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AVANTI ACADEMY IN PRACTICE

Fair, Firm and Human

Performance, conduct and absence in practice

Workbook

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How to use this workbook

Each part of Fair, Firm and Human includes a short Try it activity. When the narration invites you to pause, turn to the matching sheet here and take ten minutes or so to work through it for your own role. There are no right answers. The point is to leave with something you will actually do. Keep your completed sheets: they make a useful record for supervision, appraisal or your personal development plan.

Part 1 · Setting Expectations and Spotting Problems Early

Planning an early conversation

Choose one concern in your own team that you have noticed but not yet raised. Use the prompts to set out the expectation, describe the concern as situation, behaviour and impact, and plan how you will open, what you will ask and how you will record what you agree.

What does good look like here, in terms you could both observe?
Situation, behaviour, impact: describe one moment without any judgement of character.
Which two open questions will help you understand why this is happening?
What next step and check-in date will you propose?
What will your short note say, and how will you share it?

To reflect on: *Which small concern in your team have you noticed but not yet raised, and what has stopped you from raising it so far?*

Drafting a fair improvement plan

Think of a current or past performance concern. Use the prompts to name the reason, set the standard, plan the support and agree the time and reviews. Then read the draft aloud and ask whether the person would recognise it as fair.

What is the reason: capability, conduct or health? How do you know?
What is the standard, in terms the person could measure themselves?
What support will be given, by whom and by when?
How often will you review, and what would make you reset the clock?
Read it aloud. What would you change so the person would see it as fair?

To reflect on: *Think of the last time someone in your team struggled. Did you name the reason before choosing the route, and what would you do differently now?*

Fact-finding before a conduct decision

Choose a current or past conduct concern. Work through the prompts to set out what is known, what evidence exists, what the person says and which route fits, before any decision about action or suspension is made.

What exactly is the concern, in one or two factual sentences?
What evidence exists now, and who saw or heard what happened?
Has the person heard the concern and had a chance to respond?
Which route fits best: no further action, a clear conversation or a formal investigation?
If there is a risk, how could it be managed without suspension?

To reflect on: *When a conduct concern last reached you, how quickly did a view form about the outcome, and what would have helped you find out first?*

Thinking through one absence

Choose one current or recent absence in your team. Use the prompts to set out what you know, what would help, who can advise and how you will keep in touch and plan the return. Keep health details out of the worksheet and store any notes securely.

What is the pattern of absence, and what do you actually know about it?
What has the person said would help? If you have not asked, how will you?
Who can advise: occupational health, human resources or others?
How will you keep in touch, how often and through whom?
What would a phased return look like, and when will you review it?

To reflect on: *Think of the last absence in your team. What did the person experience from you in the first week, and what would you keep or change?*

Preparing for the first moment

Prepare for the next time someone mentions a concern about a colleague in passing. Write your opening words and questions, check the routes your policy offers, and work out who could look into a concern independently if you manage both people.

What will you say when a concern is first mentioned?
Which open questions will help you understand what happened and its effect?
Which routes does your policy offer, and when would informal not be safe?
Who could investigate independently, and where would you get advice quickly?

To reflect on: *How do people in your team raise a concern about a colleague, and what do they see happen when they do?*

Your practice plan

Build a short practice plan for the weeks ahead. Choose one real situation and run it through the four questions, then name one habit to build, one policy to check and one source of advice. Finish by choosing the first step you will take this week.

One situation: reason, voice, proportion and record. Where are the gaps?
One habit to build, and when and how you will practise it
One policy to check, and what you need to know from it
Who will you go to for advice, and who will test your thinking?
The first step you will take this week, and by when

To reflect on: *Which small decision about a person in your team will you make differently this week, and what will tell you it made a difference?*

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