Exercise: Recognizing and Replicating Support

It can be helpful for managers who must address negative emotions in the workplace to begin with an understanding of their own negative emotions and reactions. An integral part of this understanding is an awareness of the types of support to which you respond best in stressful situations. Knowing this not only helps you encourage people to relate to you in ways that you prefer, but also helps you replicate the most useful types of support when dealing with others.

Think about two different times you were struggling with a difficult workplace situation, one where you found other managers or workers supportive, and another where you found them unsupportive.

Supportive Workplace Response

What was said to you by others? (be specific):

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

How did you feel? (list as many emotional and physical reactions as you can recall):

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

How did the response help you deal with the stressors you were experiencing?

____________________________________________________________________________
When might this same response have been less helpful for you?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

**Unsupportive Workplace Response**

What was said to you by others? (be specific): ________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

How did you feel? (list as many emotional and physical reactions as you can recall): ________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

How did the response add to the stressors you were experiencing? __________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

When might this same response have been more helpful for you?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
Consider how you choose your response in any given situation. Also think about whether you tend to use these types of supportive responses and avoid the unsupportive responses when managing workers in stressful situations. To what extent can you replicate with others the approaches that you find effective for your own stressful times, while acknowledging workers’ unique individual needs?