Work-life balance: building resiliency to improve your health



Statistics Canada suggests that one in four workers are highly stressed. In the working world of today – expectations of doing more with less, blurred boundaries of work and home due to technology and uncertain economies – what can you do to reduce stress at work and increase job satisfaction? The key lies in developing healthy work-life balance and resiliency.

What causes workplace stress?

Anxiety and stress at work can be the result of one particular factor, or many smaller issues that build up into a situation that feels out of your control, such as:

- Demanding superiors
- Dysfunctional work team or difficult coworkers
- Long hours
- Boredom or work that is too intense
- Unrealistic expectations
- Bad job fit
- Little control over work, decisions or work environment
- Worry about home life while at work

When consistently dealing with these types of challenges, with seemingly little or no possibility for resolution, some individuals move from feeling overwhelmed to feeling ineffective, detached and exhausted. While everybody responds differently to stress, why are some people more successful at managing and preventing burnout than others?

It's all about resiliency

Highly resilient people thrive in conditions of constant change – they are flexible, sociable, creative and learn from experience. When hit by major setbacks, they do not withdraw or complain about life being unfair; instead, they manage to land on their feet and often end up stronger than ever. However, building resiliency can be challenging, so it is important to persevere if things do not seem to be improving right away.

Interested in building your resiliency? Find more helpful resources here >

The Canadian Mental Health Association has also put together some tips to help you bounce back from adversity:

Reach out to others. Dealing with stress and anxiety can be challenging, especially if you feel like you are alone. Asking for help can allow you to lighten the load. A loyal network of people – trusted family members, friends or colleagues – may provide you with the support you need as you try to manage your stress at work.

Speak to your supervisor/manager. While some people are reluctant to discuss these issues with their supervisor or manager, these people cannot support you if they do not know that there is a problem. Ask for a meeting to discuss your challenges, request their input or guidance, and review any solutions that you feel may be practical.

Use your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP). EFAPs are confidential programs created to help employees and their family members. You will have access to a wide range of services and programs

that can help you manage stress, improve communication at work, build your career and balance the priorities of work and home. There is no cost to use your EFAP.

Need to reach your EFAP? Chat with a counsellor now, using the orange First Chat icon >

Embrace change. While change can present challenges, it can also reveal opportunities you might never have discovered. Instead of concentrating on the disruptive aspects, take a flexible approach and focus on the exciting "element of the unknown" that change can bring to your life.

Accept what is beyond your control. Fighting against things over which you have no control will leave you feeling frustrated and exhausted. Let go of situations that are not in your power to control so you can move on and focus your energy more positively. Remember: though you may not be able to change these realities, you can change how you respond to them.

Make time for yourself at work. Skipping lunch and breaks may seem like a more efficient way to get work done, but by not taking breaks, you do not give yourself the chance to recharge throughout the day. Try to avoid eating lunch at your desk or on the run – take the time to take care of yourself.

Discover helpful time management tips here >

Make time for yourself outside of work. It might not be easy, given the demands you may have with family and other responsibilities, but just as you need to take breaks at work, you need to take “me breaks” too. This could be spending time on a hobby, walking, going to the gym, participating in an activity with friends and family – anything that you choose to do because you want to do it, on your terms.

Read more about promoting balance at work and at home >

Mental health in the workplace can affect other aspects of your life, so it is important to build the resiliency you need and establish work-life balance before the negative impacts of stress compromise your overall health.

For additional support, click on the icons under the "Get in Touch" section to the right or call us 24/7/365 at 1.844.880.9137.