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& ASSOCIATES

After a Difficult Workday

A BRIEF RESOURCE GUIDE FOR BLACK WOMEN

Cerissa A. Brown, LBSW

You are home, but a conversation from work is still bothering you. You keep going over what was said and thinking of what you wish you had said back. In the meantime, dinner needs to be made, someone is asking you a question and you have to be back at work tomorrow.

Before deciding how to handle the whole situation, look at what needs your attention tonight. There may be a work problem to address and a meal you have not eaten. Both deserve attention.

Does it need an answer tonight?

Check the deadline and any actual after-hours responsibility. A message can be upsetting without requiring an immediate reply. If it can wait, write down what you need to return to and when. Keep any notes private and leave out confidential workplace information.

What is possible this evening?

A quiet evening may not be available. You may be starting another job, helping a parent or getting a child ready for bed. Look for something small enough to fit: change clothes, get water, eat or put work materials away. If you try it and remain upset, consider what else you need. You do not have to keep repeating an activity that is not helping.

Who could help with the part that is hardest?

You may want someone to listen. You may need help with tonight's responsibilities or information about what happened at work. Be clear about the request. 'Can you listen for ten minutes before giving advice?' asks for something different from 'Can you help me figure out the policy?'

Free to read and use. No purchase, event registration or newsletter signup is required.

Talia describes what work has cost her

Talia is a pseudonym for a Black woman who described mistreatment at work and physical and emotional effects. She reported using counseling and medication. Her account also included concern about being heard after reporting internally. Names and identifying details are omitted to protect her identity.

Use the account for this evening's exercise: what needs attention now, what can wait, and who could help? A reader could identify an immediate need, a work question to return to and a suitable source of support. These are possible responses for practice. Fit the questions to your own evening and the responsibilities that need your attention.

Using this guide

The next page gives you room to write. Use a PDF reader that supports forms to type and save a copy, or use the Word file or a notebook. These files do not send your answers to CABA. Keep responses private and leave out names or confidential workplace, coworker, client or patient information.

When more help is needed

This is educational material, not treatment, a diagnosis, legal advice or an individual consultation. If distress continues or interferes with daily life, consider an appropriately qualified health professional. Immediate danger calls for appropriate emergency help in your location. An employer remains responsible for addressing workplace conditions.

Further reading

World Health Organization (2020).

Doing what matters in times of stress: An illustrated guide.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (1999).

Stress at work. DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 99-101.

The questions are original educational activities, not standardized assessments. The workplace account is real and anonymized; suggested responses are for practice. The publications above are further reading; their exercises and illustrations are not reproduced here.

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What would help tonight?

Write about your own evening or work with Talia's anonymized account. Keep a blank copy for another day.

Date _____ Click or tap a shaded space to type. Save your copy.

What keeps coming back to mind?

Write enough to recognize the situation when you return to this page.

What needs attention tonight?

Include your immediate needs and any responsibility that cannot wait.

What can wait, and until when?

Check the deadline or availability requirement before putting it aside.

What help could I ask for?

Name the person, the request and anything you want to ask about privacy first.

If something needs attention tomorrow, leave yourself a time to return to it. You can come back to this page and add what happened.