

Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors (FSSB)

Training Manual

Based on the FSSB training used with managers/supervisors
as part of the STAR and START initiative

This training manual is based on material designed for use as part of the STAR/T program, the key concepts of which are a focus on results, and supervisor support for family and personal life. As part of STAR/T, the concepts included in this document were presented in a computer based training that each participating manager/supervisor completed in approximately 45 minutes. Immediately following the completion of the training, one of the STAR/T Intervention Coordinators worked one-on-one with the manager/supervisor to review the tracking of supportive behaviors on an iPod device. The manager then tracked his/her supportive behaviors for two weeks. Results of the first two-week trial were shared with each participant privately and the two-week tracking was repeated approximately four weeks later.

These materials were developed for use with supervisors/managers in two different industries. While most of the content was identical for the two groups of participants, some examples were customized based on the nature of work in each of the industries, and company-specific information was included in each version. The manual is suitable for use with any group of managers/supervisors, although some customization will need to be done to ensure that the content is applicable to participants.

Periodic quizzes and a test may be used as a pre/post evaluation of one's learning as a result of the training.

All materials are based on the FSSB training developed by Dr. Leslie Hammer, Ph.D. of Portland State University and Dr. Ellen Kossek, Ph.D. of Purdue University to address how supervisors and managers can help employees ease the stress of work and non-work life. Managers/supervisors are the key to increasing worker engagement on the job, improving worker well-being and reducing workplace injury. This training program requires supervisors to focus on specific repeated behaviors that have been shown to improve employee work and health outcomes, such as reductions in turnover intentions and improvements in reports of health and job satisfaction. Helping employees manage work and non-work demands is important for both individual well-being and performance, as well as for the organization's performance.

This training is designed to:

- Describe the benefits of providing support to help employees combine their work with their non-work/family lives.
- Understand the different types of Performance Support, and Family and Personal Support that are characteristic of a supportive supervisor/manager
- Prepare managers/supervisors to set goals and track one's own supportive behaviors

STAR/T Introduction

Review of two key strategies for achieving STAR/T:

1. Focus on results
 - Attend to your employees' work expectations or results
 - Let go of outdated or ineffective work practices and expectations
 - Gain more control over the time and timing of work
2. Supervisor support for family and personal life
 - Managers have the tools to manage their employees' performance and to demonstrate their support for employees' lives outside of work

STAR/T: Why Work Needs to Change & How STAR/T Can Help

Research on Work and Life: The Business Case

Research examining the costs of work and life conflict to organizations and employees in the U.S. has found that conflict between work and family/personal life is related to:

- Greater work stress
- Greater family stress
- Greater intention to leave an organization
- Lower family, marital, job, and life satisfaction
- Lower organizational commitment
- Lower performance

Definition of Family and Non-Work Aspects of Life

Employers often initially define work-family integration as a parenting and dependent care issue. However, there has been a broadening of policies and practices to support participation in additional life roles such as community, elder care, teen supervision, personal health care, personal values (e.g., political, religious), military service, domestic chores, and exercise. This trend shows growing recognition of the need to support not only those with visible family needs (e.g., child care), but also employees at various life stages who may experience work-life stresses regardless of family status.

Cost to Organizations and Employees¹

¹ Allen, T.D., & Armstrong, J. (2006). Further examination of the link between work-family conflict and physical health: The role of health-related behaviors. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 49, 1204-1221.

Costs to the Organization

When organizations are not supportive of personal/family activities, what are the costs to the organization?

- Absenteeism: Employees are required to take full days off when sometimes only a few hours are needed. According to one study, employees with children average six days absence per year due to their responsibilities.
- Presenteeism: Distracted, fatigued employees lead to less productivity and efficiency, poor customer service, and workplace safety concerns.
- Time lost during shifts: Employees are forced to deal with crises or organizing out-of-work responsibilities while on the job.
- Greater turnover: Employees look to work elsewhere to resolve work-life conflicts.
- Higher costs for safety and health insurance: Insurance costs go up when unsafe incidents are reported and when employees are unwell.

Costs to Employees

When organizations are not supportive of personal/family activities, there are many costs to employees.

- Poorer physical and mental health: Anxiety and high stress levels increase the risk for heart disease and other chronic illness, as well as increase unhealthy coping behaviors such as substance abuse.
- Lower job satisfaction: Lack of job flexibility, autonomy, and support is discouraging when family and personal life responsibilities affect work.
- Professional advancement: Due to reduced time, resources, and energy, employees are unable to pursue educational and professional opportunities.
- Personal fulfillment: Reduction in personal time leads to an inability to engage in personally fulfilling hobbies, recreation, and other activities.

Aumann, K., & Galinsky, E. (2009). The State of Health in the American Workforce: Does Having an Effective Workplace Matter? Families and Work Institute.

Cullen, J. C., & Hammer, L. B. (2007). Developing and testing a theoretical model linking work-family conflict to employee safety. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 12*, 266-278.

Netemeyer, R.G., Boles, J.S., & McMurrian, R. (1996). Development and validation of work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*, 400-410.

Costs to Employees with Dependent Care²

Work stress also spills over to affect family members, not just employees.

- Children's education suffers: When family members cannot meet with teachers, oversee homework, and attend school events, it impacts children's educational experience.
- Children's health and safety are jeopardized: When work hours vary or there is a lack of flexibility in parents' schedules, some children are at home without an adult present. One survey reported more than 40% of parents stated that their working conditions affected their children's health—for example, missing a needed doctor's appointment or not having adequate daycare supervision.
- Adult dependents' health and safety are at risk: Inability to provide consistent care and support for things such as transportation to doctor appointments and food shopping, personal care, and companionship impacts well-being.

From the research we can conclude that employees, managers, families, and organizations all lose something when work and family or other personal roles conflict, and they benefit when they can be integrated.

STAR/T's strategies are designed to address many of the issues facing employers and employees described previously.

Remember the two strategies of implementing STAR/T:

1. Focusing on the results and control over the time and timing of work
2. Supervisor support: family/personal support and performance support.

² Dones, N., & Firestein, N. (2002). Labor's participation in work/family Issues: Successes and obstacles. In C. Beem & J. Heymann (Eds.) From Learning From the Past – Looking to the Future. Boston, MA: Work, Family and Democracy Project. Also at: <http://www.working-families.org/>

Hammer, L.B., Neal, M.B., Newsom, J., Brockwood, K.J., & Colton, C (2005). A longitudinal study of the effects of dual-earner couples' utilization of family-friendly workplace supports on work and family outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90, 799-810.

Kossek, E.E., Demarr, B.J., Backman, K., & Kollar, M., (1993). Assessing employees' emerging elder care needs and reactions to dependent care benefits. *Public Personnel Management*, 22, 19-33.

Shinn, M., Wong, N.W., Simko, P.A., & Ortiz-Torres, B. (1989). Promoting the well-being of working parents: Coping, social support, and flexible job schedules. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 17, 31-55.

Thomas, L. T., & Ganster, D. C. (1995). Impact of family-supportive work variables on work-family conflict and strain: A control perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 6-15.

Work Culture and Environment at [Company]

Insert specifics about the company culture, work processes, policies, and types of jobs.

Prior to delivering this training, consider conducting interviews or focus groups at [Company] to understand better how to customize STAR/T and to collect data to inform this section of the training. This will allow you to develop specific training and culture change to fit [Company's] needs

Include information about [Company] Workplace Policies and Programs, Work Environment, Employee Performance Evaluations, Manager and Employee stressors, etc.

The Research Behind FSSB

Supervisor Support is Key³

Supervisor support to reduce work-life conflict for employees is crucial for a number of reasons, including:

- Increased levels of physical and mental health
- Higher levels of positive work-family spillover (good events at work positively affecting home life)
- Higher levels of job satisfaction
- Decreased likelihood of voluntarily leaving the organization

³ For more information about how reduced work-family strain has positive effects on health, see:

Hammer, L.B., Kossek, E.E., Yragui, N.L., Bodner, T.E., & Hanson, G.C. (2009). Development and validation of a multi-dimensional scale of family supportive supervisor behaviors (FSSB). *Journal of Management*, Vol. 35, No. 4, 837-856.

Kossek, E.E., & Hammer, L. B. (2008). Work/life training for supervisors gets big results. *Harvard Business Review*, 36.

Thomas, L.T., & Ganster, D.C. (1995). Impact of family-supportive work variables on work-family conflict and strain: A control perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 6-15.

Supervisor Support Training

Being a Supportive Supervisor

There are many ways to give employees more control over work time.

For example, focusing on work results instead of how people spend their time can give people more control over how they get things done. This gives employees the flexibility to meet both work and family/personal demands.

We'll now focus on a second way you can reduce employee stress and help them succeed, which is to engage in supportive supervisory behaviors.

So, what does it mean to be a supportive supervisor/manager?

STAR/T focuses on encouraging two types of supervisor support:

- 1. Family & Personal Support** – focuses on supporting employees' lives outside of the workplace and on helping employees manage both work and family/personal demands.
- 2. Performance Support** – focuses on supporting employees' work performance and helping them achieve results.

We'll now learn a little more about both of these types of support.

Family & Personal Support includes four types of behaviors.

1. Daily Job and Personal Problem Solving: Helping employees manage practical work-life issues, such as work assignments, family emergencies, or access to company resources.

For example:

- Adjusting work assignments to support employees' family or personal needs
- Telling employees about existing company resources or policies that support their family or personal needs

2. Emotional Support: Showing employees that they are cared for, that their feelings are considered, and helping them feel comfortable communicating about family or non-work issues.

For example:

- Expressing empathy, understanding, or offering help when an employee shares a family or personal challenge
- Celebrating employees' family or personal successes
- Asking open-ended questions about employees' family or personal needs, such as "what can I do to help?" and following through on providing the support requested

3. Role Model Behavior: Setting a good example by managing your own family and personal priorities in a way that works for you.

For example:

- Sharing a family or personal priority with an employee
- Sharing ideas or advice with employees about how you manage your own work and family or personal priorities
- Experimenting with new ways of doing work that benefits your own family or personal life

4. Creative Management: Being inventive and flexible to plan work in ways that benefit both employees' lives and workplace productivity.

For example:

- Asking employees for input about how work can be organized to benefit both company and family or personal priorities
- Implementing new ways of working together that better support employees' family or personal priorities

Performance Support includes four types of behaviors.

1. Measurement & Direction: Ensuring that employees know what to do and how their work will be evaluated. This includes things like goal setting and providing measurable expectations.

For example:

- Collecting or recording data on individual or group performance
- Setting a goal or sharing a clear and measurable expectation with an employee or team
- Providing advance notice about upcoming events that could change or disrupt employees' work

2. Feedback & Coaching: Ensuring that people know how to do their work and that they are motivated to do it.

For example:

- Providing praise for a good idea or work result
- Giving feedback (or asking for feedback) about performance data, progress toward goals, or the quality of work results
- Teaching an employee a technical skill or work strategy

3. Providing Resources: Facilitating work results by providing resources or removing obstacles for employees.

For example:

- Asking an employee about the adequacy of his/her equipment, tools, or resources
- Providing support or tools that employees need to get their work accomplished
- Asking employees "What can I do to help you get your job done?"

4. Support for Change: Supporting change processes and being responsive to employees' questions and challenges as change takes place.

For example:

- Asking for or listening to employees' suggestions about new ways to measure or accomplish work results
- Expressing support for the STAR/T process or discussing challenges that arise while people make changes
- Reinforcing employee behavior that helps your group achieve a positive work environment

FSSB Tracking

Your first exercise will start today and will involve setting personal goals for providing Family & Personal Support as well as Performance Support (i.e., the types of support you have just learned about) and then tracking your supportive behaviors for two weeks. You will repeat this exercise again in about a month.

For each two-week period of the FSSB Tracking exercise, you will be asked to track your behaviors and progress toward your goals. For the next two weeks, track every time you do one of the eight supportive behaviors we've just reviewed. You can keep track as you go through your day, or designate two times each day when you'll reflect on your interactions and count your supportive behaviors. While this sounds like a lot of work, research has shown that FSSB tracking helps people: (1) become more aware of their own behaviors, and (2) make behavior changes to achieve personal goals.

[At this point, you will need to explain how participants will be tracking their behaviors – on an iPod Touch device, on a computer program, on paper, etc. The STAR/T FSSB Tracking exercise used iPod Touch devices with a program that included:

- A "Home Tab" where participants can view progress toward goals for each type of behavior and the number of days left in the exercise
- A "Statistics Tab" where participants can view overall statistics, a week's history of total counts, and detailed scores for each type of behavior
- A "Help Tab" where participants can review how to use FSSB Tracking or get more information about the types of supportive behavior
- A "Settings Tab" where participants can adjust initial goals once during the two weeks if they find the original goals are not challenging or not attainable]

Setting Goals for FSSB Tracking and Follow-up

Setting goals for the two major categories of behaviors (Family and Personal Support and Performance Support) for your first two-week period of FSSB Tracking requires consideration of what you normally do. Your goals should be challenging, but also attainable. This isn't meant to be a competition to interact with employees so much that it feels unnatural. Instead, the goals should help you strive to provide the level and quality of support that will actually benefit employee health and productivity. For the first two-week period, which you will begin today, we suggest setting a minimum goal to support each person who directly reports to you every week. For example, if you have 10 direct reports, an initial two-week goal for Performance Support would be 20 (10 x 2). If your initial goals turn out to be too hard or too easy, you can change them once during the activity.

Later, you will use your results from the first exercise to set challenging yet attainable goals for the second two-week period of FSSB Tracking. In about a month, you will be given individual and group feedback results based on your first exercise and you will then complete the second two-week period of FSSB Tracking.

Closing Reminders

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For more information on the full FSSB training program, contact Leslie Hammer at hammerl@pdx.edu or Ellen Kossek at ekossek@purdue.edu.

Remember that the overall vision for this exercise is to help employees reduce work and life stress and improve their health and productivity. The purpose of this activity is to help you as managers/supervisors reflect on and increase support for employees' family lives and productivity.

Do you have any questions? If you have any issues while tracking your supportive behaviors, please contact me at [*contact information*]. Good luck and enjoy this activity!

Appendix: List and Examples of Supportive Behaviors (handout)

Family and Personal Support

Family and Personal Support Behaviors are the things you do for employees that help them meet their family and personal demands and that enable them to have a fulfilling life both at work and outside of work.

Creative Management: Organizing work so that employees can meet both family and work demands.

- *Example:* Rewarding or praising employees who solve problems or cover work shifts/tasks when a co-worker has an urgent/emergency family or personal issue

Emotional Support: What you do to let employees know that you understand their family and personal demands and that they feel listened to.

- *Example:* Expressing empathy, understanding, or offering help when an employee shares a family or personal challenge

Daily Job and Personal Problem Solving: When you help employees make practical arrangements to meet their family and personal demands, both ongoing and unexpected or emergency events.

- *Example:* Adjusting or facilitating work shift schedules to support employees' ongoing family or personal needs

Role Modeling: What you do that shows employees that you care about family and personal priorities, and that you make efforts to arrange your own work/life so you can meet family and personal priorities.

- *Example:* Sharing a family or personal priority of your own with an employee

Performance Support

Performance Support Behaviors are the things you do that help employees accomplish their work results and have a fulfilling work life.

Feedback and Coaching: What you do to make sure employees know how to produce work results – that they have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to do what is expected of them.

- *Example:* Encouraging employees to maintain a positive attitude and offering praise for a job well done.

Providing Resources: What you do to make sure people have the equipment or materials they need to produce work results, and that obstacles to their productivity are removed.

- *Example:* Asking an employee about the adequacy of their equipment, tools, or resources and providing help when needed.

Measurement and Direction: What you do that lets employees know what is expected of them, such as setting goals and measuring results.

- *Example:* Collecting or recording data on individual or group performance.

Support for Change: what you do to show you are committed to employee health and well-being and the success of the STAR/T process.

- *Example:* Expressing support for the STAR/T process, or discussing challenges that arise while people make changes.