

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Balancing Our Lives Better to Manage Stress

For many of us, life is hectic to say the least. It seems like there are never enough hours in the day and you keep getting asked to do more with less. You tell yourself that if you could just work harder and get more organized, you might manage to fit it all in. Sound familiar?

We call it balancing our lives—juggling multiple responsibilities and hoping we don't drop too many balls. For most of us, growing job demands are constantly causing us to borrow from the energy we'd allocated to responsibilities and activities outside of our jobs. The added work, the stress and anxiety and the lack of time for our personal lives can make it feel more like surviving than living in balance!

Real balance isn't just about time management. It's about continually assessing how your life is and how you want it to be. Remember to put yourself at the top of the list sometimes. Decide what is important to you and focus on what makes life meaningful or fulfilling. Here are some tips to help you balance your life:

Get perspective in life.

- When faced with a problem or decision, first decide how important it is in the big picture of your life.
- Evaluate how much control you have over the situation or decision. This can make it easier for you to take action or accept things the way they are.

Enjoy the moment.

- Try not to spend too much time worrying about tomorrow or feeling guilty about yesterday. This simply serves to ruin today!
- Ask yourself if there's anything you can do about what is worrying you.
- If the answer is "Yes", do it! If not, let it go.

Don't be so tough on yourself.

- You don't have to do everything perfectly—and you don't have to do everything.
- At work, learn to be more assertive.
- At home, enjoy yourself and your family. Make sure there is time in your life for relaxation.

Nurture relationships.

- Connect daily with at least one important person in your life.
- During family time, try not to be distracted.
- Focus on your family and let their energy replenish yours.

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Start some great rituals.

- Wake up early to read, meditate or exercise on your own.
- Start a personal journal.
- Remember that "good habits" can help keep you grounded and in control.

Create your own PAUSE button.

- Chances are, the demands in your life aren't going to let up any time soon. Start doing small things to re-energize yourself and build a buffer against unhealthy stress.
- When you feel pressure or anxiety starting to build, take time out.
- Take a break from work. Walk around the block at lunchtime, or sit in the park with a book.
- At home, walk the dog, water the garden or read a book. Have a good laugh!

Avoid burnout.

Don’t let personal, financial or work-related stress get you down. Establishing a sense of balance will help you feel more rested and energized and allow you more time for yourself or with loved ones. There are many ways to achieve a degree of stability but only you can determine what “balance” means to you.

- Burnout is an extreme stress response that includes being unable to cope or function.
- By becoming aware of what causes your stress, finding ways to reduce it and better managing its effects, you can avoid burnout.
- You can't always control what's causing your stress, and you don't have to solve it alone.