APPLICATION

# 14.3 Abusive Leadership Questionnaire*

*Purpose*

1. To gain an understanding of the dimensions of destructive leadership
2. To obtain an assessment of your own destructive leadership tendencies

*Directions*

1. Make five copies of this questionnaire. It should be completed by you and five people you know (e.g., roommates, coworkers, relatives, friends).
2. For each of the 15 statements, use the following key to indicate the frequency with which you think this individual engages in the leadership behavior listed. Do not forget to complete this exercise for yourself as the leader.

Key:
1—I cannot see him or her ever using this behavior with others.
2—He or she very seldom uses this behavior with others.
3—He or she occasionally uses this behavior with others.
4—He or she uses this behavior moderately often with others.
5—He or she uses this behavior very often with others.

When Kat-ca is the leader/supervisor, followers would say the following about his or her leadership:

Score Statements

| When I am the leader . . . | Never | Seldom | Occasionally | Often | Very Often |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Ridicules others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Tells others their thoughts and feelings are stupid | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Gives others the silent treatment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Puts people down in front of others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Invades the privacy of others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Reminds others of past mistakes and failures | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Doesn't give others credit for work that required a lot of effort | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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(Continued)

| When I am the leader . . . | Never | Seldom | Occasionally | Often | Very Often |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. Blames others to save his or her own embarrassment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Breaks promises he/she makes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Expresses anger at others when he/she is mad for another reason | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Makes negative comments about people to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Is rude to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Does not allow others to interact with their co-workers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Tells others they are incompetent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Lies to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

*Source:* Tepper, B. J. (2000). Consequences of abusive supervision. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(2), 178–190.

## Scoring

1. Enter the responses for Raters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in the appropriate columns on the scoring sheet on this page. An example of a completed chart is provided on pages 387–388.
2. For each of the 15 items, compute the average for the five raters and place that number in the "average rating" column.
3. Place your own scores in the "self-rating" column.

## Abusive Leadership Questionnaire Chart

| | Rater 1 | Rater 2 | Rater 3 | Rater 4 | Rater 5 | Average rating | Self-rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Ridicules others | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1.8 | 2 |
| 2. Tells others their thoughts and feelings are stupid | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1.6 2 | 2 |
| 3. Gives others the silent treatment | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. Puts people down in front of others | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1.2 | 2 |

| | Rater 1 | Rater 2 | Rater 3 | Rater 4 | Rater 5 | Average rating | Self-rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Invades the privacy of others | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1.6 | 1 |
| 6. Reminds others of past mistakes and failures | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1.2 | 1 |
| 7. Doesn't give others credit for work that required a lot of effort | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1.6 | 1 |
| 8. Blames others to save his or her own embarrassment | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1.8 | 2 |
| 9. Breaks promises he or she makes | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1.8 | 2 |
| 10. Expresses anger at others when he or she is mad for another reason | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1.8 | 2 |
| 11. Makes negative comments about people to others | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1.6 | 2 |
| 12. Is rude to others | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1.4 | 2 |
| 13. Does not allow others to interact with their coworkers | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1.4 | 2 |
| 14. Tells others they are incompetent | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 15. Lies to others | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1.2 | 2 |

## Scoring Interpretation

The scores you received on this questionnaire provide information about how you see yourself and how others see you as a leader. Specifically, the purpose of the instrument is to assess your tendencies to show aspects of destructive leadership. The higher your average score is on a particular behavior, the more you have a tendency to engage in this potentially destructive behavior with others. The chart allows you to compare your perceptions of yourself as a leader with the perceptions of others, especially in regard to behaviors that have the potential to be destructive. While it can be confirming when others see you in the same way as you see yourself, it is also beneficial to explore the observations of others that differ from your self-rating. None of us wants to consider ourselves a destructive leader, but sometimes we are unaware how certain behaviors by us toward others have potentially damaging effects. This assessment can help you learn of and understand the areas in which you are consistently doing the "right things" as well as areas in which you may seek to improve.

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# 14.4 Observational Exercise

## Destructive Leadership

### *Purpose*

1. To learn to identify characteristics of destructive leaders
2. To develop an understanding of how followers and context contribute to destructive leadership

### *Directions*

1. For this exercise, you will observe a functioning leader and assess that person's tendencies to be destructive in how he or she treats followers. This leader can be a supervisor, a manager, a coach, a teacher, a fraternity or sorority officer, or anyone who has a position that involves leadership. You will also observe and take notes on the followers and the situation.
2. On a sheet of paper, briefly describe as completely as possible (1) the way the leader treated followers, (2) the way followers responded to the leader, and (3) the implied communication norms and rules that seemed to be operating in the situation.

### Questions

1. Using the Toxic Triangle illustrated in Figure 14.1, draw a sketch that briefly highlights the leader's characteristics, the follower's responses, and the nature of the situation.

Aggressive, overbearing, Needs to constantly be in charge. When invoicing out bills this has the situation.

2. Identify one characteristic about this leader that made you feel uncomfortable. Could that characteristic lead to destructive leadership if not corrected? Discuss.

micromanaged, belittled. It could lead to destructi leadership because people feel like they cant voice opinions

3. From your vantage point, how would you describe the way followers responded to the leader? Did followers act overly dependent in any way toward the leader? Do you think these followers would be susceptible to the leader unfairly dominating them? Discuss.

They were quiet & felt like they couldnt voice opinio Yes the leader had control over them they couldnt control.

4. If you were asked to be a consultant to this group or organization, describe three specific changes you would make to lessen the possibility that destructive leadership could thrive in this situation.

- let others do the work the leader was doing.
- report problems to HR when it happens
- give others the leadership opportunities