

## Abrasive family can affect your job performance

### Home/work: They need to be separate

BY JENNIFER NEWMAN, VANCOUVER SUN NOVEMBER 9, 2013

You arrive home from work, looking for a break after a hectic day. But, instead you walk into a war zone - everyone is yelling at each other. Then, when you ask the kids a question, they roll their eyes.

It's what happens when families are disrespectful or uncivil towards each other.

Recent research shows that being in a rude or abrasive family is linked to increased psychological distress.

And it can affect your job.

Researchers Sandy Lim at the National University of Singapore and Kenneth Tai at Singapore Management University found that experiencing disrespect in your family can increase feelings of worry, anxiety and depression which can decrease your job performance.

The authors note that staff can be distracted during work hours when they worry about how to handle their family members' negativity. They may experience an energy drain and difficulty focusing due to being exposed to uncivil family patterns. Work efforts decrease and staff find it hard to concentrate, think, or anticipate what to do next, when exposed to these kinds of environments.

And, ultimately, as the study revealed, it can lead to poor performance reviews. As well, managers notice when employees demonstrate uncivil behaviour at work. In one instance, a worker who came from a family that used a lot of sarcasm and zingers, did the same thing at work. He thought he was being funny, but it bothered co-workers. His boss had to tell him to stop.

To safeguard your career and maintain performance standards, it is important to analyze how your family treats its members. Review whether encouraging a climate of increased civility would provide wage earners in your home an advantage at work.

It's important to remember, when family members are uncivil, they aren't necessarily trying to hurt each other. It's just that they probably don't realize they're being surly or short. This kind of behaviour leads to unintentional harm and seems accidental. In this situation, family members may not realize they've become disrespectful. However, it's related to increased



Publication: Vancouver Sun

Date: 9 November 2013

Headline: Abrasive family can affect your job performance

psychological distress in workers, due to the cumulative nature of daily disrespectful interactions. As it builds up over time, worker wellbeing is increasingly at risk.

The following indicators may signal your family might want to engage in a family-wide discussion about civility: People put each other down a lot. Call each other stupid, dumb or worse.

People put each other down a lot.

Call each other stupid, dumb or worse.

People don't pay attention to what each other says.

They show little to no interest in each other's opinion.

Family members say demeaning or derogatory things to one another.

Your family ignores or excludes each other.

People doubt each other's judgment.

They intrude on one another's personal privacy.

If your family isn't interested, try to find ways to make the situation controllable on your own. You can go for a walk when the put-downs or zingers are really flying so you don't absorb the negativity.

Work on staying positive about what you say to yourself. In this way, you will be less likely to absorb negative ideas or personalize harmful things people may say. As well, watch out for pulling long hours to avoid a toxic family. Not getting enough rest can have long term repercussions.

Try to create a civil place at work. Talk about the importance of civility at work with co-workers or your supervisor. You'll safeguard your psychological health and be successful at work. And, given a chance, your family may eventually follow suit at home.

Dr. Jennifer Newman is a registered psychologist and director of Newman Psychological and Consulting Services Ltd., a Vancouver-based corporate training and development company. Identifying information has been changed to protect confidentiality. Dr. Newman can be contacted at: [info@drjennifernewman.com](mailto:info@drjennifernewman.com)

© Copyright (c) The Vancouver Sun