



# Moderating Abusive Supervision

Kirrane, M., Kilroy, S., & O'Connor, C. (2019). The moderating effect of team psychological empowerment on the relationship between abusive supervision and engagement. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 40(1), 31–44.

## WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

According to research, almost 60% of employees will experience an abusive supervisor in their workplace. This article looks at the data from a survey of 191 employees from diverse employment backgrounds to explore factors related to teaming that may buffer the negative consequences of abusive supervision.

## WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

**ABUSIVE SUPERVISION:** A subordinate’s perception of a supervisor’s ongoing negative behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal, resulting in damaging effects at the individual, team, and organizational levels.

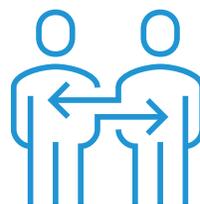
**TEAM PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT (TPE)** is a strategy that agency staff can use to safeguard against abusive supervision. TPE enhances responses to challenging environments by providing the team, as well as the individual, social support, resulting in a sense of empowerment in the areas of competence, meaningfulness, autonomy, and impact. TPE improves decision-making, performance, job satisfaction, and commitment.

Three points of measurement for the study:

**1. VIGOR:** “At work I feel bursting with energy”



**2. DEDICATION:** “I am enthusiastic about my job”



**3. ABSORPTION:** “I am immersed in my work”



## FINDINGS:

The data for the study show that feeling empowered through enhanced social support was significantly and positively related to vigor, dedication, and absorption. High levels of TPE mitigated the effects of abusive supervision, with higher engagement, motivation, and commitment.

## WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Team psychological empowerment can buffer the negative effects of abusive supervision. Agencies can foster TPE by strengthening individual and team bonds through team-building exercises that promote a strong sense of shared purpose, mutuality, and support.

Review NCWWI microlearnings to learn how to [Create an Inclusive Team Culture](#) and [Build Strengths Based Teams](#).