



CANADIAN MENTAL
HEALTH ASSOCIATION
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POUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE

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If you have any questions or require tips for the delivery of the presentation, please feel free to contact Roger Baggs, Workplace Mental Health Coordinator with the Canadian Mental Health Association via email at rbaggs@cmhanl.ca or phone 757 - 7220 to speak with Roger directly. Please contact us if you plan to do a presentation and let us know how things have gone. We would appreciate the feedback!

We encourage employees, managers, union representatives, and occupational health and safety representatives to deliver the presentation. Feel free to be a leader in your workplace to spread the message of work-life balance.

This presentation is approximately 30 minutes long. Should your workplace choose a more interactive option, the presentation may go to approximately 45 minutes in order to facilitate comments and questions.

Good luck!

Slide 1

Hi my name is _____ and this presentation is about work-life balance. It was created as a mental health promotion tool for CMHA NL's Workplace Mental Health Program.

Achieving and maintaining good mental health in the workplace is everyone's responsibility. It is the responsibility of the employer. And, it is the responsibility of the employee.

Awareness of personal mental health and work-life balance are two important themes for taking action for good mental health, and I will focus on these themes today. This presentation will help us think a bit about the current bigger picture in the workplace, and will also help us to recognize what works for you as an individual at a personal level as well as the resources and strengths for dealing with stress and work-life balance that you already have.

Often we are so obsessed with looking at the problems that we don't realize that many of the solutions lie in what we already know. This presentation will give you an opportunity to get you started on what works for you.

While this presentation looks at things you can do on an individual level, I would like to stress that the most effective way to promote good mental health in the workplace is to take action in all five areas for health promotion, as stated in the World Health Organization's Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion.

Slide 2

From the start, I am going to be upfront and mention that workplace mental health is an emerging field, which means that there are some gaps in the research, and a small evidence base to draw from. So, your tips and suggestions are very important to us.

I would like to suggest that we try as much as possible to stay solution focused because mental health promotion is a positive approach that focuses on strengths and existing capacity for good mental health, which all of us have. (note** if the presentation is longer than 30 minutes, feel free to say the following) I would also like to suggest that we have discussion breaks throughout the presentation for quick questions and comments.

We are strong people. We have gotten this far as stressful as life is sometimes. Growing up doesn't mean that joy has to disappear from our lives. We deserve to find peace, and contentment in our lives and reconnect with ourselves and others.

I believe that our work-life balance can change for the better. Healthy workplaces start with an investment in ourselves.

Slide 3

You can access the work-life balance quiz from the home page of CMHA National.

As well, select the evaluator for another interesting work life balance tool.

The mental health meter is more detailed in the responses it will give you. You can find the Mental Health Meter on the CMHA National website and you can do it whenever you would like.

Slide 4

In September 2007, the Canadian Policy Research Network released a report that gave a top ten list of what Canadian's valued in their work environments. Canadian's want work environments where they feel safe and valued and also where diversity is respected. Canadians also want to know that they have job security, and that they are paid well for the jobs they have.

Workers also state that they need work-life balance which is a combination of flexible workplace policies as well as personal skills to manage stress, time, and commitments.

Slide 5

The late Richard Carlson, who wrote the inspirational books, "Don't sweat the small stuff" compared stress to a mental illness. Stress can certainly impact people's lives in such a profound way.

Why do we tolerate stress and let it go on for so long?

Why is stress acceptable to us? Heart palpitations.... Anxiety Not being able to concentrate doesn't sound like fun to me..... But sometimes when stress has us in a grip, we find it hard to stop it....

Why is that?

Why do we accept stress? What can we do to make our lives less stressful?

Slide 6

CMHA National is suggesting that the real bottom line is about workers.

Yes, things have to get done and money needs to be made. That is the bottom line that many of us in the public, private and non-profit world are used to. We are not suggesting that things do not get done. We are suggesting that by accommodating the work-life balance of people then people can be more productive. By investing in ourselves, we can deal with our work stress and our home stress, and that is ultimately a personal responsibility.

Employers and insurance companies, are starting to realize that people have complex lives and needs, and also need flexible and supportive work environments in order to maintain their best mental health.

Slide 7

Madeline Homan, a workplace coach, says that above all things, maybe we need boundaries before balance. She recently wrote an article about work life balance, and the topic was, "Is work-life balance a myth?" Balance is not something we have to perfect. We can strive for better balance without having to make it into a stressful thing.

In order to achieve a better balance, we may have to look at all these areas and ask ourselves some tough questions.

In achieving balance, we may have to say 'no'. Yes, it's true we may have to say no, politely but firmly. This may be a little uncomfortable at first, to reap the benefits at a later date.

Slide 8

These are some tips for work-life balance. I hope they can get you started on what may work for you.

1. The first step to balance is believing that you can find a better balance. Believe a better balance is possible and the rest will follow.
2. Sometimes we can't be all things to everyone. If you need time to yourself, ask for it. Let yourself off the hook.
3. It is important to make a commitment to our health. Try having a healthy breakfast to kick off the day. Strive for 7 hours sleep a night. And exercise when you can, all of this helps too. What about the vices? Can we cut down? Can we even replace them?
4. So, what do you want from life? Where do you want to be in 3 years? What about a vacation this year?
5. Sometimes, we need to say 'no' or 'I appreciate the invitation' or 'I appreciate you thinking of me for this committee' and not do what everyone wants from us. What are your current priorities? Make sure you don't forget yourself.
6. Learn to give yourself a hand and neck massage. Take time out. A peaceful moment. A good book. Make something. Start a new project that you like. Whatever works!
7. Schedule time for you. If you have to run errands, add on 15 minutes to a half-hour, and take some secret time for you. No one will know. Will they?
8. Never, never, never, give up on your dreams. Your dreams are important. What about that place you always wanted to go to, or that hobby that had been on the back burner? It is possible.
9. This is hard to say, but what about adjusting your old expectations and standards for new ones. Let's ask ourselves, how much dust we can live with? Can we do the dishes later and

catch that movie or show? Do we constantly have to be available to work, or to our friends and extended family? 10. And what makes you happy? Write down 10 things that make you happy and do 3 of them each week. And at the end of the week, right down 3 more things that make you happy. And if you can't do this, try to find time for you. Maybe you might need to start with asking for what you want and need.

I am not suggesting that work-life balance is another thing we have to perfect. Let's let ourselves off the hook. Take some time out for yourself. And refocus and reconnect with others and most importantly, yourself. We can simplify our lives.

Slide 9

There's nothing worse than a grouchy person at work. Try to make an effort. Smile. Greet everyone with respect. 2. Try to rise above how you feel and greet people with energy. Don't let people get the best of you. 3. If you have had run ins with your boss or coworkers in the past, let go. It's hard, but it can help you feel better. 4. It is OK to ask for flexibility. Arrange your work day to suit you. If you have a complex life and many family concerns to consider, talk to your boss about it. Go in with an open mind and stay solution focused. 5. It's easy to let negative thoughts creep in. Try not to let things bother you in the work place. If change is slow, can you cut yourself and everyone else some slack? 6. And what about compromise. Go in with a list of suggestions to talk about with your employer. If you reach consensus on 2 of 5 things, give yourself some credit. 7. Take energy breaks. Combine a carb-snack with some protein. Yogurt and trail mix. Cheese, and crackers. Or find some private moments. And yes, do relaxation techniques wherever and whenever you can. 8. Talk about your life with your employer. Focus on what you need to work well. Can you come in early, work late, have someone cover for you, go to appointments, pick up your kids, change your lunch hour, work late or go to the gym? The more flexibility you have, the better you will do your job. That is the bottom line. 9. When is your best energy time? Can you bank time? Do you have flex-leave? Can you talk to your employer about what may work? 10. And please, let your supervisor know when a deadline is unrealistic. Perhaps some accommodations can be made. Talking about it in advance may save you 2 or 3 days of needless anxiety and stress.

Slide 10

Take that 5 minutes to figure out what you are going to do.

At work, or at home.... Can we STOP?

Stopping is the key.... We can get so stressed and so off balance and so busy that we don't realize we are, and we forget, that we can control our stress and we don't have to feel tense and frustrated all the time.

So.....

Stop

Take time for you

Open your mind

And make a plan

Slide 11

Now, lets talk about more stress relief. A fact, did you know that people are saying that the 3rd cause of break ups in relationships currently is due to an unfair division of household responsibilities, like chores, laundry, cleaning, that kind of stuff? Makes you think hey?

Women are participating in the labour market at an almost equal proportion to men. But what happens when a woman comes home from work and she has a family? She may be expected to clean, make supper, spend time with the kids, do laundry, What's wrong here? Do you think that this stress effects work? Sure it does! Home stress can impact on her feeling positive about her job as well.

When you are stressed, what do you like to do..... Do you like to DO something? Do you like to de-stress with friends? Do you like to do something completely different to get your mind off the problem?

SO.....Here is the 3-D rule to stress reduction

If you are task oriented.... Do something!

If you are emotion oriented.....De-stress with others!

If you are distraction oriented.....Distract yourself!

Which style works best for you?

Slide 12

Balance is achievable and balance is unique, for you!

Like I mentioned before, the key is striving for a better balance and not a perfect one because perfect balance does not exist.

It does require that we each take a look at our lives, and reconnect and reprioritize. And this is not always an easy thing because we may have to say no to people in the process and that is not always easy.

Slide 13

Right now, can you list 5 things that you say or do to keep you feeling positive when you are stressed, or going through a hard time in your life. Remember, these are very personal questions and you don't have to answer them right now. Please feel free to take a moment to think about the questions, and if you would like to write them down now, feel free as well.

Slide 14

The second question that I have to ask is

What do you secretly wish for that might make you feel more in control of your life?

It could be the lotto, if that is what you wish for or perhaps you would like to look into some new ways to save money, for example.

Slide 15

What do you do at home to relax.....

These can be simple activities like reading a magazine, or they can be complicated as redecorating and shifting around your furniture.

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And then make a list of the things that you do to de-stress at work.

Remembering that stress accumulates during the day, so, the more stress relievers you have, the better. And remember about your unique stress style. What style are you?

Slide 17

Let yourself off the hook with balance. It is a challenge for all of us and sometimes it is extremely hard. Can you develop your own stress reduction program, and then, try to incorporate it into your life?

The more you are stressed at home and at work, the more self-care you need. Try to be good to yourself when you are extra stressed. Give yourself permission to do good things for yourself. Take out your plan for balance and your happy list.

Let's also not try to resist things. Things are constantly changing. We need to accept that change is constantly in the air. And we have to figure out how to cope with it. Stress accumulates and throws us off balance. When a crisis hits, it is so hard to cope. We have to keep moving, like Winston Churchill said years ago, "If you are going through hell, keep going".

It's almost like we get consumed by stress. Like it takes us over. We can do things. Simple things that work for us if we STOP, refocus, reconnect & prioritize.

Slide 18

Sometimes our jobs are great. Sometimes we need to check in with our lives and realize that one of the reasons we are working is to be in touch with our dreams.

How can we refocus and reconnect to things that are important to us?

Slide 19

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that the purpose of this presentation was to get us thinking about what works for us, both at work and at home, so that we can achieve and maintain good mental health in the workplace. We are suggesting that positive workplace mental health can start with a commitment to our own mental health.

These recommendations are the next steps in mental health promotion, and take the action to achieve and maintain good mental health in the workplace up one level from the individual. Promoting mental health at the workplace level will be the focus of Session 2 in the Workplace Mental Health Series, and will take a look at understanding, flexibility, and creating supportive environments.

I would also like to stress the importance of building healthy public policy for good mental health in the workplace, as it is the next level for action, and provides a strong foundation upon which all other health promotion efforts can be built.

Slide 20

(web site contacts/national and provincial) Thank you for attending this seminar.