

### Self-Appraisal Skills

Good managers need to develop good leadership and employee appraisal skills. There are several factors that contribute to sound operational management. Perhaps core among those factors is the ability to assess oneself accurately on an ongoing basis. The accurate and fair appraisal of other people requires that we begin by being able to sort out our own biases.

There are several dimensions that managers must consider when striving to develop good self-appraisal skills. They include the following:

- Personal reactions – What are both your initial and sustained emotional reactions to the situations that confront you as a manager?
- Self-regulation – How do you respond to those emotional reactions? Are you able to develop a reflective, measured response appropriate to the situation or do you find yourself acting impulsively in a manner that ends up amplifying problems?
- Authority, Leadership Zone – Are you comfortable with your sense of authority and leadership persona?
- Commitment – Have you been able to develop a sense of sustained commitment to providing the best leadership you can or have you settled for mediocrity by just doing enough to get by?
- Communication – How would you rate your own oral, written, nonverbal, and receptive communication skills? Have you made efforts to improve and cultivate those skills?
- Achievement Orientation – Leadership requires a reasonable desire to achieve better things. Do you still experience a sense of focused passion in your work?

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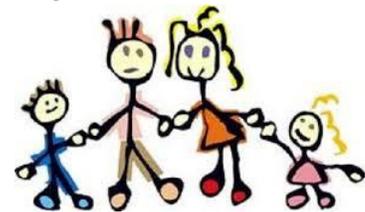
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- Organizational skills –Leadership also requires the ability to both organize and the coordinate participant work efforts. Are you effective at putting the pieces of the puzzle together, while also drawing upon foresight in providing realistic planning?
- Seeking Counsel - Are you able and willing to seek out input and feedback from other? Are you able to handle and sort out criticisms?
- Perseverance, frustration tolerance – Are you able to draw upon an emotional and intellectual reservoir to keep at it and inspire other to do likewise when challenges abound?
- Teamwork – Are you able to overcome numerous obstacles to help others develop a sense of operational teamwork? Are you able to deal with groups effectively?
- Adaptability to change – Are you able to adapt to the ever-changing contemporary workplace environment and facilitate change adaptation in others?
- Patient motivation – Are you able to blend a sense of patience with realistically motivating others to move forward and take necessary action?
- Judgment – Are you able to step back and exercise good judgment without becoming overly detached?

In the final analysis, self-appraisal is a process that requires commitment, courage and psychological integrity. Often people also need the perspective of an unbiased professional to help them through the journey. Perhaps an EAP counselor can also be of assistance (1-800-835-5012).



## Managing Family Safety

In our busy contemporary lives, it is often easy to overlook important safety practices. Below, we review some important steps that families can take in renewing their family safety program.

It is impossible to predict any accident or crime, but the consistent practice of good safety and security habits by you and your family can reduce the possibility of being a victim. To make sure you've covered the basics, you might want to review these checklists for safety and security.

### Safety and Security At Home

- Make sure your doors and windows have adequate locks on them and always use them.
- Don't leave extra keys outdoors in obvious places, such as under the doormat.
- Don't block any exit in such a way that you won't be able to get out quickly and easily in a fire.
- If you consider barring your windows, check with your local fire department for their recommendation of safe systems. Have a plan with alternate routes for home evacuation. Practice them.
- Know what to do in a natural disaster such as a tornado or an earthquake. Take extra precautions if there is a disabled or elderly person in the house.
- Use smoke alarms even if they are not required in your community. Check the smoke alarm battery once a month.
- Any firearms should be unloaded and stored away from ammunition. All should be locked away.
- Keep toxic products, such as household cleaners, paint thinners, insect spray and medications out of the reach of children and pets.

### Safety and Security on the Street

- In high crime districts, use a buddy system when walking on the street or in a parking lot and plan your route in advance.

- Stick to well-lit and well-traveled places and teach your children to do the same, even if it means a longer walk.
- Stay alert when walking. Stand straight and look around. If an area feels unsafe, don't pass through it.
- Avoid using automated bank teller machines at night, especially in deserted areas.
- If you are accosted on the street, yell "fire" instead of "help".
- If possible, make a scene the moment you feel physically threatened by someone and teach your children to do the same.

### **Safety and Security in the Car**

- In the car, always use seat belts.
- For small children, use safety seats, appropriate to the child's given age, weight and height levels.
- Practice and master the correct operational procedures for car seats.
- Pets should travel in a crate or pet carrier.
- Neither people nor pets that are not crated should travel in the bed of a pickup truck.
- Never leave children unsupervised in a car, even with other children.
- Always keep car doors locked and teach children to stay away from the door handles.

## Teaching Children about Safety

If you're like most parents, you are probably anxious about your child's safety in an increasingly dangerous world. Accidents pose a grave threat to children. But talking about personal safety with your child can go a long way toward reducing these risks.

### Accidents as a Childhood Hazard

Accidents kill thousands of children a year, making them one of the leading causes of childhood death. Traffic crashes are the biggest threat followed by drowning, fires and burns, choking, firearms, falls, poisoning and electric shock.

There are some basic precautions your child can take to avoid such accidents.

- First and foremost, teach your child to call 911(or the correct number for your area) in an emergency.
- Show your children the safest route to school and make sure they know to cross streets only at crosswalks, or on a green light.
- Have your children learn to swim and warn them never to swim unsupervised.
- Fire safety should involve the whole family. Explain the household fire escape plan to your children. Tell them to, "stop, drop, roll," *not* to run, even if their clothes catch fire.
- To keep them from choking, teach them to cut their food in small, manageable pieces and chew slowly.
- In case your children ever find guns in anyone's house, teach them that they should immediately inform you and that they should not be played with as toys.
- Warn your children never to climb tall trees or high ladders onto the roof of a house or building.

- Keep medicines secure. Teach children that chewable vitamins are not candy. Tell them that they should not consume them-or any other pills unless you give dispense them or approve another adult to do so in your absence.
- Finally, to prevent electric shock, tell your children not to fly kites near power lines and never to put their fingers in any electrical outlet.

As always the Employee Assistance Program (1-800-835-5012) is available to help you work out challenging issues in finding the proper balance between providing parental direction and fostering independence in your children.

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## Managing Sleep & Shift Work

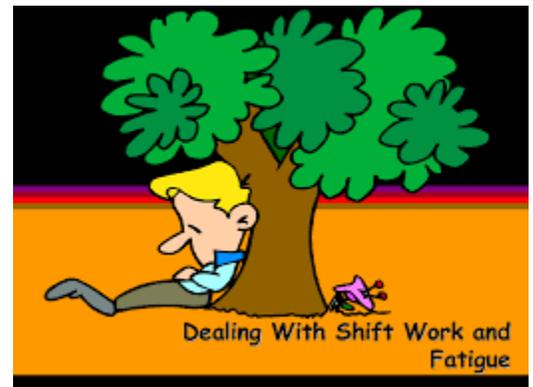
Sleep! We long for it and yet we often find ourselves trying to stave it off, either to complete work tasks or to engage in recreational activities. But those deprived of sleep for too long usually pay a price both physically and psychologically.

For years now scientists have been studying the biological factors that influence sleep, as well as striving to more fully appreciate its purpose. While much undoubtedly remains to be learned in the future, we do know that one area of the brain that is instrumental in regulating sleep is called the hypothalamus. This brain region also plays a role in a variety of drives and can intimately affect mood and other psychological processes. So, it is not unexpected that a sustained loss of sleep can have a variety of adverse effects. After all, sleep appears to play an important role in facilitating healthy brain maturation, restoring positive emotions, renewing a sense of optimism, providing a functional basis for physical restoration, consolidating memory processes, as well as enhancing problem solving skills and other cognitive functions.

For those in the world of work, shift work obligations can play an important role in undermining both the quantity and quality of sleep. Approximately 25% of the American working population work nontraditional shifts. These individuals tend to sleep shorter hours, sleep more lightly and are less likely to experience sleep as restorative.

In addition to poor sleep, non-traditional shift work can also contribute to a variety of deleterious quality of life issues. Due to the fact that workers are attempting to sleep during daytime hours, they and their families may experience significant stress associated with altered family patterns and parental roles. Workers may feel excluded or cheated out of participating in many ongoing meaningful family functions including shared eating routines, parties, and attendance at sporting and recreational events. Over time, marital unhappiness can ensue. Disrupted relationships can contribute to increased loneliness and interfere with dating opportunities.

Unfortunately, many individuals who are having trouble sleeping may turn to problematic sleep remedies. For example, alcohol tends to help people fall asleep but also interferes with their ability to stay asleep and disrupts an important stage of sleep known as the Rapid Eye Movement (REM) stage. The result is often poor quality sleep, fatigue and a lack of sense of restoration. While some sleep medications can be effective they also frequently result in a variety of other health compromising side effects.



## **Recommendations**

Fortunately, there are some things that night shift workers can do to improve their chances of working effectively as well as obtaining satisfying sleep and navigating healthy relationships. Regarding sleep, you might want to consider the following suggestions:

- Prepare a quiet, dark room.
- Use blindfolds or black window shades. Use earplugs, disable telephone & doorbell ringers, or a “Do Not Disturb” sign.
- Use a white noise machine.
- Listen to soothing tape recordings such as waterfalls.

## **While at work:**

- Expose yourself to bright, full spectrum light.
- Eat protein snacks, fruits and vegetables early in your shift for energy at work.
- Eat largest meal during “lunch” of night shift.
- Eat a light dinner with carbohydrates and daily fat allowance closer to bedtime, minimizing proteins.
- Avoid caffeine within six hours of bedtime.
- Take brisk 10 minute walks on breaks, but avoid exercising right before bed as this will likely keep you awake; major workouts are advisable sometime prior to work.

## **After leaving work:**

- Minimize sunlight on drive home by using wrap-around sunglasses.
- Go straight to bed.
- To unwind, read in bed with the aid of a dim light
- Avoid chores, TV.
- Don’t fall asleep on couch or someplace you will not sleep all night
- Set thermostat from 65 to 68 degrees (cooler temperatures make sleeping easier).
- Avoid excessive fluids before sleep.

# YOST EAP

## **Problems Covered Include:**

Personal or job related stress, alcohol or substance abuse, psychological problems, interpersonal conflicts, relationship problems, marital difficulties, family conflicts, parenting issues, child adjustment problems, career concerns and work-life adjustment matters. Through the use of our toll free number, clients can readily access services and speak with our intake specialists.

Employee Assistance Program 1-800-835-5012