



Long-Term Care Management Series

The New Supervisor:
**STRATEGIES FOR
SUPPORTING
AND MANAGING
FRONTLINE
STAFF**

Linda LaPointe, MRA



The New Supervisor:

Strategies for Supporting and Managing Frontline Staff

by Linda LaPointe, MRA



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Hartman Publishing, Inc.
8529-A Indian School Road NE
Albuquerque, NM 87112
(505) 291-1274
web: www.hartmanonline.com
e-mail: orders@hartmanonline.com

ISBN 1-888343-60-5

Acknowledgments

The publisher gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following individuals who reviewed this material:

Cheryl Cooper, MA

Cheryl Dilbeck, MN, RN, PHN

Laura Fain, RN, CFADONA/LTC

Mary Mercer, MS

From the author:

For their encouragement, suggestions and interest in this work, I need to thank Rita Friberg and Jacqueline Lynch. Thanks also to friends Valerie Miller, whose eye for detail was enormously helpful, and Myrna Mead, who generously gave me room in paradise in which to work. I cannot thank my partner in life, Linn Marmon, enough. He's always given me the support and space I need to become all that is possible for me to be. I would wish that for everyone.











Notice to the Reader

Although the guidelines contained in this text are based on consultations with healthcare professionals, they should not be considered absolute recommendations. The instructor and readers should follow employer, local, state, and federal guidelines concerning healthcare practices. These guidelines change, and it is the reader's responsibility to be aware of these changes and of the policies and procedures of his or her healthcare facility/agency.

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Opening Test

Find out how self-managed your organization or department is with this barometer.

Organizational Self-Management Barometer

Circle the number which best represents the frequency with which you experience each situation.

Never = 1 Rarely = 2
Often = 3 Always = 4

There are days when I am constantly interrupted.

1 2 3 4

I do not get to my own work until late in the shift.

1 2 3 4

I spend time putting out fires.

1 2 3 4

I find that I answer the same questions repeatedly.

1 2 3 4

I have to correct staff's work.

1 2 3 4

I must overturn staff's decisions.

1 2 3 4

Staff does not follow my instructions.

1 2 3 4

I find myself hovering over staff.

1 2 3 4

8

I am asked “why?” by staff.

1 2 3 4

Staff’s priorities are not reflected in their output.

1 2 3 4

The quality of work is poor.

1 2 3 4

Directions to staff go “in one ear and out the other.”

1 2 3 4

I wonder if staff thinks things through.

1 2 3 4

Staff makes poor judgments.

1 2 3 4

I have to explain things several times before staff gets it right.

1 2 3 4

It is easier to complete some things myself than to teach others.

1 2 3 4

The place falls apart if I am gone for a few days.

1 2 3 4

I regularly work late two or more times a week.

1 2 3 4

Staff takes on more responsibility than is called for.

1 2 3 4

It seems like chaos at work.

1 2 3 4

I have to repeat myself often.

1 2 3 4

Staff does not act on my suggestions.

1 2 3 4

Staff asks me for permission or approval to do the simplest, most obvious things.

1 2 3 4

When I am gone for a while my desk is piled high with work I have to make up.

1 2 3 4

I am hesitant to take a vacation.

1 2 3 4

Scoring

Add the numbers for each answer for your total score. _____

Interpretation of scores

The intent of this test is to have supervisors take notice of common difficulties they may deal with. The situations above may be symptoms of a lack of supervisory skills. More educated and experienced supervisors usually get lower scores. The focus of most supervisory problems must be the supervisor. Generally, staff does not need more training, an additional class to take or skill to learn. Supervisors must change the way they relate to the staff. Many of the issues above are created by the inability to communicate and guide staff in the workplace.

Score of 80–100. Little self-management is going on in this organization. Frontline staff has a very low retention rate. Staff is very unhappy. There is a