

Application

12.3 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 them ever using this behavior with others.
2. They very seldom use this behavior with others.
3. They occasionally use this behavior with others.
4. They use this behavior moderately often with others.
5. They use this behavior very often with others.

When _____ is the leader/supervisor, followers would say the following about their leadership:

Score Statements

	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

	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
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
8. Blames others to save their own embarrassment	1	2	3	4	5
9. Breaks promises they make	1	2	3	4	5
10. Expresses anger at others when they are 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 coworkers	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 following scoring sheet. An example of a completed chart is provided in Example 12.1 below.
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. Tells others their thoughts and feelings are stupid							
3. Gives others the silent treatment							
4. Puts people down in front of others							
5. Invades the privacy of others							
6. Reminds others of past mistakes and failures							
7. Doesn't give others credit for work that required a lot of effort							
8. Blames others to save their own embarrassment							
9. Breaks promises they make							
10. Expresses anger at others when they are mad for another reason							

	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Rater 5	Average rating	Self-rating
11. Makes negative comments about people to others							
12. Is rude to others							
13. Does not allow others to interact with their coworkers							
14. Tells others they are incompetent							
15. Lies to others							

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.

Example 12.1 Abusive Leadership Questionnaire Ratings

	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Rater 5	Average rating	Self-rating
1. Ridicules others	3	2	2	2	2	2.8	1
2. Tells others their thoughts and feelings are stupid	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Rater 5	Average rating	Self-rating
11. Makes negative comments about people to others							
12. Is rude to others							
13. Does not allow others to interact with their coworkers							
14. Tells others they are incompetent							
15. Lies to others							

Scoring Interpretation

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2. Tells others their thoughts and feelings are stupid	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Rater 5	Average rating	Self-rating
3. Gives others the silent treatment	2	3	3	3	3	2.8	1
4. Puts people down in front of others	1	2	2	3	2	2	2
5. Invades the privacy of others	1	2	1	1	1	1.2	2
6. Reminds others of past mistakes and failures	3	2	2	2	1	2	1
7. Doesn't give others credit for jobs requiring a lot of effort	3	3	4	3	2	3	3
8. Blames others to save they own embarrassment	2	2	2	1	3	2	4
9. Breaks promises they make	4	3	4	4	5	4	2
10. Expresses anger at others when they are mad for another reason	3	3	4	3	2	3	5
11. Makes negative comments about people to others	3	3	4	4	3	3.4	1
12. Is rude to others	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
13. Does not allow others to interact with their coworkers	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
14. Tells others they are incompetent	2	3	3	4	3	3	1
15. Lies to others	1	2	2	1	2	1.8	4

Summary and interpretation: The scorer's self-ratings are higher (i.e., worse) than the average ratings of others on 1, 3, 6, 9, 11, and 14. The scorer's self-ratings are lower (i.e., better) than the average ratings of others on 5, 8, 10, and 15. The scorer's self-ratings on 2, 4, 7, 12, and 13 are the same as the average ratings of others.