



# EAP Educates: Balance and how to achieve it

## ACHIEVING WORK / LIFE BALANCE

### Wellness

Balancing work, social, emotional, family and physical dimensions

- **Wellness is achieved when our bodies, mind and spirit are developed and are in equilibrium with one another.**
- **Maintaining a healthy body and taking care of physical problems timeously is essential for balance.**
- **Mental health is crucial as our minds integrate the three different aspects of ourselves.**
- **Developing a strong spiritual sense of “self” gives people their destination in life.**

### Stress

The Consequence of Imbalance

- **Stress is the reaction of the mind and body to a stressor.**
- **A stressor can be a thought, feeling, behaviour, situation or an experience, i.e. feeling angry can be stressful.**
- **When you are stressed, your body undergoes physical changes, i.e. your heart beats faster, adrenaline flows to the muscles in order to cope with the stress. When the stress exposure is prolonged, it can have serious consequences for your mind and your body, i.e. depression, burn-out and chronic illness.**
- **Not all stress is bad, a certain amount of stress is normal and keeps your body and mind functioning.**  
**The key is to find your optimal stress level.**
- **Symptoms of stress includes tiredness, anxiety, apathy, headaches, constipation, indigestion, diarrhea, low frustration tolerance, moodiness, appetite changes, disturbed sleep, inability to concentrate and deteriorating memory.**

### The Imbalance Cycle

Imbalance occurs when one area of your life consumes your energy at the expense of other areas, i.e. work, more= less time with your family.

- **An imbalance causes stress, inner and external conflict; it drains your energies and leaves you feeling tense and overwhelmed.**
- **The imbalance can occur slowly without you being consciously aware of what is happening.**

### Obstacles to achieving balance

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- **Presumed expectations from family, friends, superiors and your internal critic.**
- **Time constraints, not having enough time to accommodate everything**
- **Unassertiveness – little ability to say no and set limits at home and at work.**
- **Unresolved personal, family and work related problems that demand excess energy and pre-occupy time.**
- **Poor physical and psychosocial health and low energy levels**
- **An external loss of control, believing you cannot control your environment**
- **Lack of awareness about the reality of your situation and denial**
- **Unsupportive family, friends, superiors and co-workers**
- **Lack of internal and external resources**

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## **Planning your health**

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- **Take “stock” of your personal, family, social, spiritual and work situations.**
- **Identify gaps or needs in different areas of your life.**
- **Be committed to changing the status quo.**
- **Incorporate changes into your lifestyle and routine.**
- **Learn new skills, hobbies and acquire new information**
- **Enlist support from family, friends and other professionals.**
- **Learn stress management techniques**
- **Start an exercise and healthy eating regime.**
- **Do not be afraid to change**
- **Let go of negative thinking – empower yourself.**

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