



MILITARY FAMILIES
LEARNING NETWORK

Working to Balance Life

<https://learn.extension.org/events/1722>

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MILITARY FAMILIES
LEARNING NETWORK

Research and evidenced-based
professional development
through engaged online communities.
[eXtension.org/militaryfamilies](http://extension.org/militaryfamilies)

POLL

How would you best describe your current employer?



MILITARY CAREGIVING

Military Families Learning Network

Providing educational tools and caregiving tips for military professionals and family caregivers



Available Resources

Find slides and additional resources under 'event materials'



<https://learn.extension.org/events/1722>



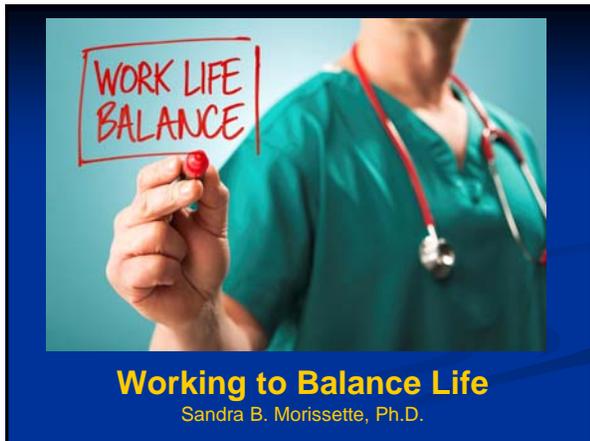
Evaluation and CE Credit

The Military Caregiving Concentration team will offer 1.00 CE credit hour from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

*Must complete evaluation and pass post-test with 80% or higher to receive a certificate.

A link to the evaluation and post-test will be available at the end of today's presentation.





Sandra B. Morissette, Ph.D.

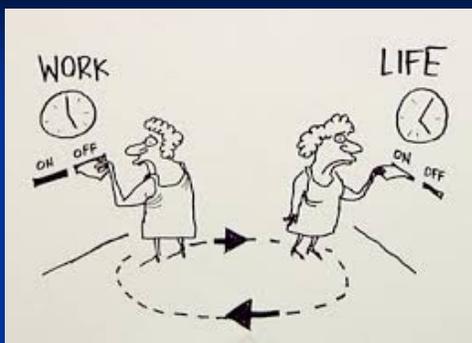
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Conflicts and Disclosure

- I have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
- The views expressed in this presentation are my own and do not reflect the official position or policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs, United States government, or Texas A&M University Health Science Center.

Outline

- The work-life, work-family dilemma
- Understanding unbalance
- Why work-life balance is important for employers?
- Laying the groundwork for balance
- A different way of thinking about life balance
- Exercise: Moving Toward Balance



“There is no such thing as work-life balance. Everything worth fighting for unbalances your life.”
-Alain de Botton

Background

- Job satisfaction among clinical providers is a business and public health imperative.
- Work-life balance is a key factor in job and life satisfaction.
- Often the work-life balance literature gets translated to work-family balance.
- Pursuit of work-life balance is a lifelong process across all phases of career.

Work-Family Balance Defined

- “The accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his/her role-related partners in the work and family domains.”
(Gryzwacz & Carlson, 2007, p 458)
- Work-family balance conceptually distinct from work-family conflict.
(Carlson et al., 2009)

Balance



Understanding Unbalance

Work and Workaholism

- Work provides salary, sense of purpose, ability to create/build, forms relationships, structures the day.
- Workaholism is a "continual pattern of high work investment, long working hours, work beyond expectations, and an all-consuming obsession with work" (Andreassen, 2014; p 1).
 - Negatively affects private relations, leisure and health (Andreassen et al., 2012).

Work and Workaholism cont.

- 10% prevalence rate, though higher (23-25%) in college educated (Sussman, 2012).



Warning Signs of Workaholism

- Hurrying and staying busy
- Need to control
- Perfectionism
- Difficulty with relationships
- Work binges
- Difficulty relaxing and having fun

Robinson, 1998

Warning Signs of Workaholism

- Brownouts or memory losses of conversations or trips to and from a destination because of exhaustion and mental preoccupation with planning and work effects of tuning out the present
- Impatience and irritability
- Self-inadequacy
- Self-neglect

Robinson, 1998

Effective time management, more delegation, and improved efficiency are not strategies for achieving work-life balance.

Symptoms & Signs of Burn-out

- Results from stresses interacting with the environment
 - Emotional exhaustion
 - Sense of ineffectiveness
 - Dissatisfaction with work
 - Can result in cynicism and detachment from work
 - Other symptoms: difficulty sleeping or with concentration, social withdrawal.

Signs of Compassion Fatigue aka Secondary Trauma

- Results from *relationship* between the clinician and patient, but can occur with burn-out
- Symptoms parallel post-traumatic stress disorder and could result in burn-out
 - Avoidance of situational reminders
 - Intrusive thoughts
 - Distressing dreams

Figley, 1995

Health Effects

- Research consistently demonstrates negative health effects of work-life conflict
 - Anxiety, depression, stress
 - Increased substance use/problem drinking
 - Lack of energy and optimism
 - Serious backache
 - Headaches
 - Sleep disorders and fatigue
- Employees with less supportive managers sleep less and are twice as likely to have 2 or more cardiovascular risk factors (cholesterol, diabetes, hypertension, body-mass index, tobacco use).

Frone, 2000; Frone et al., 1996; Hammig et al., 2009

When in emotionally draining circumstances, being able to reflect on your own experiences, learn new skills, and find meaning can allow clinicians to be highly present, empathic, and energized vs. feeling drained.

Kearney et al., 2009

Make Time for Self Care

- ### Self-Care
- Moments of mindfulness practice (e.g., washing hands before seeing a patient, think of loved one or favorite place, pray)
 - Mindfulness meditation
 - Stop to look out a window or notice something in nature when walking outside
 - Make connections with patients, family members or colleagues
 - Reward yourself after completing tasks
- Gallagher, 2013

- ### Self-Care cont.
- Know your limits (refer out, sometimes hard to achieve good outcome no matter how you try)
 - Use community resources and other professionals to meet needs of complex end-of-life situations (team approach, support network)
 - Learn from your experiences (new knowledge, skills, attitudes)
- Gallagher, 2013

Self-Care cont.

- Deliberately shed your role when you leave work and don't take it home
- Do what relieves stress (e.g., exercise, spend time with friends)
- Reflective writing or diary
- Have a special "getaway" place where you like to visit

Gallagher, 2013

Off-Setting Unbalance



Why Balance Matters to Employers?

- Work-family conflict is associated with poor organizational outcomes.
(Allen et al., 2000; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005)
- Organizations put work-family initiatives into place despite limited evidence for their strong economic payoffs.
(Kelly et al., 2008)
 - Organizational attractiveness
 - Lower burn-out
 - Lower turn-over

Work-Family Initiatives

- Flex-time
- Part-time work
- Job sharing
- Compressed work week
- Telework
- Partially paid family leaves
- Pre-tax spending accounts for dependent care
- Information and referral accounts to find care
- On-site child care

Management Support

- Management support, being job proud, job security, and job stress predicts quality of work-life (Mosadeghrad, 2013)
- Employees may be reluctant to use benefits if don't perceive management support
 - Not useful if climate doesn't support use
- As gatekeeper between employer and employee, supervisors may need training in workplace interventions to effectively communicate with employees and reduce stigma

Positive Impact of Perceived Supervisor Supportiveness

- More work-family balance
- Lower work-family conflict
- More perceived success in work and life
- More loyalty to the organization
- More job satisfaction
- Lower turnover intentions

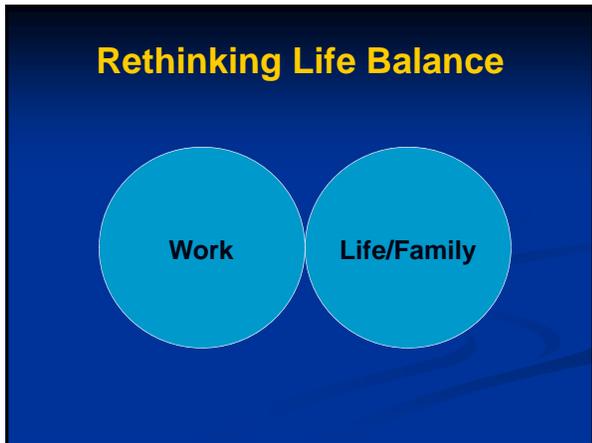
Consequences of Seeking Balance?

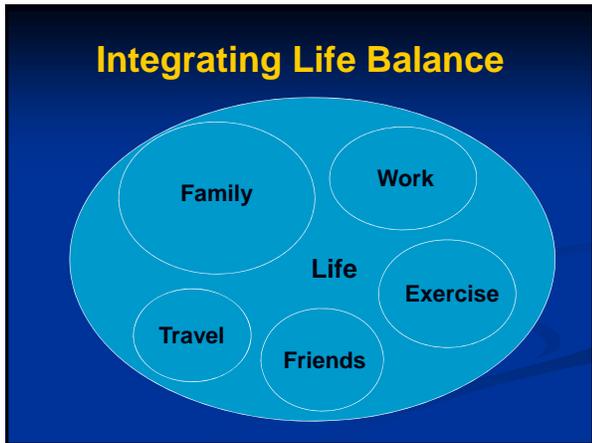
- Not all change leads to positive things
 - Impact on family members and friends
 - Impact on work
- Consideration of consequences can help you prepare and prevent "relapse" to old bad habits

Know Thyself

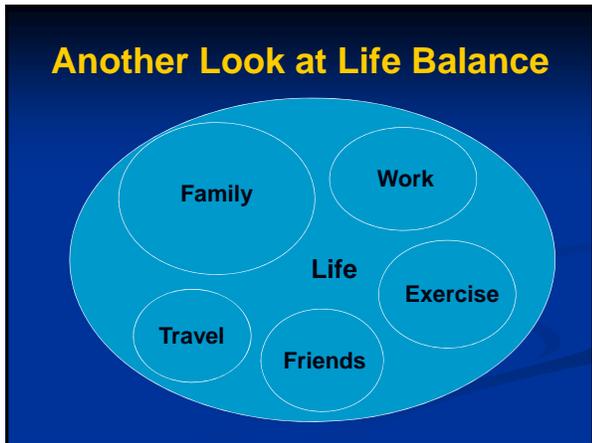
- Control over schedule and hours worked predicts emotional resilience and personal accomplishment (Keeton et al., 2007)
- Not all initiatives lead to positive impact, depending on the person.
 - Overtime is associated with more work-family conflict (Berg et al., 2003)
 - Flexible work arrangements did not bode well for dual-earner women, and utilization of work-family supports actually increased family-to-work conflict perhaps because they need to take on more family care one they began using work-family supports (Hammer, Neal et al., 2001)











What matters to you?

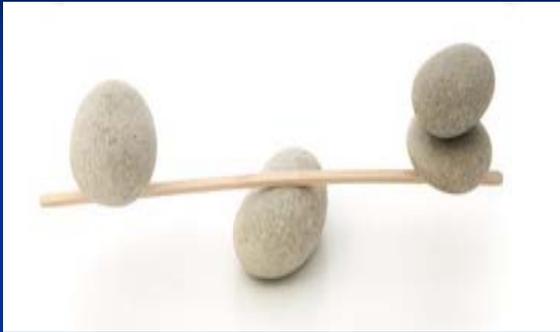
Balance Requires Effort

- Keep an eye on well-being indicators: close relationships, general health/energy, satisfaction with work/everyday life.
- Don't sacrifice self-care – "soldiering on" isn't always the answer.
- Set goals—may not need to compromise, but may take more time.
- Be true to your priorities! Say no and set limits--Make choices.

Balance Requires Effort cont.

- Create time for personal reflection.
- Maintain physical well-being.
- Nurture close relationships.
- Foster a hobby or special interest.

Life Equilibrium



Exercise

- What would give you more balance?
- Write down one goal that would improve your life balance or move you in that direction.
- What are the potential consequences of making this change? Are you willing to accept both the positives and negatives?
- How will you achieve this goal?
 - Strategize potential roadblocks?
- By when will you achieve this goal?

Do It Now!

Make It Happen!

When will you know you achieved better balance?

- Fewer warning signs
- More energy
- More satisfaction
- Better mood
- Better relationships

Key Take Aways

- Learn to recognize signs and symptoms of unbalance.
- Monitor key indicators of well-being.
- Instead of trying to balance work-life or work-family, consider life balance that includes multiple valued parts working together.
- Make a change today!

Questions or Comments?

Evaluation & CE Credit Process

The Military Caregiving Concentration team will offer 1.00 CE credit hour from NASW.

To receive CE credit please complete the evaluation and post-test found at:
https://vte.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6XS75QOXrh7AwCx

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Upcoming Caregiving Event

Understanding Narcotic Medications for Service Members

- **Date:** April 9, 2015
- **Time:** 11:00 a.m. Eastern
- **Location:**
<https://learn.extension.org/events/1723>

For more information on MFLN-Military Caregiving go to:
<http://www.extension.org/pages/60576>





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