Work-Life Balance

The month of May is observed as Mental Health Month. Approximately 1 in every 5 adults in the United States live with a mental health condition (NAMI). A healthy lifestyle has been shown to help prevent the onset and worsening of mental health conditions. Making time for recreation, meditation, family, friends, and finding a work-life balance can help to lead a healthier lifestyle, both physically and mentally.

Finding a healthy balance between work and life is an important aspect of mental health. When juggling heavy workloads, family responsibilities, and maintaining relationships, finding this balance can seem to be an impossible goal. Of adults employed full time in the U.S., nearly 40% reported working at least 50 hours per week, and 18% work 60 hours or more (Work-Life Balance Fact Sheet). Poor work-life balance increases stress and the risk of various health conditions such as: sleep problems, digestive disorders, and mental health problems. While on the other hand, people who feel they have good work-life balance are more satisfied with their job and their life, and experience fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety (Work Health Survey). Maintaining a healthy work-life balance will not be the same for everyone. Achieving this goal is an ongoing process that is constantly changing as changes in work and personal life occur.

Tips for Finding Work-Life Balance

At Work:

1. **Set manageable goals:** Clear and realistic goal setting helps to keep you on track and meet goals that are set. Being able to meet set goals and priorities helps us to feel a sense of accomplishment and control, which leads to less stress.

2. **Be efficient with your time at work:** Avoid procrastination. When we procrastinate, a task often grows in our minds until it seems unachievable. Organization, planning, breaking tasks into smaller pieces, and taking breaks can help you to be more efficient at work.

3. **Take breaks:** It is important to take breaks throughout the day. Small breaks help to clear your mind, deal with stress, improve focus, and make good decisions. Taking a short break every hour has shown to improve focus and performance.

At Home:

1. **Leave work at work:** Technology has created the expectation of constant accessibility while at work and home. Making it seem as if the work day never ends. It is important to make an effort to "unplug" once the workday is finished and separate work from your personal time.

2. **Divide responsibilities:** Work to evenly distribute tasks at home. Making a daily plan and to do list for home responsibilities allows for clear expectations among family members and a decreased workload at home.

3. **Stay active:** Exercise reduces stress, depression, and anxiety, and enables people to better cope with adversity. It is important to set aside time each day for exercise, whether it be the gym, a walk, or other activities that keep you physically active.
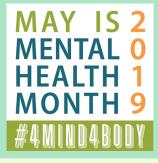
Know When to Seek Professional Help

If you are persistently overwhelmed, it may be necessary to seek help from a mental health professional, such as a counselor or mental health provider. Many workplaces offer resources and guidance through an employee assistance program (EAP), that may be helpful when dealing with stress in the workplace. For information on the Federal Occupational Health EAP please visit the following website: FOH EAP.

For more information on mental health awareness and work-life balance, please visit the following websites:

MHA Work Life Balance, 4Mind4Body: Work-Life Balance,

Mayo Clinic Work-Life Balance, MHA Mental Health Month.

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2019
#4MIND4BODY