

PEOPLE FIRST. MISSION ALWAYS.

Personal Management Interview Guide

The structured one-on-one leadership practice at the heart of the FLOURISH system

Arnold Leadership Group, LLC

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Flourishing does not happen because a chief believes in it, a framework exists, or a card is laminated.

It happens because a supervisor sits down, listens, and uses authority to develop rather than diminish.

PMI is where that promise is either kept — or broken.

FOUNDATION

What Is a Personal Management Interview?

A Personal Management Interview (PMI) is a scheduled, private, one-on-one conversation between a supervisor and each of their direct reports — held monthly for first-line supervisors, quarterly at minimum for command staff. It is not a performance review, a disciplinary session, or a status update.

PMIs are where the FLOURISH framework becomes real. They are the delivery mechanism for everything the system promises: trust, development, communication, well-being, recognition, purpose, accountability. Without PMIs, those domains remain aspirational. With them, they become observable, repeatable practice.

PMI IS

- A scheduled, private conversation
- Focused on strengths, capacity, standards, and growth
- A place where the supervisor listens more than speaks
- A way to build trust before problems occur
- The ACT model practiced face to face
- A consistent signal that the organization sees the officer as a person worth investing in

PMI IS NOT

- Discipline or a substitute for discipline
- Counseling or therapy
- A performance evaluation
- A place for surprise corrections
- Documentation for a personnel file

RESEARCH BASIS

Why PMIs Work

PMIs are grounded in Kim Cameron's research on positive leadership and the Job Demands-Resources model. The research shows that perceived organizational support — the degree to which officers believe the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being — is among the strongest predictors of burnout prevention and retention.

PMIs work not primarily because of what is said in the conversation itself. They work because of what they signal: the organization sees this officer as a person worth investing in. That signal, delivered consistently month after month, changes how officers experience their work and their organization.

FIRST-LINE SUPERVISORS-SERGEANTS, CORPORALS

The First-Line PMI

FREQUENCY

- Monthly — non-negotiable
- Monthly also for probationary officers, developing leaders, and members under high stress

DURATION

- 30–45 minutes
- Uninterrupted — no phones, no MDT, door closed

SETTING

- Private — office, conference room, or quiet space
- Some supervisors allow the officer to choose the location
- Never in a patrol car between calls

OPENING STATEMENT

Start every PMI by stating clearly:

"This is your regular PMI — not discipline, not evaluation. This is a private conversation focused on how things are going, your development, and how I can support you. What we talk about stays between us unless there's a safety or legal issue."

This sets safety before anything else is discussed.

THE FIVE-PART AGENDA

PMI Conversation Structure

Move through the five parts in order. Each build on the last. Do not skip the opening — safety must be established before the officer will speak honestly.

PART 1 What's going well for you right now?**What this question surfaces:**

Police culture is problem focused. This question forces a different lens. It also signals that you care about the officer as a whole person, not just a performer. Listen for energy, pride, and growth. Notice if someone struggles to identify anything positive — that's diagnostic.

FLOURISH F · R · I **ACT** C — Create Safety

PART 2 What's been most stressful or draining?**What this question surfaces:**

Surfaces capacity issues, resource gaps, and organizational stressors before they become crises. Do not minimize. Do not fix immediately. Ask: 'What support would help?' Listen for patterns across your team — individual stress may signal systemic problems.

FLOURISH U · O **ACT** C — Create Capacity

PART 3 Are expectations clear? What's getting in the way of meeting them?**What this question surfaces:**

Preserves accountability without threat. Corrects behavior if needed, but without emotion or surprise. This is where you clarify standards — directly and calmly. Discipline belongs in a separate conversation; this is about ensuring the officer understands what is expected and has what they need to meet it.

FLOURISH O · H **ACT** A — Authority with Dignity

PART 4 What do you want to get better at? What responsibility are you ready for?**What this question surfaces:**

Develops future leaders at every rank. Coach rather than prescribe. Match responsibility to readiness. Make development explicit — most officers have never been asked this by a supervisor. The first few times, they may not have an answer. Keep asking. It matters.

FLOURISH L · I **ACT** T — Transfer Responsibility

PART 5 What feedback do you have for me — what should I keep doing, or do differently?**What this question surfaces:**

The psychological safety question. This is the hardest part and the most important. It signals that feedback flows both directions and that you are committed to your own development. Officers will rarely answer honestly at first. Consistency builds trust. When they eventually do, listen without defensiveness.

FLOURISH O · S **ACT** A + C + T

CLOSING THE PMI — Commit and Support

End every PMI with three concrete statements:

SUPERVISOR: "Here's one strength I see you bringing every day..."

OFFICER: "Here's one thing I'm committing to before we meet again..."

SUPERVISOR: "Here's how I'll support you..."

Then schedule the next PMI before leaving the room.

COMMAND STAFF · CHIEFS, DEPUTIES, COMMANDERS

The Command-Level PMI

Command-level PMI serves a different purpose than first-line PMI. At this level, the focus is not daily performance — it is stewardship, ethical authority, decision quality, culture signals, and succession. Command PMI prevents the isolation that forms at the top of police organizations and ensures leadership remains reflective rather than reactive.

FREQUENCY & DURATION

- Semi-annual minimum; quarterly during high change or transition
- 60–90 minutes — infrequent but deep
- One-on-one only

FACILITATOR

- Chief conducts PMIs with direct reports (deputies, commanders)
- Chief's own PMI facilitated by a peer, mentor, or trusted outside leader
- Facilitator posture: calm, curious, non-defensive

GROUND RULES TO STATE

"This PMI is not an evaluation or discipline. It's a leadership reflection. What we discuss stays between us unless there's a legal or safety obligation. Disagreement is expected and welcome."

Command PMI fails when leaders defend decisions instead of examining them, dominate the conversation, or avoid disagreement. It succeeds when they listen more than they speak and invite challenge without retaliation.

SIX-PART COMMAND AGENDA

Command PMI Conversation Structure

#	TOPIC	QUESTIONS TO ASK
1	Strategic Energy & Meaning	<i>"What aspects of your role currently give you energy?" "Where does the work feel heavy or less meaningful?"</i>
2	Authority Reflection	<i>"Where has your authority been most tested recently?" "Is there a decision you're still carrying or questioning?"</i>
3	Culture Signals	<i>"What are you seeing that concerns you but hasn't surfaced formally?" "Where do you think people feel least safe to speak?"</i>
4	Alignment & Challenge	<i>"Where do you feel tension with our direction?" "What decision do you think we need to slow down or revisit?"</i>
5	Succession & Transfer	<i>"Who are you intentionally developing right now?" "If you left tomorrow, where would the organization feel it most?"</i>
6	Close with Commitments	<i>Each person states one leadership behavior to strengthen and one organizational risk to monitor.</i>

INTEGRATION

ACT Inside Every PMI

The ACT daily leadership model is not separate from PMI — it is the framework that governs how supervisors conduct PMI conversations. Every PMI should demonstrate all three ACT elements.

	ACT ELEMENT	IN PMI	SELF-CHECK QUESTION
A	Acknowledge the Person	Open with strengths. Name what you see. Know the officer as a whole person — ask about their life, not just their performance.	<i>Did this officer feel seen and valued as a whole person?</i>
C	Coach for Growth	Ask questions rather than give answers. Help the officer think through challenges. Develop rather than direct. Surface goals and learning.	<i>Did I help them grow, or did I just check a box?</i>
T	Take Care	Ask about stress and well-being. Connect current work to larger purpose. Model the behavior you expect. Follow through on every commitment.	<i>Did I take care of this person — their well-being, their dignity, their development?</i>

CRITICAL GUARDRAILS

What Makes PMI Fail — and Succeed

PMI will DESTROY trust if it becomes:

- Mandatory but conducted as a formality — box-checking
- Documented in detail and stored in personnel files
- Tied to discipline or used to build a performance case
- A source of surprise corrections or performance shocks
- Rushed, cancelled, or deprioritized when workload increases
- A place where officers feel they cannot speak honestly

PMI BUILDS trust when supervisors:

- Schedule it consistently and protect that time
- Listen more than they speak — 80/20 is the target
- Keep the conversation confidential
- Follow through on every commitment they make
- Separate PMI clearly from discipline and evaluation
- Allow productive silence — don't rush to fill pauses

COMMON SUPERVISOR CHALLENGES

Handling Difficult Moments in PMI

SITUATION	WHAT TO SAY
Officer goes silent	<i>"Take your time — this isn't rushed."</i>
Officer becomes emotional	<i>"I appreciate you being open. Let's focus on what helps you do the job well."</i>
Performance concern needs to be raised	<i>"This isn't discipline — but we do need to be clear about the standard. Here's what I've observed..."</i>
Officer requests something outside your authority	<i>"I can't fix that — but I can help you navigate it."</i>
Officer gives no feedback for you	<i>"I really do want to know — even something small that would make working together easier."</i>
Officer discloses personal crisis	<i>"Thank you for trusting me with that. My concern right now is making sure you're okay and supported. Would it be helpful if I connected you with..."</i>
Performance issues need formal action	<i>Address them separately. Do not use PMI as discipline. If needed: "I want to be straightforward with you — this is now a separate conversation about performance."</i>

DOCUMENTATION

Recording PMIs — What to Write Down

PMI documentation serves development, not surveillance. Notes are private between supervisor and officer. They are not stored in personnel files, shared with command staff, or used as performance documentation.

Documentation rule: Record date and completion only for organizational tracking. All other notes are private and developmental — between you and the officer.

The documentation template below is for the supervisor's personal use. Review it before each PMI to continue conversations across months. Share the commitments section with the officer so both parties are accountable.

PMI DOCUMENTATION TEMPLATE*For supervisor use only — private and developmental — not for personnel files***Officer****Supervisor****Date****Next PMI scheduled****PART 1 — What's going well? Strengths observed:****PART 2 — Challenges and stressors identified:****Support I committed to provide:****PART 3 — Standards discussed or clarified:****PART 4 — Development goals. What they want to learn or take on:**

PART 5 — Feedback for me as supervisor:

COMMITMENTS — Share this section with the officer

One strength the supervisor named:

Officer's commitment before next PMI:

Supervisor's support commitment:

SUPERVISOR REFLECTION

What did I learn about this person that I didn't know before?

Did I ACT like a FLOURISH leader in this conversation? What would I do differently?

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing PMIs in Your Agency

PMI implementation follows a three-phase model. Do not skip Phase 1. The most common failure mode is mandating PMIs without first preparing supervisors to conduct them well. A poorly conducted PMI destroys trust faster than no PMI at all.

1

Command Staff & Supervisors *Months 0–3*

- Teach ACT and PMI together — they are the same system
- Chief models PMIs with direct reports before rolling out department-wide
- Deliver supervisor training: what PMI is, what it is not, and how to run one
- Practice PMI conversations through scenario-based role play
- Address resistance directly: 'Is this therapy?' 'Is this discipline?' 'I don't have time for this'
- Select 3–4 strong supervisors as pilot leaders

2

Pilot and Normalize *Months 3–9*

- Pilot supervisors begin monthly PMIs with their teams
- Require scheduling and completion — not content reporting
- Gather qualitative feedback from both supervisors and officers
- Share early success stories (with permission) to build buy-in
- Chief meets monthly with pilot supervisors to coach and refine
- Identify what is working and what needs adjustment before full rollout

3

Scale and Integrate *Months 9–18*

- Mandate PMIs as core supervisory practice for all ranks
- Include 'conducts effective PMIs' in supervisor performance expectations
- Measure unit climate scores by supervisor — PMI quality predicts climate scores
- Integrate PMI language into promotional processes — not notes, but demonstrated leadership
- Build a community of practice: supervisors learn from each other monthly
- Evaluate participation and fidelity — not content, to protect confidentiality

QUICK REFERENCE

PMI Supervisor Checklist

Use this checklist before, during, and after each PMI. It integrates ACT into each phase of the conversation.

BEFORE THE PMI

- ☐ Schedule PMI in advance — no 'drive-by' conversations
- ☐ Choose a private, uninterrupted setting
- ☐ Identify one observed strength to name
- ☐ Review previous PMI notes and follow up on prior commitments
- ☐ Clear distractions — phone away, door closed, MDT off

Self-check: Am I prepared to listen — or just to talk?

DURING THE PMI**Part 1 — Strengths & Wins**

- ☐ Ask what's gone well
- ☐ Name specific strengths you've observed
- ☐ Avoid 'but' statements that undercut recognition

Part 2 — Stress & Capacity

- ☐ Ask what's been most stressful
- ☐ Listen without fixing immediately
- ☐ Ask: 'What support would help?'

Part 3 — Standards & Expectations

- ☐ Confirm expectations are clear
- ☐ Address concerns calmly and directly
- ☐ Separate coaching from discipline

OPENING

- ☐ State clearly: "This is not discipline or evaluation"
- ☐ Clarify confidentiality boundaries
- ☐ State the purpose: check-in, expectations, development

ACT focus: A — Authority with Dignity**Part 4 — Growth & Responsibility**

- ☐ Ask about development goals
- ☐ Offer appropriate responsibility
- ☐ Coach instead of prescribing answers

Part 5 — Feedback for the Supervisor

- ☐ Ask sincerely: what should I keep doing or change?
- ☐ Listen without defensiveness
- ☐ Thank them for the feedback, whatever it is

Closing

- ☐ Supervisor names one strength
- ☐ Officer states one commitment
- ☐ Supervisor states one support action
- ☐ Schedule next PMI before leaving the room

AFTER THE PMI — Protect Trust

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Document date and completion only | ☐ Reflect: Did this build trust and capacity? |
| ☐ Keep conversation confidential | ☐ Note what you'll do differently next time |
| ☐ Follow through on support commitments | ☐ Give officer a copy of the commitments section |

QUICK ACT SELF-CHECK — After every PMI

- A** Did this officer feel seen and valued as a whole person?
- C** Did they leave safer to speak up — and more capable to perform?
- T** Did I help this officer think like a leader — or just receive direction?

ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATION

The PMI is the primary delivery mechanism for daily FLOURISH leadership—the place where the eight domains are practiced in real time through structured one-on-one conversations. PMIs anchor the entire Ecosystem:

- **FLOURISH Model:** The eight domains that frame all PMI questions and supervisor behavior
- **Leader Development Architecture:** PMI delivers the development curriculum at the individual level through consistent conversation and feedback
- **Cohort Design:** While cohorts serve the group, PMI is the individual complement—extending FLOURISH into every leader's day
- **Mentorship Framework:** Mentors use PMI as their primary structured conversation tool for supporting developing leaders
- **Module 02 (FOP Board):** PMI conversations generate Portfolio evidence over time, documenting impact and development
- **Module 04 (Climate):** PMI quality directly influences unit climate scores. Consistent, skillful PMIs predict higher psychological safety and engagement

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Personal Management Interview Guide was developed by Lance Arnold, EdD, Chief of Police at [Department Name], as part of the FLOURISH Leadership Ecosystem. PMIs are grounded in Kim Cameron's positive leadership research, the Job Demands-Resources model, and original doctoral research on PMIs as burnout prevention interventions in policing (Abilene Christian University, 2026).

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EVALUATION CRITERIA · HOW YOU KNOW THIS COMPONENT IS WORKING

- PMI completion rates exceed 90% per supervisor per quarter. PMIs are happening — not just scheduled.
- PMI documentation is specific and behavioral. Development goals reference observable behaviors and timelines, not generalized aspirations.
- Members can describe what was discussed in their last PMI without prompting. PMI content sticks because the conversation was substantive.
- Year-over-year climate scores in domains correlated with PMI quality (Foster, Lead Development, Open) move upward in units where PMI fidelity is high.
- PMI quality is visible in the Portfolio. Supervisors who conduct strong PMIs have specific, behaviorally rich Portfolio entries because they have lived the leadership they are documenting.
- Supervisors describe PMI as the practice that anchors their leadership — not as one more thing to do. When a supervisor speaks about PMI as a burden, that is the diagnostic signal: the practice has not yet become a habit.