BALANCING IT ALL

Have you ever asked yourself whether it’s realistic to achieve this thing called work-life BALANCE?  Are we trying to attain something that is impossible and illusive?  Are we just setting ourselves up for disappointment by having unrealistic expectations?

What is real is that change is constant, and our work and home life can take some juggling.  Sometimes we are extremely busy and other times “just busy”.  Then again, one person’s just busy is another person’s extremely busy.  The concept of work-life balance is something we can use as a marker to help us create some semblance of it to help us maintain our health and well-being.  Taking steps to move away from feeling that life is constantly “off kilter” will be of benefit to us now and in the long-run.  Here are some things to consider:

♦ Be aware of your limitations:  Let go of the idea that you can do or have it all, and instead set your priorities.  Identify what is important to you.

♦ Avoid bringing work home and home to work:  Make a conscious transition when going from one place to the other.  Figure out what that transition might be for you to switch gears between home life and work life.  For instance, make a list of your tasks for the next day before you leave work or home to help you mentally set aside your to-do list until you return.  On the commute home, listen to your favorite kind of music (and sing along!).  Establish a tradition upon arriving home that everyone gets fifteen minutes of “quiet time” to do something that lets them unwind.  If you live alone, you can do this for yourself too!  Get creative, and try out different things to see what will work best for your transition times.

♦ Learn the value of planning and organizing:  Don’t let stuff just happen.  Establish and practice routines as much as possible.  This helps to reduce stress and can save time.

♦ Add fun every day:  Learn to appreciate the comical side of life.  Laughing is a way of alleviating stress.

♦ Nourish your body:  Taking care of the body — the vehicle that takes us through life — is an important investment.  Eating nutritious foods, getting sleep and exercising pays off in good health and added energy.

Make it a general practice to pause and reflect from time to time to identify what works and what doesn’t in terms of the load you are carrying in your work and home lives.  When feelings of being overwhelmed or the inklings of “burn out” arise, acknowledge these as warning signs.  Take steps like those described above, and don’t hesitate to reach out for assistance and support.  Contact EAP for more information and suggestions.
The fall season is now in full swing. Days are getting shorter, and nights are getting longer. Trees will stop performing photosynthesis, causing the leaves to lose their green color and ultimately turn beautiful shades of red, orange, and yellow. During October, pumpkins and apples are in plentiful supply at grocery stores, roadside farm stands, and local farmers markets. This time of year, pumpkins are very popular for carving on Halloween night. Apples covered with candy or caramel coating make the perfect treat for trick or treaters. Pumpkins and apples are not only delicious, but good for you as well. Let’s take a look at some fast facts.

- The pumpkin was first named by people in Greece, who called this orange edible a “pepon,” which means “large melon”. Pumpkin is a low-calorie, nutrient-dense food. One cup of cooked pumpkin has only 49 calories yet has 2.7g of dietary fiber, more than a slice of whole-grain whole wheat bread.
- Pumpkin seeds are a great source of vitamin E. Vitamin E helps protect cells from free radical damage, boosts the immune system to help the body fight off infections and helps widen blood vessels to keep blood from clotting. Pumpkin seeds and pumpkin seed oil are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids which can help improve cardiovascular health and complications from diabetes and reduce inflammation.
- A handful of pumpkin seeds is a smart choice for a balanced afternoon snack. A one-ounce portion provides 158 calories, 8.6g protein and 13g of fat, which is mostly unsaturated fat, and only 3.04g carbohydrate and 0.4g of sugar.
- One medium-sized apple contains about four grams of fiber. Some of that is in the form of pectin, a type of soluble fiber that has been linked to lower levels of LDL or "bad" cholesterol. That's because pectin blocks absorption of cholesterol, helping the body to use it rather than store it.
- Apple’s wealth of fiber can also keep you feeling full for longer without costing you a lot of calories -- there are about 95 in a medium-sized piece of fruit. That's because it takes our bodies longer to digest complex fiber than more simple ingredients like sugar or refined grains. Anything with at least three grams of fiber is a good source of the nutrient; most people should get 25 to 40 grams of fiber a day.

Apple Pumpkin Pie Smoothie

2 (6 ounce) containers light vanilla yogurt
1/2 cup pumpkin pie filling
1 banana, broken into chunks
2 cups apple juice
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 dash ground nutmeg

Combine the yogurt, pumpkin pie filling, banana, apple juice, cinnamon, and nutmeg in a blender.

Blend until smooth, about 1 minute. Pour into glasses.

Serves two.

Nutrition Facts per serving: 200 calories; 2.7g fat; 8mg cholesterol; 260mg sodium; 60g carbs; 9g fiber; 10g protein

Source: Allrecipes.com
The workplace can be a potential breeding ground for conflict and stress if people feel taken for granted or unappreciated. Consequently, if efforts are not made to promote cooperation among employees, conflict is inevitable. Whether you are involved personally in a conflict with a co-worker or if you work with others who are in conflict, if the parties involved have been unsuccessful in resolving an ongoing issue(s) themselves, an alternative to consider is mediation.

In this month’s edition and in the November’s issue of the EAP E-News, we will outline some basic techniques that are helpful in navigating conflict management and mediation. This practical information necessary for successful mediation is provided by Sarah Rudgers-Tysz, Executive Director of Mediation Matters, who on September 27 facilitated the EAP-sponsored professional development workshop called Managing Difficult Conversations.

Even though a formal mediation process involves a highly skilled person who provides a confidential process for resolving differences with a legal agreement ultimately signed by both parties and enforceable in New York State courts, the same basic guidelines can be applied informally with one or two mediators and the conflicting parties within the workplace. If an informal mediation is not possible, formal mediation might best be considered.

**Emotions First** - A basic principle underlying all interpersonal communication is that the emotions must be dealt with before anything else. When people are experiencing strong feelings, they will not respond to logic and will be unable to problem-solve effectively. Thoughts and feelings must be in balance.

The key skill for the mediator during times when one or both of the parties is full of emotional energy is to patiently use reflective listening and paraphrasing skills until the party’s energy level subsides some. This will happen as they feel listened to and understood and have had a chance to vent some. Only then can you move effectively to the problem-solving and agreement-building part of the process. How many of the active listening techniques described below have you used in conflict situations?

### Active Listening Techniques Include:

**Finding out more by asking questions like...**
- What are you concerned about?
- When did this begin?

**Repeating back the information:**
- So, you would like her to stop giving you dirty looks.
- You’re saying that you don’t know when you first noticed it happening.

**Repeating back the feelings:**
- You seem angry about all of this.
- I get the feeling that you are sad about what has taken place.

**Encouraging the party to speak:**
- Thank you for taking the time to explain this to me; please go on.
- Can you tell me what is most important to you about this?

**Summarizing what the party says:**
- The things you want from him are:...
- You’re saying that the problems you want to talk about here today are:...

Next month we’ll explore another aspect of mediation. Until then, if you encounter a situation where conflict is present, try incorporating some of these active listening techniques. Notice if you recognize how important it is to bring thoughts and feelings in balance before problem-solving can begin.
Domestic violence is when one person does a variety of things to control another person in an intimate relationship. The shift in power can happen very slowly, over a period of time, so that the other person cannot even remember when it happened. Or, it can happen very quickly after there is some sort of commitment or some change in the level of intimacy. Many people wonder if what is happening to them is domestic violence because their partner has never hit them. Physical abuse is probably what most people think of when they think about domestic violence, but it is just one of the many ways that your partner might try to gain power and control in your relationship.

Ways a person might try to gain power and control over their partner include:

- Isolation - making it hard for you to see your friends and family; telling you that your friends and family cause problems in the relationship or are trying to "come between you."
- Economic abuse - having complete control over the money; making you account for every penny you spend; taking your money from you.
- Verbal, emotional, psychological abuse - calling you names; putting you down or embarrassing you in front of other people; criticizing your abilities as a partner or parent.
- Intimidation - making you afraid with a look, action, or gesture; getting you to do something by reminding you about "what happened last time."
- Coercion and threats - showing you a weapon and threatening to use it on you; threatening to "out" you to family, friends, or employers if you are gay or lesbian; threatening to harm your family, friends, or anyone you might go to for help.
- Physical abuse - pushing, grabbing, hitting, slapping, punching, or kicking you.
- Sexual abuse - forcing you to have sex when you don't want to; making you engage in sexual acts that make you uncomfortable; forcing you to engage in prostitution.
- Using children - undermining your authority with your children; threatening to take the children away from you by kidnapping or getting custody of them; "pumping" your children for information about you.
- Minimizing, denying, blaming - making you think the abuse is your fault; saying the abuse was caused by stress, alcohol, or problems at work; denying that the abuse happened at all.

These are some of the most common ways that abusers try to control their partners, but they are certainly not the only ones. If your partner does things that restrict your personal freedom or that make you afraid, you may be a victim of domestic violence.

You are not alone. Millions of people are abused by their partners every year, but it is important to know that nowadays more resources are available to help you be safe.

A community agency that offers services to victims of domestic violence, called a domestic violence program, can be your first step to safety and support. There is a domestic violence program in every county of the state. All programs offer services such as support groups, legal advice, and children's services. Some programs also offer a safe place to stay. To find the domestic violence program in your area, call the NYS Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline.

1-800-942-6906 http://www.opdv.ny.gov/index.html
Or, contact UAlbany EAP for information and resources. 452-5483 bseckerson@albany.edu

Article material provided by the NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence http://www.opdv.ny.gov/index.html
One of your benefits as an employee of the University at Albany is access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP’s mission is to provide services to support a healthy, productive workforce. Available to all employees is the voluntary, confidential Information, Assessment, and Referral Service provided by UAlbany EAP Coordinator, Brenda Seckerson.

Is there a concern that you know you need to address but just haven’t taken the time to do so? Is there an issue at home or work that is having an effect on your ability to be as productive as you need to be? Early intervention is the key! You don’t need to deal with it alone. Support is available through UAlbany EAP. Whether it is family and relationship issues, work stress, interpersonal difficulties, substance abuse or dependency, aging parents, therapist referrals, legal matters and/or financial concerns, employees can take advantage of the confidential assistance available from EAP.

Confidential support, information, and referrals are available to assist you in finding a way to address your concerns.

To schedule an appointment for an Information, Assessment & Referral session, contact

Brenda Seckerson,
UAlbany EAP Coordinator
Call 442-5483
or email bseckerson@albany.edu

Employee Assistance Program-sponsored events and services are open to UAlbany and Research Foundation faculty, staff, family members, UAS employees, GSEU members, and retirees.

Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you.
– Maori Proverb
Do you or a family member have a student loan(s) that you are trying to pay off? Do you know all of the current ways to address repaying those loans? If not, then join us for this lunchtime session designed to educate those with student loans about the tools that are available to help with repayment. **Topics to be discussed include repayment plans, consolidation, cancellation or forgiveness, deferment and forbearance, and how to get out of default.** Bring your questions!

**Wednesday, October 3**  
**12:00 - 1:00 pm**  
**Room 375, Campus Center**

To Register Contact:  
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator  
bseckerson@albany.edu

CALL 442-5483 OR REGISTER ONLINE  
http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

Presenter: Jenny Brannon,  
SEFCU Member Education Manager
Building a Better Bag Lunch

Whether you pack a lunch for adults or kids, this program will give you plenty of ideas for healthy options while saving money. Planning tips and recipes will be included, plus food safety for bag lunches. Participants will try out and sample a few make-ahead lunch ideas, and learn some fun ways of putting it all together!

Presenter: Kim Mullen, M.S. is a Nutrition Resource Educator at the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County where she has worked for 15 years.

Tuesday, Oct. 30
12 - 1 PM
Room 110A

Deadline to register:
Friday, Oct. 26

To register, contact
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu 442-5483
Online http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm
Another opportunity to enhance your professional development brought to you by EAP!

Making Seamless “Switches”

Professional Development Workshop for Faculty and Staff in a Supervisory Role*

This workshop offers a set of tools to help make change happen based on the renowned book *Switch, How to Change Things When Change is Hard**, by Chip and Dan Heath. The concepts are simple enough to remember and flexible enough to use in many different situations. It provides a unique way of understanding change. By aligning the “Rider” and the “Elephant” which represent the rational and emotional systems in our brains we are better equipped to control changes in our lives.

You will learn how to do three things at once to create a Switch:

♦ Direct the order
♦ Motivate the elephant
♦ Shape the path

Learning how to do this increases your ability to create, lead, and adapt to change.

**NOTE:** Upon registering, participants will receive a free copy of the book *Switch* and are asked to review its contents before attending the workshop.

Presenter: Debra Blatt has a foundation in organizational behavior and management experience grounded in over two decades in the business world. She has been a previous EAP presenter and a well-received resource.

Registration Deadline: Monday, November 5
Space is Limited! Register Early!

*Supervisor’s Approval Required to Attend

To Register Contact:
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu

CALL 442-5483 OR ONLINE
http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

Employee Assistance Program-sponsored events are open to UAlbany and Research Foundation faculty, staff, family members, UAS employees, GSEU members and retirees.
Stress is not what happens to us. It’s our response TO what happens. And RESPONSE is something we can choose.

~ Maureen Killoran

Save the date!
November 7
EAP’s next
Lunchtime Art Break at the University Art Museum
Featuring Rachel Foullon & Dana Hoey

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EAP website: http://www.albany.edu/eap/

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The New York State Employee Assistance Program is a joint labor/management program and a negotiated benefit. EAP Coordinators are a confidential and neutral resource for employees. The use of EAP is on a voluntary basis.