



## **Finding the Right Fit: Helping Employees Manage Work and Life Demands**

**Overview:** Conflict between work and other life responsibilities can diminish the quality of both work and home life for employees, which in turn can affect organizational outcomes. Effective work-life practices efforts can improve morale, increase job satisfaction and strengthen employees' commitment to the organization. Additionally, the organization may reap benefits in terms of increased productivity and a reduction in absenteeism, presenteeism and employee turnover. The items below represent some of the ways organizations can help employees better manage multiple demands.

### **Flexible Work Arrangements**

- Flextime
- Telecommuting/Work from home
- Compressed work week
- Part-time work
- Part-year work
- Job sharing
- Shift rotations

### **Time Off**

- Adequate time off (e.g., vacation time, sick days, personal days)
- Time off for holidays
- Time off for religious observances
- Time off during the work day to address personal or family issues
- Time off for training
- Bereavement leave
- Time off for jury duty
- Sabbaticals

### **Family Support**

- Provision of family benefits
- Provision of domestic partner benefits
- On-site childcare
- Arrangements with local childcare facilities (e.g., priority placement, discounted fees)
- Childcare and eldercare resources and referral services
- Pre-tax dependent care spending accounts
- Parenting classes
- Summer camp resources and information
- Flexible leave options beyond those required by the Family and Medical Leave Act
- Gradual return to work options for new parents
- Adoption assistance



- Paternity leave
- Lactation resources (e.g., nursing mother's room, equipment, lactation consultant)
- Scholarships/educational assistance for dependents

### **Additional Resources**

- Access to on-site or local services (e.g., fitness facilities, banks, dry cleaners)
- Access to health/recreation facilities
- Relocation resources
- Financial assistance for personal demands (e.g., childcare, eldercare, purchase of a house)
- Stress management training
- Long-term care options
- Transportation assistance (e.g., subsidy or pre-tax withholding for parking or public transportation)
- Concierge service
- On-site cafeteria/availability of healthy meal options
- Efforts to address life problems that affect job performance (e.g., EAP services, counseling, referrals for appropriate mental health treatment)
- Personal financial planning
- Personal travel services
- Retirement options (e.g., phased retirement, early retirement)

### **Balanced Communication**

- Assess the work-life needs of employees through surveys, meetings and other suggestion forums
- Disseminate information about flexible work arrangements through multiple communication channels
- Make information about community resources available to employees
- Ensure that the process of requesting flexible work arrangements is not overly burdensome
- Describe work-life balance practices during new employee orientation
- Include work-life topics in employee training and development
- Provide supervisors with specific training related to managing employee work-life issues
- Ensure that managers/supervisors encourage appropriate use of vacation time/PTO
- Establish communication mechanisms to help flex workers stay connected to co-workers, clients, vendors and other contacts
- Involve employees in designing, implementing and evaluating work-life practices
- Tailor programs and policies to meet the unique needs of the organization's workforce
- Formally evaluate the results/outcomes of the organization's work-life practices on an ongoing basis and provide feedback to employees

**Note:** Not all work-life balance practices may be necessary, appropriate or effective for every organization (or for specific positions within the organization). Success will be based, in part, on identifying and addressing the challenges unique to your particular organization and tailoring programs and policies to meet your needs.

*For more information about APA's Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program, visit [www.phwa.org](http://www.phwa.org)*