of staff in relief operations.
- To define methods of supervision, performance evaluation, and disciplinary actions.
- To discuss how to implement change and prevent and resolve conflicts.
- To define basic security measures to be observed by relief workers in the field.
- To recognise the responsibility of managers and agencies towards staff health and welfare in the field.
- To describe the cultural priorities in human resource management.

Key Competencies

- To understand the main problems of human resources in relief operations.
- To address the needs of employees in order to prevent them from leaving their jobs.
- To recognise the value of good leadership, team building, and motivation in relief operations.
- To analyse health worker tasks for supervision, evaluation, and disciplinary action.
- To introduce change and prevent and deal with change and conflicts.
- To increase security awareness among field staff.
- To increase the manager’s and agency’s responsibility towards staff health and welfare.
- To recognise problems of working in a cross-cultural environment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview

Because humanitarian assistance is a **service given to people by people**, human resources are the most valuable asset of relief operations. Expatriates and local staff from the host and the beneficiary population consume a significant amount of the relief program budget. In addition to bringing skills, energy and creativity, these staff can initiate problems that are unique only to human resources.

The performance of a relief organisation may be influenced by the quality of staff recruited to assist the beneficiaries as well as how they are managed. Due to the urgency to respond, HRM problems usually begin with the recruitment of unskilled or unqualified staff. Thereafter, problems may increase over time if there is no staff orientation, inadequate training and supervision, and poor management of stress and conflict. Organisations that focus on achieving the mission's objectives without considering human resource needs such as staff development, health and welfare may experience a higher turnover of staff.

Relief organisations must learn to match their organisational needs with the needs of their human resources to improve operational performance. Because "**effectiveness**" (doing the right thing) of relief operations is often more highly valued than "**efficiency**" (doing things right), many relief organisations typically begin with a large workforce to quickly bring emergency situations under control. However, as the donor funding declines, there is increasing need to train, develop, and retain local staff who can run the operation in a more economic and efficient way.

Relief organisations should assist the host authorities and displaced community leaders in building their capacity to manage humanitarian emergencies, by providing opportunities for training and development. This will reduce long term dependence on expatriate staff whose primary role should be transferring essential skills for setting up and running relief projects (water and sanitation, trauma surgery, mental health, etc.). Having enough skilled staff locally will enable both the host and the displaced populations to cope better with future disasters.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN EMERGENCIES

Introduction

Human resources in relief operations usually comprise of **local staff** (all members recruited from within the host country) and **expatriate staff** (recruited from outside the country) who may work on contract or as **volunteers**.

1. **Local Staff**: Most relief workers are recruited from the beneficiary or host population. Even though local professional and para-professional staff may be available, they may not have enough experience or skills to run a relief operation with special emergency projects for displaced populations, e.g., search and rescue activities, selective feeding programs, prevention of sexual and gender violence, etc. Some professionals from the displaced population may have been considered "enemies" during the conflict and were killed. The professionals and para-professionals that survive the conflict (doctor, nurse, social worker, psychiatrist, etc.) and are available for recruitment may lack recognition or certification as a professional by the host country.

2. **Expatriate Staff**: Relief organisations have to recruit international professionals where the displaced or host population lacks professionals to set up or deliver essential services (medical, mental health, social services, etc.). However, expatriate staff may be unfamiliar with the culture of the host country and displaced population and keeping them over the long-term may not be cost-effective. Many expatriates have extensive experience and bring new skills from other emergency situations. In reality, they serve as program monitors or neutral parties during relief distribution to displaced people, particularly where there is conflict. The presence of expatriate staff may sometimes be the only guarantee that supplies (food,

medical) will actually be provided. Or sometimes, their presence makes high-ranking government officials more co-operative in giving support to the local staff. Thus, when the expatriate staff leave, critical supplies may cease to arrive or it may be more difficult to get any assistance from the authorities.

3. **Volunteers**: Voluntary service is a natural part of life in developing countries. Helping others in situations of distress or emergencies requires no particular motivation because it is a behaviour that comes with belonging to a family or community. Even though an organisation may recruit and pay many staff members, volunteers are the backbone of a relief operation. Volunteers may include community health workers (CHWs), representatives of the beneficiary population, Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteers from the host or displaced populations, or from local groups or NGOs. These volunteers offer voluntary service for various reasons, for example:
   - to serve others and do useful work in the community
   - to receive training
   - to do challenging work
   - to become involved in Red Cross/Red Crescent activities

The following table defines the key terms in human resource management.

Table 3-1: Terms and Definitions

Accountability	Being answerable to others for the results or performance of one's unit and the effectiveness of subordinates.
Authority	The right to make decisions and enforce them when necessary; limits of authority may be defined according to one's position.
Benefits	Non-pay rewards, e.g. vacations, sick leave, medical insurance, use of vehicles, pension, etc.
Conflict Resolution	Settling any disagreement or dispute that individuals or groups of people may have.
Counselling	Supporting a team member who is experiencing personal problems by providing a sympathetic ear and, where appropriate and possible, some advice.
Debriefing	A process by which information is obtained by management from those in the field. Field personnel contribute first-hand knowledge and provide management with important feedback.
Delegate	(verb): Transferring authority to a subordinate for a specific purpose. (noun): Expatriate staff recruited from outside the country by a Red Cross or Red Crescent Society. May be from neighbouring or distant locations.
Delegation	Transferring tasks and authority to a subordinate in order for the person who delegates to have more time for tasks only he/she can do and to build the capacity of the subordinate.
Disciplinary Action	Dealing effectively but fairly with workers who break rules or whose work is not up to standard.
Expatriate Staff	A person who has been recruited from outside his or her own country. May come from a neighbouring country or distant land.
Performance Evaluation	The process of assessing a staff member's conduct and performance, and by which his job description is regularly reviewed and if necessary updated. It includes giving feedback on the staff member's achievements, perceived strengths and weaknesses.
Human Resource Management	The mobilisation, motivation, development and deployment of human beings in and through work to achieve organisational goals. Defining the rules for optimal use of human resources to achieve organisational goals.
Incentive	Non-financial reward that a volunteer receives for performing a job. This includes getting recognition, training, promotion, etc.
Induction (Orientation)	The process of integrating new staff into an organisation. It includes welcome, introduction and briefing on the job description and expected benefits.
Job	A collection of tasks, with the role and responsibilities linked to a position in the organisation structure.

Job Analysis	Examining jobs in terms of the duties they fulfil, the results they are expected to achieve, the major tasks involved, and relationship to other jobs in the organisation structure.
Job Description	Simple statement showing the job title, terms of services, relation to other workers and the key responsibilities and duties to be carried out. Job descriptions are products of job analysis.
Leader	The readily identifiable person in charge of a working team.
Local Staff	• All personnel recruited and hired "in-country", nationals or otherwise, and issued with a fixed-term contract. • Occasional or "casual" labour – hired temporarily for short-term jobs (e.g., to unload trucks). Should respect local laws and customs and include accident insurance. • Volunteers (see below)
Misconduct	Breaking any formally prescribed rules and regulations.
Motivation	The feelings inside a person based on their wants or needs that makes them want to do something.
Organisational Chart	A chart showing functions of individuals and lines of authority and communication within an organisation or office.
Organisational Structure	Formal defined relations between people who work together.
Recruitment	Searching for and choosing the best-qualified workers for particular posts.
Responsibility	A task or duty for which one is answerable.
Salary	Regular payment for job grades within a hierarchy of jobs; includes associated benefits.
Staff Development	Helping staff to improve their skills and qualifications in order to improve the quality of services and to prepare staff to move on to posts of greater responsibility, should opportunities arise.
Supervision	Ensuring that task are carried out, that workers can always get help when they need it and that high standards of work are maintained.
Team	A group of people who communicate and work together to achieve a common goal.
Volunteers	People who offer services without any material or financial compensation, but may sometimes receive an allowance or have their expenses paid.
Wage	Weekly or hourly payment for performing a job in terms of time worked or by resulting output.
Welfare	Taking care of all other needs of employees, either as individuals (sickness, bereavement, domestic or employment problem) or a group (staff transport, canteen services, recreation, etc.)

HRM Problems in Emergencies

Relief work can be very trying, often resulting in a high turnover of staff. The following HRM problems are commonly observed in relief operations:

a. **Difficulty in Planning**: In many disasters, it is difficult to predict the long term health care and human resource needs due to lack of reliable information about the size of the affected population, the future of the operation, and the availability of funding. WHO currently suggests the following general guidelines for emergency requirements for a refugee camp: 60 staff per 10,000 population to cover vaccinations, growth monitoring, ante-natal clinics, assisted delivery, OPD consultation and treatments, registry and clerical duties.

b. **Inadequate Local Capacity**: Professionals from among the beneficiary population may have fled to developed countries or they may have been victimised and killed during the conflict. Professionals among the host population may be too few or they may lack support from the national HQ. Local staff in the latter situation may deliver poor quality services due to low motivation from unpaid wages, lack of tools, lack of supervision, no training opportunities, no recognition for achievements, insecurity, etc.

c. **Unprofessional Recruitment Procedures:** Lack of employment policies can make it difficult to regulate the recruitment of relief workers. Qualified local staff are usually secure at their jobs and few may be available for immediate employment. Due to the urgency of the relief response, local (and refugee) staff are recruited based on their availability, rather than qualifications, skills, and experience. In addition, relief agencies may be under political pressure to recruit poorly performing or unqualified local staff. Thus, relief managers in the first two weeks may find it necessary to recruit staff from other countries or offer very high salaries to attract the qualified local staff, which often cripple local services.

d. **Unsuitable Expatriate Staff**: International staff recruitment may be strongly influenced by donor funding conditions. Some expatriate staff do not understand the importance of following the national protocols. They may refuse to have their medical qualifications checked and registered by the host country. Some may consider relief work as a sightseeing trip, an escape from home, an adventure or evangelical opportunity, with little concern for cultural sensitivity for the population or organisation that they are serving. Expatriate staff with such misplaced motivations are immediately recognised by the affected community and local staff.

e. **Different Terms for International and Local Staff**: Expatriate staff are usually better paid than local staff, with benefits of accident and medical insurance, and enjoy greater HQ support. Local staff may be hired on lower terms (even for counterpart positions), may lack insurance, and face greater job uncertainty at the end of the mission. Due to these realities, the motivation of the international staff may be rather different from that of the local and refugee staff; yet they must all work together as a team. Relief agencies have come to accept high local staff turnover as inevitable, despite the obvious management problems.

f. **Poor Work Assignment and Motivation**: Due to poor HRM policies, political interference, poor program design (e.g., no primary health care approach), highly skilled staff may be wasted doing tasks that can be done by people with less skills or training. On the other hand, unqualified staff may be expected to perform tasks they have not been trained to do. Being under-qualified for the job can make staff feel overwhelmed. In other situations, workers may get bored doing tasks they have mastered, yet they are not given recognition or additional responsibilities to challenge them.

g. **Lack of Supervision**: Supervisors may be unskilled, overburdened with administrative duties (reports, meetings, etc.) or fail to delegate responsibilities. As a result, they cannot support their staff in terms of job orientation, training, evaluating performance, etc.

h. **Lack of Career Development or Professional Growth**: Humanitarian organisations may close down a relief operation after a short time or hand it over to local organisations. They offer very few senior positions that are filled as and when they arise rather than to support any individual's career development. In addition, disaster relief certificates given by some agencies for good service, or for training may not be recognised by their national government or other institutions.

i. **Unwelcome Program Changes**: Excessive recruitment of aid workers to run a relief operations at the beginning can later prove costly and unsustainable when the donor funding declines. Implementing inevitable operational changes (e.g., premature down-sizing) can prove very traumatic for relief workers as well as the beneficiary population if they are not prepared to lose services or assume new responsibilities.

j. **Increased Security Risks**: Many relief workers operate in high risk situations and are exposed to high levels of violence and criminality. Some workers may create security risks for themselves and their colleagues by not respecting prescribed security rules and regulations, for example, by violating cultural norms or travelling without authorisation.

k. **Increased Stress**: Relief workers have to deal with the suffering of displaced people, overwork, poor health care and living conditions, exposure to unfamiliar disease threats (e.g. malaria, typhoid), and extended absence from their families. In addition, interpersonal conflicts may arise for various reasons, including cultural differences. Many organisations do not provide a way for staff to release stress or tension. As a result, they may be at increased risk of alcoholism, violence and HIV/AIDS. Staff that suffer burnout from chronic stress may simply be discharged from the operation.

l. **Inadequate Support from Headquarters**: Lack of support from agency headquarters can be expressed in various ways, e.g. poor orientation, no job descriptions, delayed contracts and salaries (mainly for new staff whose names may take a while to appear on the payroll), lack of essential supplies. In addition, due to lack of concern about the stressful working conditions, the headquarters may conduct inadequate debriefing for field staff completing their assignment.

To reduce the high staff turnover due to HRM problems, relief organisations need to improve how they manage their staff. The rest of this chapter discusses how the above HRM problems can be addressed.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

Human Resource Management (formerly called Personnel Management) may be defined as:

> *The mobilisation, motivation, development and deployment of human beings in and through work to achieve organisational goals; where humans are not mere inputs of production but living, feeling, thinking beings who seek satisfaction from their work.*

Human and Professional Needs of Employees

In relief operations, "**effectiveness**" (doing the right thing) of relief operations is often more highly valued than "**efficiency**" (doing things right). As a result, many relief organisations typically recruit a large workforce in order to quickly bring emergency situations under control. However, as the donor funding declines, there is increasing need to meet the priority needs of the beneficiaries in a more efficient way.

To improve operational performance, relief organisations have to recruit and develop the right number of staff with the right skills from the beginning. More importantly, organisations need to improve how they manage their human resources. They need to understand their employees' human and professional needs as well as ensure that the priorities of relief workers do not differ from the organisational needs. Human and professional needs of human resources are described below:

Human Needs

All employees have human needs that exist at different levels, as follows :

- *Physiologic needs* that sustain life: food, shelter, water
- *Safety and security needs*: the job should be free from harm and provide a sense of security
- *Belonging needs*: employees need to belong to a group or team
- *Esteem needs*: employees need to be appreciated, recognised, valued
- *Self-actualisation needs* for setting and achieving personal goals and being creative

The above-listed human needs are drawn from Maslow's hierarchy of needs. For more details on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, please see the *Mental Health* chapter.)

Professional Needs

- Clear work objectives and responsibilities
- Capable leadership that can be respected and admired
- Work incentives (not necessarily monetary)
- Opportunity for self-improvement
- Opportunity for promotion and increased responsibility
- Support and interest from superiors
- Degree of independence to set goals and determine direction
- Good work environment
- Assurance that others are doing their fair share of the work
- Fair treatment relative to others
- Respect for individual religious, moral, and political beliefs

Human Resources Management Functions

Human resource management is not only concerned with recruitment of qualified relief workers. How they are supported by the organisation's headquarters and managed by relief managers at the relief operations level can greatly influence the overall performance of a relief program. HRM functions may be defined at two levels:

1. **Headquarters Function**: In relief organisations, management of human resource usually begins at a manpower office based at the *headquarters level.* The role of the manpower office is to develop HRM policies for the mission that are credible, honest, and fair. In this way, it helps relief workers meet expected standards of performance. The following table defines the key HRM functions at the headquarters level:

Table 3-2: The Key Human Resource Management Functions at Headquarters Level

Key HRM Functions (at the Headquarters Level)
• Defining employment policy: job descriptions, recruitment qualifications & contract conditions based on the HRM needs, the mission and other stakeholders (e.g. host govt.)
• Recruiting and selecting staff (local and international) through the following means: - local contacts, advertisements, national databases etc. - screening applicants, selection, - standardising contract conditions, grading, salaries and benefits, etc.
• Orienting new staff to the organisational structure, job description, relief operation, terms of contract, local culture, etc.
• Ensuring best possible preparation of staff for working in an unfamiliar environment
• Training operations managers on supervision, counselling, performance evaluation, etc.
• Making staff assignments, encouraging team building, motivation (reward, punishment)
• Defining guidelines for good HRM practices (supervision, performance evaluation, etc.)
• Defining opportunities for promotion and staff development
• Establishing disciplinary procedures for poor performance and misconduct
• Defining procedures for managing change and conflict
• Defining rules and regulations for staff security, health and welfare, etc.
• Defining procedures for termination of contract, retirement, death, etc.
• Maintain a human resources information system on staff recruitment and development

2. **Relief Operations Function**: Managing human resources is more critical at the *operations level* since poor management of human resources can be the single biggest source of problems. The proper management of human resources is the key to managing relief activities. It may demand as much as 90% of the supervisors' time. The table below describes the HRM functions at the relief operations level:

Table 3-3: Key Human Resource Management Functions at the Operations Level

Key HRM Functions (at the Relief Operations Level)
• Assessing human resource needs and reporting to headquarters • Revising job descriptions and organisational structure at the project level as situations change • Providing good leadership and building effective teams • Providing basic skills training and promoting cross-cultural sensitivity • Carrying out supervision and performance evaluation • Increasing staff motivation and staff development • Preventing and resolving conflict and managing change • Implementing disciplinary actions, when necessary • Updating staff about security evacuation measures and enforcing security measures • Addressing staff welfare, counselling, etc.

Note: *This chapter will focus largely on human resource management at the relief operations level.*

LEADERSHIP, TEAM BUILDING, AND MOTIVATION

To improve HRM in relief operations all managers and supervisors should be trained in **leadership**, **team building** and **motivation**.

Leadership

*"Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something **you** want done because **he** wants to do it."*
— Dwight D Eisenhower

Some people seem to be born leaders. Others apply for senior positions in order to become leaders. However, true leadership is not always the same as having a title. Any manager or supervisor who is directly responsible for the performance of other members of staff needs to understand the art of leadership. Leadership is about teamwork and building teams. Teams need leaders and leaders tend to have teams.

Leaders should understand that they are not expected to know all the answers or do all the work. They often serve as role models through their commitment, discipline, and personal conduct. Even though team members may have different personalities and culture, they all expect the following qualities in a team leader:

- a sense of vision and purpose
- integrity and honesty
- enthusiasm and commitment
- trust, encouragement, and support for team members
- management competence
- decisiveness where necessary

Note: *In some cultures, the ability of the leader to influence higher authority and thus protect group members may be an essential quality.*

Leaders may use different leadership styles, according to the situation and ability of their team members. A leader could be:

- *Authoritarian* — during times of danger (war, fire, accidents), when saving lives comes first
- *Consultative* — a new team needs an experienced leader
- *Supportive* — in order to build an "enabling" work environment for team members to work effectively

Good leaders value their subordinates and avoid showing favouritism. They provide direction when needed but look for opportunities to transfer responsibility to others. They actively seek out team members to participate in decision-making and encourage them to express their opinions. In addition to being accountable for their staff's use of resources and reporting, good leaders maintain their staff's health and welfare by recognising when people are overburdened and acting to reduce over-commitment.

In summary, good leaders must be able to do the following:

- Function effectively within the limits of their responsibility and control
- Understand the scope of their work
- Understand their staff members and provide adequate support to them
- Allocate and delegate work fairly, according to individual skills and work preferences
- Carry out performance evaluations
- Be accessible for communication and consultation
- Develop effective conflict resolution skills

Team Building

> *A team is a group of people who share the same vision or purpose and are committed to achieving a common goal.*

Every relief worker (local and expatriate staff and volunteers) may receive individual mission instructions before joining other group members. However, the overall purpose of the team may be unclear. To transform individual staff members with varying perceptions and needs (including their welfare, security, and personal development needs) into a motivated team is one of the key challenges facing relief managers.

Team building demands special qualities in team leaders. Much more is expected from team leaders than from technical supervisors overseeing specific tasks of a job. In addition to having enough drive to get the job done, the team leader needs to be able to look at people with a "co-ordinator/shaper" view and also be attuned to listening to his or her staff. The ultimate goal of a team (i.e., providing services to the beneficiaries) may be achieved through the following approach:

1. **Set Up a Work Structure:** Involve team members to establish a common purpose and broad strategy for the coming months. Make sure every member understands and is committed to the purpose and strategy. As a team, define the functions the team needs to carry out, and then the role and responsibilities of each team member, distributing the work load fairly. This will build team commitment and reduce future misunderstandings and feelings of professional insecurity.

2. **Develop Appropriate Working Methods:** Even though working methods will depend on the leadership style, they should be acceptable to all team members. Leaders should organise various meetings and ensure everyone participates and is integrated into the team. For example, regular information-sharing and co-ordination meetings may be held for the whole team and more frequent problem-solving meetings for those who are directly involved. By bringing team members together to address pending problems and new challenges, meetings serve as an excellent method for team building and should be considered a good indicator of a team's working methods.

3. **Build a Good Working Climate and Relationships:** Even though the working climate depends on the individuals, the leader can set the tone of the team by listening carefully to team members' opinions, showing trust, encouraging, coaching, and delegating. Social activities during and after working hours are essential for establishing a relaxed, friendly, and co-operative atmosphere in which team members are able to speak openly and honestly about their ideas and feelings.

In conclusion, to achieve joint goals, teams require good leadership and good teamwork. It is important for the team members to feel that their leader is accessible, listens to their concerns, and shows respect for their contributions and ideas. Provided the whole team is taken through a goal-objective-action planning experience of creating mutually understood and agreed "milestones," great improvement in team performance can be expected with high levels of motivation. However, major problems can arise if an individual team member or the team leader is not fulfilling his or her responsibilities. There are many tips on how team leaders and members can build good working relationships, as shown in the table below:

Table 3-4: Tips for Team Leaders and Members

Tips for a Leader	Tips for a Team Member
• Be transparent • Be a good listener • Respect everyone's contribution • Delegate responsibilities • Recognise work done by others • Be decisive when necessary: • Lead by example (what you do rather than what you say) • Be proactive in dealing with conflicts • Look after the team at work and outside • Do not overwork yourself • Do not spend all the time in the office	• Be transparent • Be flexible and prepared to learn from others • Do not blame or criticise others • Understand your individual responsibilities, and ask the team leader for more when ready • Help integrate newcomers to the team • Respect differences among individuals (unless it interferes with your work) • Do not make quick judgements • Share information, ideas and experience with others • Support colleagues, especially the team leader • Discuss problems with other members or the team leader early and directly

Motivation and Staff Development

> *The best way to motivate an employee is to give him or her challenging work in which he or she can assume responsibility.*

As team members become more efficient in the tasks they were employed to do, they will need less support. Their team leader will simply need to periodically monitor how work is progressing, introduce the required changes and evaluate staff performance when necessary. However, these team members may gradually become dissatisfied with the monotony of their job.

The challenge for relief organisations is to motivate these skilled workers to remain with the operation rather than leave in pursuit of their personal goals. It is possible to increase motivation of over-qualified or over-capable team members even if the organisation does not have the capacity to increase salaries and benefits, or give promotions. For example, encouraging the practice of recognising work that has been done well and involving team members in decision-making on future activities of the team can greatly increase job satisfaction.

Jobs can be made more interesting by building the skills and experience of the team members in the following ways:

- Giving team members opportunities to act as chairperson during the regular team meetings.
- Improving communication and information sharing between teams from different sectors.
- Systematically transferring or rotating staff to different positions so that each one understands the overall work and demands on others.
- Giving team members special short-term assignments, with or without their routine work.
- Transferring additional tasks and responsibilities to subordinates according to their experience, ability, and preferences (**delegating**).
- Developing a team member with exceptional potential as an "*acting*" stand-in for future supervisory positions or as a "*counterpart*" to an international staff.
- Arranging for team members to attend training courses (within the organisation or external).

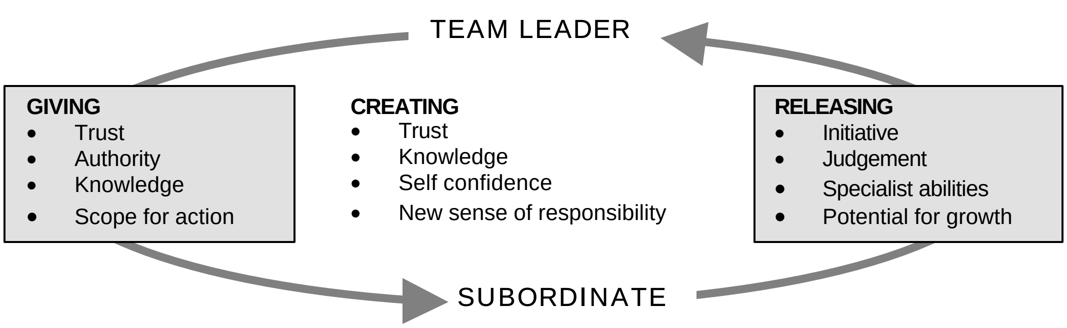
Two effective ways of motivating and retaining staff in relief operations are discussed in detail below:

1. Delegating

A team leader is under constant pressure and cannot do everything. The more one transfers, the more time one has for more important tasks.

Delegation may be defined as transferring tasks to a subordinate and giving him or her the authority and resources to get the job done. Although it is essential for building the capacity of the subordinate, delegation should be done gradually and must be supported with on-the job coaching. This will motivate team members to perceive their personal expectations to be in line with the mission objectives. The Figure below illustrates the process and outcome of delegating.

Figure 3-1: The Process of Delegating

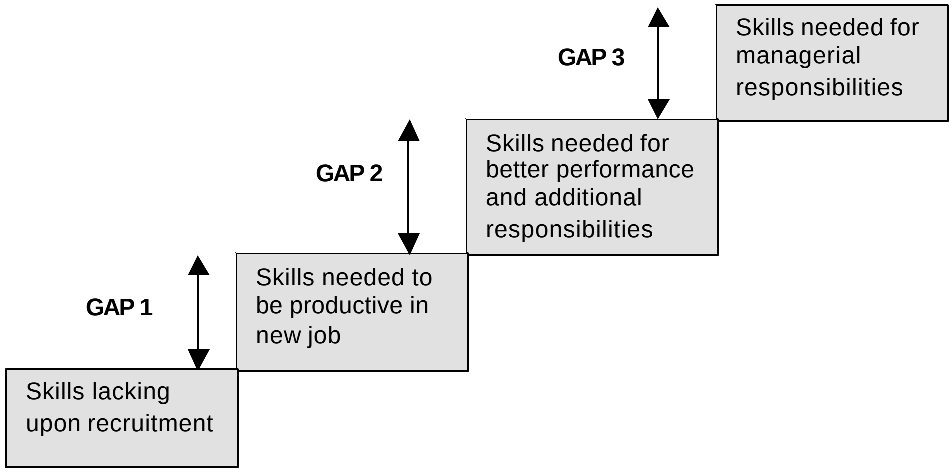


Note: *Even after delegating and giving the subordinate enough authority and resources for action, the ultimate responsibility for completing the tasks still remains with the team leader.*

2. Training

Relief organisations should build good relations with local educational and training institutions, community leaders and donors that can support the training and development of non-professional relief workers. Team leaders are responsible for identifying the additional skills that team members need to enable them to perform a job to required standards. A simple model can be used to identify gaps in team member's skills, knowledge, and information that can be filled through training.

Figure 3-2: Possible Skills Gap for Jobs that May Require Training



In the above exhibit the existing skills of a team member are regularly compared with those needed for a new job or for additional responsibilities. The first training gap (*Gap 1*) should be addressed immediately after recruiting new staff and may involve training in radio communication, report writing, team building, etc. Thereafter, informal and formal performance evaluations can help in identifying training and development needs of each team member as well as identify individuals with capacity for handling additional responsibilities (*Gap 2*). Through ongoing performance review and feedback, the manager can determine from among the most experienced, the skills that staff members with exceptional abilities require for big promotions or job changes (*Gap 3*).

Note: *It is not enough to provide training just for the sake of doing it. To ensure the training is effective, it should be matched to organisation's and employees' needs. In addition, opportunities should be provided for newly-trained staff to practice the skills and knowledge they have learned. Informal review sessions with the staff can help a manager to determine the long-term impact of training on staff performance.*

SUPERVISION AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Supervision

> *Supervision is a management function that may be defined as ensuring that tasks are carried out, and providing workers with enough support to achieve prescribed standards.*

The goal of supervision is to create a work environment in which all team members (international and local) are motivated to improve their skills and performance. Supervision includes the initial staff briefing, assignment of work and evaluation to maintain agreed performance standards. It is also a helping function, which includes ensuring all the necessary resources are available, identifying problem areas and training gaps, and taking appropriate action. Supervision may sometimes demand some form of disciplinary action, such as a warning or punishment to handle poor performance of misconduct.

The following table summarises the various functions of supervision:

Table 3-5: Functions of a Supervisor

Function	Description
Induction	• To orient new staff to the organisational structure and other workers • To advise workers about the objectives of work to be done, their role, etc.
Assignment and Work Planning	• To plan the work of the unit • To allocate work to individuals
Ongoing Support	• To provide leadership • To coach, help and encourage workers to do their work properly • To facilitate problem-solving among teams • To teach and build skills in order to improve working methods • To supply resources and information as needed to help workers to achieve set targets
Evaluation	• To check that the work is done according to set standards • To assess the need for further training the workers • To give timely feedback (positive and negative) on performance to each worker • To report regularly to the manager about needs and difficulties
Discipline and Grievance	• To ensure a good working climate • To settle disputes and grievances among workers quickly • To deal effectively with workers who break rules or whose work is not up to standard

Supervision requires giving someone the authority to ensure that work is carried out and that workers get the support they need to maintain high standards of performance. In relief operations, most supervisors are generally workers who were promoted because of continuous satisfactory technical performance. However, new supervisors may face many problems as they attempt to supervise their teams, such as:

- **Inadequate preparation for supervisory role:** poor supervisory skills, no recognition from workers, not relieved of other time-consuming duties.
- **Inadequate support for role:** managers not available for advice, no access to resources (e.g. transport).
- **Lack of supervisory tools:** no instructions, protocols or standards, no rules and regulations.
- **Poor selection of supervisor:** even though the worker was technically competent in the former position, he/she may lack interpersonal skills or problem-solving capacity to be a good supervisor.

Field supervisors need adequate support from their own “supervisors” (relief managers) in terms of coaching, recognition for satisfactory performance, authority to mobilise resources and involvement in decision-making. Managers should regularly visit their field supervisors and be ready to assist when necessary. Field supervisors will become confident in making decisions if they know they have their manager’s trust and backing.

Induction

> *Induction is defined as the process of orientating and integrating newcomers into a relief operation. It includes a welcome, an introduction, and a briefing.*

The goal of induction is to ensure that new staff settle into their job and become productive as soon as possible. Every new staff member should be briefed on what he or she is hired to do in terms of the area of responsibility, the people he or she is accountable to, etc. They must be well advised about how the emergency situation came about, the expected future evolution, as well as the security conditions, and the cross-cultural issues surrounding the emergency setting. The terms of service should be clarified (whether they will be paid wages, salary or other incentives, depending on one’s position), including benefits at termination of employment.

The following table gives an outline of the discussion during the induction:

Table 3-6: Outline for Induction Discussion

- Organisation/unit/section
- Job title & purpose
- Qualifications & experience
- Reporting to … and responsible for …
- Main tasks of the job
- Other relationships
- Methods of evaluation
- Terms of service & working conditions
- Termination of employment
- Date for revision of job description

The new member should be encouraged to discuss his or her expectations with the supervisor, e.g., status of the job, opportunities for promotion, training or transfers, etc. Sometimes the nature of the job may change, or the staff member's skill and experience may not exactly fit with the job they are hired for. In such situations, the job description may require "fine tuning," which can begin during the induction. Revisions in the job description should be discussed with every person who may be directly affected. The job description should also be reviewed during performance evaluations *(see Performance Evaluation)*.

How well the new member is orientated and integrated into the relief operation will leave lasting impressions in terms of how he or she is valued. Poor induction of newcomers can leave them unable to relate to the culture of the organisation or beneficiaries. This may later lead to job dissatisfaction, which can affect the overall team performance.

Note: *The induction of staff transferred to other units within the relief organisations, though much simpler, is essential for quick understanding of the objectives and working methods of the new unit and their new roles and responsibilities.*

Assignment and Work Planning

> *Many tensions and misunderstandings occur between staff because of one simple reason: being unclear about **who** is doing **what**, i.e., poor organisation.*

Even though formal orientation and work planning is essential, the INFORMAL organisation of the team is more important and often conflicts significantly with what is formally expected. This is the real challenge for relief managers. When one begins working with a team, it is useful to first review how it is organised to ensure that it serves the team's ultimate purpose — providing services to beneficiaries. The basic steps to follow are listed below:

1. Identify (and re-identify) the activities to be carried out by the team in order to deliver services effectively.
2. Assign (or re-assign) responsibilities and workload fairly between team members.
3. Prepare an organisational chart based on the team functions.
4. Ask each individual to prepare an individual work plan, which identifies specific tasks and time frames, based on the job description.
5. Give support to each team member.

Planning an overall work strategy for the team can help every team member to understand his or her individual role and relation to other team members. The team leader must be aware of the different roles that members may assume in the team (e.g., organisers, explorers, advisers, controllers, etc.) in order to assign workload and responsibilities according to individual preferences. It is important to discuss with each staff member their work plan and the criteria for measuring performance. Work plans should be shared with other members of the team in order to integrate individual members (expatriate, refugees, and local) into the team.

Throughout the mission, the team leader needs to informally question each staff member about how work is progressing, what help is needed to build one's personal capacity, and how results can be achieved or even improved with better support. Thus the team leader adopts, from the initial briefing, a "helping/supporting" role which includes on-the-job coaching, providing technical guidelines, information and advice.

Performance Evaluation

> *The most important role of supervisors is to help team members by monitoring their work and giving them feedback in order to improve the performance of individual members and the team.*

The goal of evaluation is to review and give feedback to staff on their conduct and performance in order to encourage improvement in performance and personal development. Evaluation is a process that begins from the first day of joining the relief operation and continues beyond the probationary period. It may facilitate promotion, job re-assignment or secure a future job in the organisation. The extent to which evaluation is carried out is a key indicator of a manager's HRM skills.

Performance evaluation in relief operations may be carried out formally or informally, as follows:

- **Ongoing evaluation** is a continuing process of the manager giving regular and constructive feedback to staff, to help them achieve higher performance and reward.
- **Periodic evaluations** are informal but highly recommended. They may first be carried out after the *probation period* and then every 3-6 months, depending on a staff member's position and length of contract.
- **Interim evaluations** are formal and may be scheduled, e.g., carried out either annually or whenever an extension of a contract is being considered, when a long-term supervisor is leaving, or following *extraordinary circumstances* (e.g., disciplinary action).
- **Final evaluations** represent judgements on a staff member's performance and capacity. They can be used to decide on recruitment for future assignments.

Two evaluators are ideal for evaluating a staff member's conduct and performance. They must discuss the outcome of their evaluation with the concerned member. The opinion of the concerned member must be incorporated into the performance evaluation report before sending it to HQ. The evaluation must not focus merely on technical competence, but more importantly on qualities that are essential for the overall operational performance, such as the following:

- Interpersonal skills in a cross-cultural environment
- Support in transferring skills
- Contribution to the working climate and team capacity

Although formal evaluation policies may exist in each organisation, they may differ from the informal realities. Evaluations may follow guidelines, which may be in the form of a checklist of required skills and the potential for training. Each staff member needs to be evaluated according to his or her job description and/or tasks given.

The table below describes the "Seven Golden Rules" to be observed in any type of evaluation.

Table 3-7: Golden Rules of Evaluation

7 Golden Rules of Evaluation
1. Listen: perceptions may not match reality 2. Be fair: apply correct emphasis 3. Be objective: put aside any prejudices 4. Be balanced: highlight strengths *and* weakness 5. Focus on specifics, not personality 6. Be constructive: offer alternatives, advice, etc. 7. Allow time for a fair hearing

Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action is an established set of procedures for dealing effectively but fairly with workers whose work is not up to standard (*unsatisfactory performance*) or who break rules (*misconduct* or *gross misconduct*). The goal of taking disciplinary action against a staff member is to seek improvement in performance or conduct when it cannot be achieved through informal discussions and mutual understanding. Disciplinary action should not be used in cases where the team member has been given a job for which he or she does not have the required skills. On recruitment, every staff member should be given a written code of conduct, an explanation of the organisation's expectations, and consequences for not following the written code. Only then can disciplinary action be taken against a staff member as a result of unsatisfactory performance, misconduct or gross misconduct. See the appendix for details on taking disciplinary action.

Note: *Effecting disciplinary action may be difficult where team members are selected for their high personal competence, independence and initiative for handling crisis.*

Unsatisfactory Performance

Unsatisfactory performance can best be characterised by the following:

- Objectives not achieved.
- Tasks not completed.
- Poor quality results.

It is rare for staff member's performance to become unsatisfactory overnight. Poor performance more often results from *organisational* causes (e.g., poor job assignment, inadequate training and support, unrealistic expectations) than *personal* ones (e.g., unsuitable for the job, laziness, family problems). Managers should always strive to address performance problems early. Friendly, non-threatening communication about the recent change in performance is often enough to right the situation. It is more economical to retain the employee than dismiss him or her and then try to find a replacement. If unsatisfactory performance results from organisational causes, these causes should be tackled promptly. Options include redefining the job or performance criteria, transferring tasks or responsibility to other members, or providing training and more support. Thereafter, the staff member's performance should be monitored to ensure that no further disciplinary action is necessary.

Continuing unsatisfactory performance despite adequate managerial support can be annoying to other workers and costly to the mission. Costs of unsatisfactory performance include decreased productivity and effectiveness of the team, monopoly of the manager's time and more work for other members of the team to produce the expected amount of work. Where the team member has the ability to bring about positive change, and the problem persists, formal disciplinary procedures may be necessary (documentation, warnings, suspension, and final dismissal). It is particularly important to document every disciplinary action that is taken when dealing with potentially difficult employees.

Misconduct

Sometimes, a relief worker may act or behave badly, in terms of set standards or the law. Certain actions may produce serious consequences, and therefore be declared as **misconduct** or **gross misconduct**. Consequences of misconduct (or gross misconduct) may include damage to the reputation of the organisation and political or security problems. A team leader must initiate disciplinary action against any team member who commits an action that qualifies as misconduct or gross misconduct.

The following table shows examples of acts that commonly qualify as misconduct or gross misconduct:

Table 3-8: Defining Misconduct and Gross Misconduct

Wrong acts that qualify as MISCONDUCT	Wrong acts that qualify as GROSS MISCONDUCT
• Failure to follow locally set procedures/policies • Unauthorised absence from work* • Disobeying instructions of the team leader • Improper behaviour while off duty • Sexual, moral, and racial harassment* • Disrespect toward local staff or local customs	• Disobeying security regulations • Working while under the influence of alcohol/drugs • Theft of the organisation's property • Violence against colleagues or the local population • Involvement in criminal and illegal activities • Carrying and storing weapons or other items of war • Blatant violations of organisation's principles/rules of conduct/formal agreement with host government

* *If very serious, this act may be considered as gross misconduct.*

Note: *Staff members may commit other wrong acts that are not included in the above table which have or might produce serious consequences. The seriousness of the consequences will determine whether these acts qualify as misconduct or gross misconduct, and disciplinary action should be taken accordingly.*

Reducing the Need for Disciplinary Action

The need for taking disciplinary action can be minimised by the following measures:

- Carefully recruiting and selecting relief workers.
- Identifying problems of performance or conduct early.
- Establishing procedures for expressing and addressing grievances.
- Maintaining regular and open communications with all staff and stakeholders.
- Making team members aware of their rights and obligations.

Responsibility Toward Supervision and Evaluation

HRM functions for improving supervision, evaluation, and disciplinary action can be divided in two levels:

Responsibility of Headquarters

Headquarters can build the capacity of field managers by:

- Setting up a functional organisational chart, defining job descriptions and supervision methods.
- Standardising procedures for staff recruitment, deployment, briefing, introduction and initial motivation for new team members.
- Regulating how each team should be evaluated both during and at the end of the mission, and debriefing individual staff at the end of the mission.
- Establishing formal procedures for disciplinary action and for ending a contract, which are consistent with organisational policies.

Responsibility of Relief Managers

Relief managers can effectively help all relief workers meet the desired standards of performance. They should clarify important HRM policies and procedures to minimise differences between the formal rules and the informal realities as follows:

a. Defining the formal organisational chart and regularly revising job descriptions to fit the changing HRM needs to achieve mission objectives.

b. Carrying out induction (orientation of work and operation) for new staff members.

c. Supervising staff, which includes introducing new staff, planning the work, assigning tasks, supporting the team, measuring performance, and controlling discipline and grievances.

d. Training and developing staff for additional job demands and creating opportunities for staff to exploit new skills.

e. Managing the performance and capacity of the team through coaching, giving advice, etc.

f. Carrying out performance evaluations, which include giving feedback and reviewing job descriptions.

g. Reducing the need for disciplinary action when necessary, effecting disciplinary action against staff reported with unsatisfactory performance or misconduct, in accordance with the national labour practices.

MANAGING CHANGE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Change in Relief Operations

Relief operations are subjected to many forces, both from within and outside the organisation. Therefore, change is inevitable. Internal forces include new programs, budget cuts, and staff turnover. An example of an external force is the increased demands from beneficiaries and donors. Because relief operations involve interaction between different units, change in one unit is likely to have an effect on other units within an organisation. Therefore, relief managers need to adopt a proactive and systematic approach when implementing change. This approach will address the potential needs and impact of the change on all units that are affected.

Defining Change

To define change the following questions should be answered:

- Is this change necessary?
- What benefits can be expected?
- Are the expected benefits worth the effort?
- Can others be convinced of the need for change?
- Can the enthusiasm of others be sustained?
- What's in it for others if they accept change?

Major problems within an operation should first be analysed to determine the key issues, i.e. whether it is structure, management style, staff or the system of working. This will help determine all the changes needed. A problem in one area can touch on the other areas. For example, lack of supervisory skills may affect the style of supervision and the system of working. This implies that more than one area may have to be changed to improve the overall performance of the organisation. Training of supervisors may be enhanced by providing opportunities to practice new skills and changing the organisational structure and system of working.

Thereafter a logical plan can be drawn for implementing the desired change. It may simply be a timetable of the necessary steps, which can be used to monitor the implementation of change. Resources for implementing change should also be identified where necessary, e.g., new equipment, training materials and instructors, termination benefits, etc.

Implementing Change and Managing Resistance

Organisational change does not only concern the managers. The needs and the potential impact of the change on all who may be affected should be considered. A leader must recognise that "personal needs and security" are everybody's first priority, regardless of what they say. People resist change mainly because they perceive their position, status, security, etc. to be threatened by change. Usually, most of them cannot express this feeling of insecurity clearly. As individuals and groups get older, they become inflexible and resist change particularly when change affects long-standing practices or introduces procedures that take longer to learn or carry out. As a result, the resistance to change becomes even stronger.

Implementing organisational change is complex, since attitudes of a "critical mass" of people first need to be changed. Everyone who will be significantly affected must be prepared for the change. Key representatives should be invited to participate from the beginning, in discussing the value or impact of change, as well as planning how to implement it. Thereafter, flexibility and empathy for the stakeholders must be exercised throughout the process of change.

Introduce change in small steps, beginning with those who usually do not resist change. Wait for these initial changes to be accepted before bringing more. Monitor how the change is resisted or accepted, and give the affected teams time to adapt. If after a reasonable period of time a few team members continue to reject change, change their physical location of work. Changing people's place of work so often helps them to modify their attitudes and allows them to adapt to and accept change more readily.

In summary, the following measures should be taken when implementing change to prevent or overcome resistance:

- Involve people in planning the changes that will affect them.
- Consider the feelings of people and the groups and cultures they belong to.
- Develop flexible attitudes.
- Attend to people's needs (human and professional).
- Use time and formality effectively.
- Continually test and evaluate feedback … and consider changing the locations of resistant staff .

Interpersonal Conflicts in Relief Operations

Conflict between individuals in a team is natural and healthy. In most cases, conflicts can provide an opportunity to bring issues into the open and lead to creative solutions. However, conflict escalates if it is ignored, or managed inappropriately, e.g. by suppression. This may result from weaknesses within an organisation or relief operation. Unless the team leader resolves it quickly by functioning as an informed mediator, team relationships can become strained and eventually interfere with their productivity.

Each individual and group knows that to survive and be effective, it must work through and with other groups. Inter-personal relationships are fostered by the norm of give and take — like a human resource bank account. Communication can fail when an individual or group refuses to provide favours for another. Interpersonal conflict can present itself as follows:

- *Between individuals* — two employees, or between a supervisor and an employee
- *Between groups* –— the management and the employees, or between different units
- *Between organisations* — between the organisation and the host authorities or the local leaders, or between two different relief organisations

Immediate Causes of Conflict

Conflicts are inevitable among people working in a complex environment. The combination of multicultural teams, stressful working and living conditions, and the uncertain future of relief work provide fertile ground for interpersonal conflict. Differences between individuals or groups that may trigger conflicts include:

- Competition for limited resources
- Contradicting priorities
- Favouritism in working conditions and schedules
- Overlapping areas of responsibility
- Friction over power, control or individual status
- Differences in personalities or salaries and benefits

Root Causes of Conflict

Conflicts that arise over outwardly minor issues may be symptoms of deeper problems, such as:

- Personal or family problems
- Ethnic or national tensions
- Jealousy (position or education)
- Interpersonal tensions
- Political or religious tensions

Conflict Resolution

When a disagreement or conflict gets to a stage where the team leader has to intervene, he or she should take time to prepare for the discussion. During the discussion team leaders should treat everyone with respect (even when they do not agree with them) and try to establish a relaxed non-confrontational atmosphere for problem-solving purposes. The following approach may be considered for resolving any disagreement or conflict:[i]

1. **Separate the people from the problem**.
   Before discussing the issues with the "warring parties,"gather all available information in order to understand the causes of conflict and each side's perception and emotions. During the discussion, focus on the issues, not personality differences.

2. **Focus on interests not problems.**
   Before the discussion, try to identify any unspoken interests and needs that led to the conflict. These interests may be multiple and will usually include basic human needs, e.g., economic well-being, recognition, control over one's life, a sense of belonging or security. During the discussion, try to get each side to talk openly about his or her needs and interests. It is important to acknowledge and discuss the interests of both sides.

3. **Invent options for mutual gain.**
   During the discussion, present options rather than demands. Assess the opposing side's interests and needs and see if there is a package of solutions that would meet the interests of both sides, or at least in part by trying the following:
   - brainstorming for alternatives
   - identifying shared interests
   - determining preferences to establish mutual gain

4. **Use objective criteria to negotiate a settlement**.
   Even though organisational standards may exist, independent standards may be required when several parties or people with difficult personalities are involved, e.g. *fairness, efficiency, scientific merit.*

5. **Consider alternative ways**.
   There are various ways of reaching a settlement, e.g., negotiating a logical solution on its merit, asking questions that may help the two sides to understand each other better, emphasising the areas of agreement or common ground, etc. Whichever way is adopted, it should aim at reaching a satisfactory outcome for both parties as efficiently and amicably as possible.

The key to resolving interpersonal conflicts is timely intervention so minor problems (peanuts) do not grow into major issues (coconuts). Thereafter, conflict resolution should include identifying all underlying causes. If these causes are not addressed, the conflict is likely to continue or re-emerge in the future.

Note: *Conflict within and between delegations and other disaster agencies is a more critical issue that calls for negotiation between more senior people, e.g., involving the Lead Agency or the overall Disaster Co-ordinating Committee.*

Preventing Conflict

Following is a summary of the measures that a team leader can take to *prevent* or minimise conflict:

1. **Build and maintain a sense of team identity by:**
   - Defining team priorities and objectives with the team.
   - Clarifying job descriptions and sharing individual responsibilities.
   - Creating a work environment that promotes fairness.
   - Encouraging shared values.

2. **Know your team in order to proactively manage personality conflicts by:**
   - Understanding the personnel dynamics within the team.

3. **Establish effective communication in order to minimise potential conflict by:**
   - Keeping lines of communication open. Be sure information flows up as well as down.
   - Being accessible for private discussion (including sensitive issues) with individual members.

4. **Provide a service/forum for conflict resolution and stress management by:**
   - Being available to the team as a mediator/facilitator.
   - Providing an escape from tension and stress (meetings, social events, sports) for the entire team as well as for individual members.
   - Providing access to professional resources for staff with severe stress.

5. **Address conflict as soon as it arises by:**
   - Actively seeking to reduce tensions between parties.
   - Insisting that parties keep disputes as far as possible from work.
   - Minimising contact between “warring parties.”
   - Being prepared to make changes in work locations, jobs and relationships to prevent further conflict.
   - Never taking sides.
   - Avoiding any discussion of the conflict with third parties.

Responsibility Toward Managing Change and Conflicts

Human resource management functions for managing change and interpersonal conflicts can be divided as follows:

Responsibility of Headquarters

Headquarters can strengthen the capacity of field managers as follows:

1. Recruiting and selecting *teams* (people who can work together rather than groups of competent individualists) as the basic unit of work performance.
2. Selecting the right team leaders is critical.
3. Ensuring all team members have been well oriented and have adequate support, in order to minimise the potential for conflict in the team.

Responsibility of Relief Managers

Effective management of change and conflict requires ongoing team-building efforts. The team leader and members should adopt a problem-solving approach when faced with problems. The following table lists a few questions for the team to discuss:

Table 3-9: Questions for Team Discussion

Team Problem-Solving Enquiries for Defining Problems	Team Approach to Defining Solutions to Problems
• What appears to be the problem? • Is it professional or personal? • Is it a "peanut" (little problem) or a "coconut" (big problem)? • What do we know about the situation? • Any EI (Emotional Investment)? • What are the immediate causes? • Any personality problem? • What are the underlying problems?	• What is the objective? • What are seven possible solutions? • What is the most promising combination of solutions? • How shall we implement it? • How shall we evaluate the degree of success?

Individual Responsibility

Team leaders should help their team members to understand that the working atmosphere cannot always be perfect and encourage them to help reduce conflict through the following ways:

- Listening to other people's point of view.
- Accepting the fact that one cannot always be right; and that one cannot always win.
- Learning how to disagree and to put one's point of view in an assertive way without getting too emotionally involved or attacking the other person.
- Raising issues early so that minor disagreements do not grow into massive problems.
- Using humour or taking short breaks when things get heated.

STAFF SECURITY IN EMERGENCIES

Security risks are generally more frequent during complex emergencies than in non-emergency situations. Although the degree of risk will vary from country to country, security incidents can occur in all relief operations, sometimes resulting in the death of relief workers.

There are many reported cases of aid workers being threatened or attacked:

- by the local staff because of grievances about suspected dishonesty
- by the local population due to lack of diplomacy in dealing with the problems etc.
- as unfortunate bystanders of civil disturbances
- because the Red Cross emblem no longer guarantees immunity from attack

Reducing Security Risks in Relief Operations

In relief operations, security risks cannot be completely eliminated, but they can be greatly reduced. There are no golden rules that can be applied to every situation since most events are hard to predict. Security rules seek to ensure that the risk of harm to relief workers is minimised. The way the rules are applied in a given situation should always be based on *common sense* combined with a personal understanding of the situation.

Responsibility of Headquarters

Basic security regulations should be established at the headquarters for both normal and emergency situations on the following:

a. Personal items (always carry identity cards, official travel permits and visas, medical record)
b. Dress and behaviour (not offensive to local customs)
c. Keys (held only by authorised staff with minimum spares)
d. Movement and travel (work or private travel only with permission and usually not alone)
e. Curfews (respect local and delegation rules)
f. Vehicles (driven only by local drivers)
g. Photographs (no cameras to be carried)
h. Red Cross logo (always displayed but does not guarantee protection in armed conflict situations)

All staff (including volunteers) should respect the above regulations for their own safety. In addition, standard procedures should be established for systematic and immediate reporting of all security incidents affecting staff. The report, which may follow a standard format, should stick to facts and avoid making assumptions or conclusions. Any personal opinion or interpretation should be clearly indicated.

Responsibility of Relief Managers

The head of the mission is responsible for the safety of all field-workers and for deciding how to carry out the mission, based on the security situation. A duty roster can minimise security risks by specifying duty hours, meal-breaks, and after-hours arrangements. These rules apply to both local and international aid workers, where no other special security rules exist. To reduce further risk, the agency should ensure immediate support (transport, communications, protection, etc.) for staff members who are faced with security threats.

Below are security instructions that should be followed under normal situations and also under emergency situations:

1. Normal Situations

a. Ensure that security rules and regulations for the relief team are prepared, understood, and enforced. These rules must include an evacuation plan.

b. Establish a functioning system for collecting and disseminating information on security matters.

c. Encourage individual and collective responsibility for security. Attend to repeated breaches in security.

d. Establish, through personal example, good habits and proper attitudes.

2. Emergency Situations

When the relief operation is significantly affected by the security situation and the safety of the aid workers is threatened, the head of mission should develop additional security instructions for the operation based on the level of actual danger:

a. **Situation** "**Alert**": when the overall security deteriorates such that normal security regulations do not help reduce risk. Staff may be asked to stay where they are, but communicate their whereabouts and the security condition while awaiting further instructions. If necessary they may be asked to move to an assembly point or remain in contact with the rest of the team to avoid unnecessary security risks.

b. **Situation** "**Red**": critical situation and events possibly leading to the agency's evacuation. Staff must follow instructions and use their best judgement to respond immediately.

c. **Decide to evacuate** because the lives and health of aid workers are directly threatened. Staff must follow evacuation procedures.

d. **Emergency close down**: sometimes a temporary or more permanent close down of the delegation is necessary. A close down plan should be prepared in advance for handing over resources to local agencies or authorities.

All staff should be trained in security-related courses such as radio communication, local language and culture, and how to deal with checkpoints, road traffic accidents, criminal activity (theft, assault, etc.), or open conflict situations (being fired upon, shelling, direct threats by arms, mines, booby traps, etc.).

Individual Responsibility

It is important to recognise that the actions of one member of the team can affect the security of others, sometimes in ways that may not be obvious. Every staff member should take care of his or her own security and should try to minimise both individual and the group's security risks. Any serious breach of security may lead to an immediate dismissal of a relief worker from the operation.

The following **"Seven Pillars of Security"** may be useful in strengthening individual responsibility:

a. **Acceptance** — help workers to accept that their normal personal freedoms may be restricted.

b. **Identification** — always carry proper identification for operation, vehicles, staff, etc.

c. **Information** — each person is responsible for updating themselves about the security situation.

d. **Regulations** — follow appropriate security rules and regulations, e.g., travel, curfews, etc.

e. **Behaviour** — be honest and show self-discipline and respect for local culture and social habits.

f. **Communication** — observe security rules about *communicating* one's whereabouts, and promptly report any security incident to a manager and/or other team members.

g. **Protection** — take simple precautions to protect themselves and other team members and understand the evacuation procedures.

Health Risks and Consequences

The health of both local and expatriate staff may be threatened by the following:

1. Direct or indirect physical attack through accidents, open warfare, crime, riots, political unrest, indiscriminate use of weapons, land-mines, etc.
2. Endemic diseases that a staff member may not be immune to.
3. Increased risk of disease exposure due to the nature of work (TB, HIV/AIDS, etc.).
4. Stress of adapting to new cultures and social conditions and high-risk situations.
5. Excessive work load due to lack of support or staff.
6. Inadequate preparation (materially, mentally, culturally, etc.) prior to fieldwork.

The most frequently reported health consequences affecting field workers include:

1. **Physical illness**:
   - water-borne diseases (diarrhoea, poliomyelitis, hepatitis, typhoid, cholera etc.)
   - vector-borne diseases (malaria, dengue fever, TB, AIDS etc.)
   - skin diseases (fungal, abscesses, scabies etc.)
   - intentional and unintentional injuries

2. **Psychosocial consequences or effects**: basic, cumulative and traumatic stress leading to:
   - loss of self esteem, guilt and feelings of helplessness that undermine work capacity.
   - poor work performance may result from increased risk of illness, accident proneness, absenteeism, substance abuse (alcohol or drugs).
   - reduced productivity due to physical exhaustion and burnout.

The health and welfare of every expatriate and local staff member should be considered important. Prevention of health problems is always better than remedial actions. The “People in Aid” code of best practice presents seven principles for maintaining staff health and welfare:

Table 3-10: Seven Principles for Staff Health and Welfare

1. People who work for the agency are integral to the agency’s effectiveness and success.
2. Human resource policies aim for best practices.
3. Human resource policies aim to be effective efficient, fair, and easy to understand.
4. Consult field staff when developing a human resource policy.
5. Plans and budgets reflect the agency’s responsibilities towards field staff.
6. Provide appropriate training and support.
7. Take all reasonable steps to ensure staff security and well-being (e.g. vaccination, suitable accommodation, access to food and safe water, R&R).

Managing Stress

Stress may be defined as an adverse reaction in an individual as a result of the way one copes (or fails to cope) with problems or demands made on them. Most humanitarian workers experience some level of stress in their daily work, which involves critical issues of life, death, and illness. As disaster situations evolve, relief workers have to cope with changing levels of security and health risks, financial pressures, revised organisational policies, public opinion, etc.

Types and Symptoms of Stress

Team leaders must have a basic understanding of the types of stress that may affect relief workers. *Positive stress* is a normal healthy reaction to difficulty and challenge. This may even be motivating and rewarding to a relief worker. However, *negative stress* can become a serious threat to mental and physical health. Examples of negative stress are listed below:

- **Cumulative stress** should be maintained within reasonable limits, otherwise it may lead to "burn-out," the physical and psychological exhaustion resulting from working in overwhelming situations. Burn-out occurs where there is inadequate supply of workers among people who have an over-developed sense of responsibility (common in some managers). Sometimes, burn-out only appears after the mission is over.
- **Traumatic stress** is a normal response to "critical incidents" (witnessing or experiencing an act of violence, a road traffic accident, or sudden-impact natural disaster). It may develop into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) if neglected. In PTSD, the symptoms of traumatic stress persist for at least a month and people affected require treatment by a specialist.
- **Secondary trauma** is a term used to describe the range of psychological and physiological effects experienced by people who work closely with traumatised individuals. Exposure to a refugee's trauma may trigger symptoms that resemble those of the patient, or effects of other trauma experienced by the therapist.

The symptoms of stress experienced by a staff member will depend on his or her prior level of function and social support and ability to cope, which may be influenced by one's culture. It is important for team leaders to know their team members well in order to recognise any significant signs of stress, such as:

- **physical symptoms** that have no obvious organic cause, e.g., fatigue, nausea, vomiting, headaches, abdominal and back pains, lack of sleep.
- **emotional symptoms** such as anxiety, guilt, fear, inexplicable mood swings, prolonged sadness, changes in temper.
- **cognitive signs** such as poor concentration, confusion, apparent loss of memory, poor decision-making, inability to do normal tasks.
- **behavioural changes** such as an increase in alcohol intake, a change in eating habits or sexual behaviour, an increase in risk-taking (e.g., dangerous driving), poor performance, etc.

Prevention of Stress

Stress management is the key to sustaining the mental and physical health of all relief workers (including managers). Most stress can be prevented *proactively* in the following ways:

- Ensure staff have a clear sense of their personal roles and mission objectives.
- Ensure adequate preparation and training of staff before missions and debriefing after the mission.
- Prescribe and enforcing suitable security rules and regulations.
- Ensure effective communication, including regular meetings.
- Adjust workload fairly and promoting reasonable working hours.
- Manage change and interpersonal conflict effectively.
- Address staff welfare issues, e.g., excessive use of alcohol or drugs, lack of privacy.
- Organise extracurricular activities and social events.
- Establish a system for sending staff members on vacation, rest and relaxation leave (where applicable).

Stress Management

Managers are responsible for helping staff members manage stress. The *reactive* response to stress is more complicated and costly to the relief operation, depending on the seriousness of the situation. Cumulative stress due to organisational problems can be improved only by addressing the root causes. Practical strategies for managing stress include:

- Send stressed staff on R & R, and additional leave.
- Reduce the team member's workload and/or responsibilities.
- Remove staff from the immediate source of the stress by reassigning different tasks or jobs.
- Grant the entire team a temporary retreat from the operation if everyone is stressed.
- Provide TIMELY counselling to staff members who are suffering from stress, or following a critical incident.

Counselling

> *Counselling refers to providing support (a sympathetic ear, and where appropriate, some advice) to a team member who is experiencing a personal problem of a serious, or potentially serious nature.*

Stress-related problems can lead to unsatisfactory performance and misconduct. Managers should monitor the staff's performance and feelings, regardless of their training or experience in relief work. Because relief work is indeed a major stressor, all workers should have easy access to counselling. Counselling helps people to openly acknowledge and resolve their physical, emotional or psychosocial problems due to stress. The manager or other team member can provide simple one-on-one counselling informally, without documenting it as counselling. Relief workers should not fear that the information they reveal confidentially could be used against them. Any worker with persistent problems of stress or trauma may need referral for specialised care and follow-up by a para-professional mental health worker.

Counselling can thus increase productivity of staff and prevent the need for formal disciplinary procedures. However, where the problem is excessive use of drugs or alcohol, address both the personal and the professional consequences of the problem. Standard procedures should be followed when faced with workers with persistent unsatisfactory performance or gross misconduct due to stress.

For details about dealing with stress and psychosocial disorders among displaced populations, please refer to the *Mental Health* and *Needs of Children and Adolescents* chapters.

Debriefing

> *Debriefing is a process by which information is obtained by management from those in the field. Field personnel contribute first-hand knowledge and provide management with important feedback.*

Once their assignment with a relief agency is over, staff members need debriefing. A properly organised and conducted debriefing is an important part of human resource management. A positive send-off will make staff members feel that the agency values their contribution to the relief program. In addition, it will improve the impressions that the staff member may have of the agency and its management. It may also provide an opportunity to seek constructive feedback from staff members about the management of the operation.

Managers must take time to carry out the debriefing. Particularly for staff members who have just concluded a difficult assignment. Debriefing then becomes part of stress management. It may be followed up by a medical examination or psychological debriefing, where necessary, to detect any long-term effects from the mission. Professional help should be made available for staff members with emerging or continuing problems. Other departing staff members should be made aware of possible delayed symptoms of stress and advised how to deal with them if they occur. Staff members returning to their families after a long mission need to understand that re-adjusting to normal life outside the relief operation takes time.

Responsibility Toward Staff Health and Welfare

Headquarters should try to improve staff health and welfare by:

a. Defining the organisation's responsibility to staff health and welfare before, during, and after the mission and for medical evacuation when necessary (for both local and international staff).

b. Selecting staff with good physical and mental health and conducting dental and medical examination (including tuberculosis) and psychological testing as practicable.

c. Providing effective malaria prophylactics and inoculations as needed (diphtheria-tetanus-polio, hepatitis A & B, yellow fever, meningitis, Japanese encephalitis, etc.).

d. Providing medical and accident insurance for all staff in the relief operation, which may extend beyond the mission for those who may become incapacitated by their work.

e. Ensuring all staff receive the following before their mission:
   - pre-mission briefing (origin of emergency, future prospects, work environment and job responsibilities)
   - practical advice on living conditions (appropriate dress, water, food, security, rest & recuperation)
   - counselling (stress, alcohol, STDs/HIV)
   - self-protection (clothing, bed nets, anti-malarial drugs, first aid kit, etc.)
   - basic skills training (first aid, security incidents, etc.)

f. Ensuring that accommodations or reasonable allowances are provided. Where necessary, R&R (rest and recuperation) should be permitted for all staff who have been recruited from outside the location or reside without their families.

g. Even though aid workers are on duty 24 hours a day, they must get some time off a week and annual leave during their mission. When the nature of work is urgent, demanding for long working hours, then as soon as the crisis period has passed, managers should ensure that working hours are normalised.

h. Ensure that a formal program for debriefing staff is in place within the operation.

Responsibility of Relief Managers

To ensure good physical and mental health of expatriate and local staff during their mission, relief managers should always be concerned about the health and welfare of their team members. This concern should be expressed from the initial work assignment through the entire mission to ensure healthy and motivated staff. In addition to rewarding staff for achievements in work, team leaders should reward staff for *sustaining* their health and welfare in terms of keeping suitable working hours and conditions, taking R&R (rest and recuperation) when necessary. Team leaders should strive to prevent health problems before they become critical. For example, they should not allow their team members to work 100 hours per week, week after week, without R&R. In addition, they should provide timely counselling and change work responsibilities for staff in stressful positions. This will prevent burn-out. Special efforts should be made to encourage staff to take anti-malarial prophylactics if indicated, and to reduce further health risks from stress, TB, HIV/AIDS and alcohol. Relief managers should ensure that all staff members leaving the project are given an appropriate send-off by their team.

CULTURAL PRIORITIES OF HRM

Culture is the collective understanding of what is and the norms for what ought to be.

Culture can be defined as the values, attitudes, and behaviour that unite and integrate people in the same community in a meaningful way. Attitudes depend on values, which influence the way people behave. Individuals adopt values from parents or other people that are important to them. Depending on the circumstances, however, values and attitudes may change over time and cause people to behave differently. For example, not everyone from a culture that values women taking care of the home may think negatively about women earning income outside the house. Factors that can lead to change in values or attitudes include education, exposure to other cultures, individual characteristics and stress.

Different nations or organisations create communities with different cultures. People from different cultures have different values, which sometimes create conflict. Despite these differences, every person in a nation or organisation must respect the equality of all human beings and the universal human rights.

Cultural Diversity

Many relief organisations are characterised by diverse groups of relief workers. Each individual or group of local staff, expatriate staff, or volunteers may come with different cultural perceptions and expectations. Cultural differences do not cause problems if all the relief workers carry out their duty, and dress and speak as they are expected to. However, when some relief workers (recruited from another nation or organisation) do not speak the common language, do not respect, or are not respected by their colleagues in the operation because of differences in cultural values or attitudes, teamwork may not be possible.

Relief workers (both expatriates and local) may be classified as follows:

- *Those who understand and appreciate cultural diversity.*
- *Those who do not appreciate cultural diversity because of inexperience.*
  Many relief workers are recruited with little experience in working in a multi-cultural environment. Individuals who do not understand the common language or culture may feel overwhelmed and isolated. Particularly if they are unsure about what other team members expect of them. This may result from poor orientation of new staff and inadequate team building.
- *Those who do not appreciate cultural diversity despite extensive experience.*
  Although some relief workers may have worked with other multi-cultural teams, they may not understand all the communication and relationship problems that can arise from simple cultural ignorance or lack of sensitivity. Some experienced staff may develop a deep-rooted artificial cultural insensitivity as an “emotional shield” against high stress. This can result from the culture of an organisation or nation.

Cross-Cultural Issues

The potential for cultural clashes may be greater where there is a high cultural diversity within a relief operation. A simple management requirement can produce significant cultural consequences as a result of cultural differences in sensitive areas. Typical examples where a clash of cultures is possible include:

- some cultures focus on individual achievement, while others emphasise on teamwork and consensus
- some organisations are very hierarchical and authoritarian, while others tend to be more democratic and flexible
- in some cultures, decision-making involves a complex process of consultation at all levels, while in others, it is quick, being carried out directly by the individual concerned
- attitudes and respect towards authorities, tradition, and deference to elders may differ
- cultures differ in the importance they give to loyalty and unity to the organisation and family

- attitudes towards women in the workplace can vary significantly
- cultures differ in their attitude to change, risk-taking and uncertainty
- there are differences in the relative importance given to providing job satisfaction, living wages or salaries
- other differences include: the importance given to social relationships in the office, formality in dress, greetings and relationships, punctuality and use of time, office privacy, acceptance of gifts or bribes, etc.

Promoting Cross-Cultural Sensitivity in the Team

Team leaders need to understand how much culture could influence the way a team works. Education and training on cross-cultural issues is necessary when developing working relations among relief workers from different cultures. If team members appreciate the value of cultural diversity within a relief operation, they will adapt their individual attitudes and perform satisfactorily. The table below shows some advice that can be given to an individual working in a multi-cultural environment.

Table 3-11: Suggestions for Working in a Multi-Cultural Environment

- Know your own culture – understand its values, obligations, and standards.
- Be prepared to learn and adapt to the organisational or community structure and way of thinking in order to develop rapport and avoid cultural clashes.
- Demonstrate respect and interest in other individual's or group's cultures and avoid stereotyping.
- Assume that there are cultural differences until sure of the similarities.
- Be non-judgemental, flexible, and tolerant of other people's customs. Every culture has special elements that can be appreciated. Don't assume that your own cultural ways are better; they are only different.
- Do not get upset when unsure of a situation or other people's reaction. Gather more information to understand cross-cultural problems or issues.
- Do not assume the worst; look for other explanations if an individual's behaviour seems offensive.
- Remember that you are representing your organisation.

Building Respect for Local Culture

Many relief operations recruit interpreters to act as mediators where professional or para-professional service providers do not speak the language of the beneficiaries. However, these interpreters have limited training in recognising psychological or unreported problems of clients. Without direct communication, the service provider may fail to gather the right information to assist the client effectively. As a result, the beneficiaries lose trust for the relief services, and seek assistance elsewhere. In addition, service providers who are unaware of their clients' unmet needs may become frustrated with clients who do not comply to their advice.

To overcome language and cultural barriers of communication with the beneficiaries, relief organisations should recruit para-professionals who speak two languages (the official language and the language of the beneficiaries); and, if possible, share the ethnic origins of the displaced population. These para-professionals may be identified among the beneficiary and the host populations. Training and development of "bilingual" and "bicultural" para-professional staff will be a visible symbol of integration and respect for the local cultural identity and tradition. This will build the local community's support and co-operation for the relief operation.

It will also ensure those providing services directly to beneficiaries are able to do the following:

- Communicate with all the beneficiaries, including the children and elderly, who may only speak the language of their homeland.
- Educate professional staff (expatriate or host country) on the beneficiaries' cultural values and beliefs to prevent violations.
- Serve as bridges to traditional helpers (healers, religious leaders, community elders) within the displaced community.
- Understand the cultural basis for problems faced by the beneficiaries in cross-cultural adaptation and recognise non-verbal signs.

The best evidence of an organisation valuing the local culture is giving incentives for expatriate and host country staff to learn the basics of the beneficiaries' language and culture. This is because using the basics of a common language with the appropriate "eye contact" are the essence of effective inter-cultural communication.

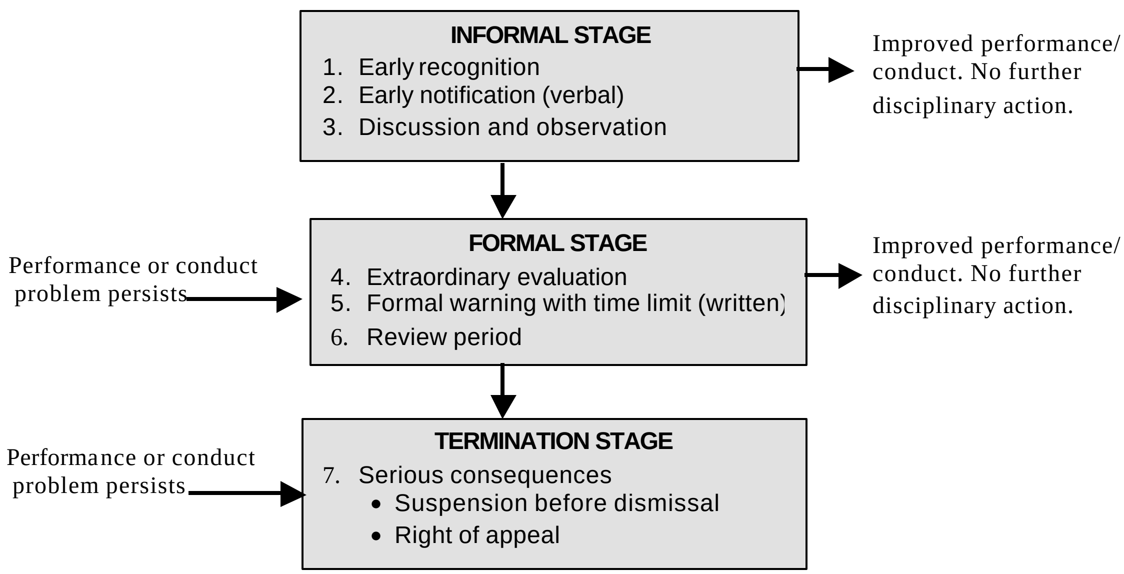
APPENDIX

Taking Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action is compulsory where unsatisfactory performance or misconduct can cause an organisation to lose credibility with other stakeholders. It should be carried out by the most senior field manager to ensure that any decision to dismiss a team member from the operation is reached in a fair and transparent way. A field supervisor who is unsuccessful in handling an individual with unsatisfactory performance or misconduct or is unwilling to forward the problem to a senior manager may lose the respect of other team members. The direct supervisor may be asked to carry out the extraordinary performance evaluation. Depending on the seriousness of the problem, the three stages described in the above exhibit may not always be followed in sequence. For example, repeated minor offences may never reach the formal or termination stage, whereas gross misconduct may result in immediate termination of employment, without applying other procedures. It is important to document all discussions, decisions and actions taken.

The following Figure shows three disciplinary stages for handling staff with problems of performance or misconduct.

Figure 3-3: Disciplinary Stages



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