

Night-shift worker wants to sleep in day

DEAR ABBY: I work a night-shift job, as does my sister-in-law, who lives in my home. People who don't work nights cannot seem to understand the need for us to get our sleep during the day. They frequently call at noon, wondering why we're not up yet.

These people need to know that noon is just like midnight for people who work the day shift. Many nights



abigail van buren

• dear abby

I go to work on less than four hours of sleep, mainly because if people can't reach me on the house phone, they'll call my cell phone, which is the emergency number for my husband and kids.

My answering machine clearly states that I "work nights and sleep days, so please leave a message and I'll return the call."

Your column is widely read, and

I'm certain that a good number of other night-shift workers would appreciate it if you could spread the word: Those of us who work nights need the same amount of sleep that people who work days do. — SLEEPLESS IN MISSOURI

DEAR SLEEPLESS: I'm pleased to help spread the word. For callers to bypass your answering machine and use your cell phone number is rude, inconsiderate, and could endanger your health. Sleep deprivation can cause memory and concentration problems, accidents and mistakes at work, increase blood pressure, and even compromise the immune system. In the interests of self-

preservation, change your cell phone number, and instruct your husband and kids not to disclose it to anyone.

DEAR ABBY: I am the happily married mother of 1-year-old and 2-year-old boys; "Jonathan" is the older and "Kevin" is my baby. Because my elderly parents live close by, we make sure they see our children often. Also, I make time every morning to talk to my mother.

It has become clear to my husband and me that Mom favors Jonathan. When Kevin was an infant, Mom would literally step over him to get to Jonathan. Until it caused a rift, she would "jokingly" refer to Kevin as "the other one."

Recently, Kevin had a violent allergic reaction to some medication. Mom's first concern was how Jonathan reacted to his little brother's being ill.

When I share a milestone with my mother, she is quick to compare Kevin unfavorably with his brother. I could list many other examples.

I am saddened, disgusted and furious. I have confronted Mother more times than I can count. Most times she denies it; sometimes she says she feels Jonathan is just "special." The boys are still too young to understand, but it won't always be that way. My husband's family is not involved much in our lives, so mine

is extra-important. How do I deal with this problem? — DISTRESSED IN DAYTON

DEAR DISTRESSED: Since reasoning with your mother hasn't helped, it's time to lay down the law. Tell her either she becomes a better actress in dealing with the boys, or you'll be forced to limit her access to them. And if she doesn't shape up, act on it.

Small children can sense favoritism and discrimination, and it is hurtful.

Rather than blame the adult, children often blame themselves for it. So draw the line now, before your little one's self-esteem is affected.

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