



Webinar D9 – Growing Programs, Growing People: Reflective Leadership in Early Head Start

Question and Answer

Question 1 - How do you support staff who may have had difficult or unpleasant supervisory experiences in their past and might have trouble trusting you?

Answer: Lee Turney: If I'm aware of the trust issue, I go out of my way to both support that person as we work together but also pointedly make them an active part of all discussions and decisions we make. Keep in mind that building trust takes time.

Question 2 - I am a new Office Manager joining the team. Not only am I new, but I am younger than the admin assistants that I am supervising. How can I establish that trust worthy relationship you speak of and convince the staff that I am capable of great leadership with the challenges I am facing? I am still learning processes and procedures but am confident I can contribute with my supervisory experience and willingness to grow.

Answer from Ellen Farrar: It will be important to remember that you would not be there if someone didn't believe that you are competent to lead. Part of the process is growing into the position and feeling secure in your role. Your age is not the issue—your competence, consistency and fairness all will contribute to the relationship based process that you are trying to initiate. Remember, be open with your staff and they will respond.

Answer from Lee Turney: The thing that I noticed with our situation here is that the office manager was up front with her lack of knowledge as to the day to day operations and sought out there guidance when necessary but the manager also relied on our administrative assistant's guidance as to policy or directives that she needed to get out to her staff. This allowed the office manager, in my eyes, to empower her staff and also get the policy and directives from another source until she was comfortable and didn't need to rely on either group to manage her duties and responsibilities. It seemed to work real well during that transition time.

Question 3 - Do you have information for new Head Start Directors to sign up for the Leader's series?

Answer from EHS NRC: There are three ways to take advantage of the New Leaders' series:

View the archive version of the Growing Programs, Growing People webinar... We also encourage you to watch other training from the virtual Birth To Three Institute, Track D.

Watch the New Leaders' video: **Lessons in Leadership: Lead, Learn and Pass it On!**

This 30-minute video presents an opportunity for new leaders to enhance their management capacity. Listen as experienced leaders share their stories. Together, these veterans have provided more than 40 years of service to infants, toddlers and expectant families! Glean insight as you hear their lessons-learned.

Become a member of the virtual leadership community for ongoing professional development. Register to receive announcements and research and important information through the EHS NRC Director's Workspace and directors' listserv. If you have an existing user ID you utilize on ECLKC.gov to sign in, please send your user ID as a reply to this email or directorsforum@ehsnrc.org

Note: Both products of the 2013 New Leaders' series will be archived on the Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website for future use.

Question 4 - Does the Staff Association you talked about reflect a mix of staff in various positions and departments throughout the program?

Answer from Ellen Farrar: Yes, the representative is an elected member from the program. Generally it is a teacher, teacher assistant, or bus monitor.

Question 5 - Ellen, would you be able to include an outline/plan of how you carry off the Staff Association concept in your agency to be included with this webinar Q & A archive? I am so interested in starting this process in our program but am not clear who facilitates this group. Thanks so much! Have a great day

Answer from Ellen Farrar: The staff association meets with me as the Head Start/ Early Head Start Program Director. The first meeting, I do a little facilitation and explain the reason for the association. I explain that this meeting is not a gripe session; rather it is a means to communicate, ask questions and get clarifications. I explain that it is the representatives' responsibility to get questions from their staff and bring back answers to their staff. I also tell them that the agenda is theirs. I will bring them any information that the federal government gives me as well as any major policy changes. However, most of what I provide, they get from their own directors. Once a year we have a picnic at my house or a lunch together. This is clearly a relationship based group. We enjoy the time together and accomplish a great deal!

Question 6 - Partnerships and relationships are difficult to establish with a new person....what ways do you have to invite the openness that is necessary so that a new person can be accepting of the information gained from reflective leadership? Especially since some of the new people are coming from other work environments that are not using Reflective Leadership.

Answer from Ellen Farrar: I tend to be a very open person and I think that helps. I am interested in the staff and am sympathetic to the amount of work that we require from them for such small salaries. They know how hard we fight to get them more money and more resources and they appreciate it. Do know that staff will not respond to someone who is not open with them!

Answer from Lee Turney: I prefer to introduce that person to our entire team and use it as an opportunity to learn more about each other. We stress that this learning process is not one-sided. Everyone is involved; it's the team approach.

Question 7 - What was the full title of the Lessons in Leadership video you spoke about...and where can I get it?

Answer from EHS NRC: The video, "Lessons in Leadership: Lead, Learn and Pass it On!" is designed to help new infant and toddler program leaders increase their knowledge of proven leadership practices and improve their ability to incorporate leadership concepts and principles into their daily work with the families of infants and toddlers, program staff and communities. It is scheduled to be released during summer 2013 and will be available on the ECLKC. The date and webpage location will be sent via e-mail.