Learning How to Ask for Help – Being Direct

Adapted by Personal Safety Nets® fromDiane E. Scott, RN, MSN, "Learning to Ask for Help." Center for American Nurses, November, 2007.

Dr. Susan Gaddis, author for the Center for American Nurses, *Nursing that Works* series, wrote the article, *"How to ask for help and increase your chances at getting it."* Focusing upon the work environment and collaboration, she details some of the benefits of asking for help, while we added our own focus upon the actual task of asking.

1) The Benefits of Asking for Help:

Saving time and money. When you ask for help, you create a synergy that leads to the reduction in the amount of time needed to complete any task. When you ask for help and guidance, you can often avoid costly mistakes saving you and your healthcare organization time and money.

Avoiding being viewed as a martyr. Being perceived as the person who never enlists the assistance of others may have a negative impact on how you are viewed, as most co-workers value collaboration and teamwork.

Developing others. By asking for help, you empower empower and mentor future leaders and help to develop their strengths. In addition, you make them feel valued for their talents, knowledge and abilities.

2) Learning to Ask for Help:
Sometimes we meet resistance when we request assistance from others, but perhaps it's not the request it is the *manner in which it is requested*. If you initiate a request for help by using a passive statement, it may result in immediate negative feelings toward the request.

For example:

- If you start your request by stating: "I really hate to ask you ..." What they may be thinking is: "I really hate it too!"
- If you start your request by stating: "If it's not too much trouble ..." What they may be thinking is: "Of course it's trouble!"
- If you start your request by stating: "Nobody signed up for this ..." What they may be thinking is: "I didn't either!

By learning how to ask for assistance without beginning your statement in a passive or negative tone, you will have better results in gaining the other person's engagement.

When you're asking for help remember to be **direct – and organize**
KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING FOR AND WHO YOU'RE GOING TO ASK.
Consider stating your request by asking:
"Would you . . . "
"Would you please . . . "

There's plenty of help to be found in our Workbook: ***Personal Safety Nets® Get Ready/Get Started*****,** Chapter Three: Asking and Organizing **[1].**

Here's a few more phrases to use for Asking for Help:

- How do you think you could help me with ...
- What aspect of this would you like to handle?
- What part of this would you like to take on?
- What ideas do you have with regard to...?
- What contribution would you like to make?

- What do you have in mind with regard to helping me?
- Based on your experience, how does this all fit together and what part of this would you like to take on?
- What are some of the ways you'd like to help?

Resources:

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