

AS@W...WORK-LIFE BALANCE

What is work-life balance?

- Work-life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work and live. It is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society.
- Work-life imbalance occurs when the demands of work impede on home life or, conversely, when demands of home impede on one's work.

What are some factors contributing to work-life imbalance?

- Role overload (either at home or on the job)
- Job insecurity
- Personal or family health issues
- Child or eldercare demands
- Staff shortages
- Technological changes ("technostress")
- Economic pressures
- Increased overtime hours worked

What is the effect of work-life conflict on an individual?

- Less job satisfaction
- Higher stress levels
- Fatigue, disengagement and burn-out
- Poor self-care (e.g. diet, exercise, sleep)



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BC Mental Health &
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an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority



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- Relationship, marital and family conflict
- Poorer mental/physical health (including depression)

What is the effect of work-life conflict on an organization?

- Decreased ability to recruit employees
- Higher turnover rates
- Lower morale
- Reduced discretionary effort (e.g. overtime)
- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism
- Increased benefits costs (e.g. drug costs, use of employee assistance programs, visits to psychologists)
- Conflict and grievances

What can individuals do to improve their work-life balance?

- Take breaks throughout the day (go for a walk, stop for lunch).
- Take allocated vacation time
- Schedule in time for friends and family (and yourself)
- Be clear about your values
- Take responsibility for maintaining your balance (because no one else will)
- Be realistic (when is “good enough”, good enough?)

What can employers do to improve employee balance?

- Review organizational values and mission (do they include valuing employees?)



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- Review hiring, promotion and training practices (do they include personal development?)
- Review programs and policies (do they support employees and their families?)
- Model balanced leadership (demonstrate your commitment to health and family)

Points to remember...

- Your best work-life balance will vary over time, even within a day.
- There are individual differences in what constitutes balance.
- "Sprint when you need to, but aim for the marathon."

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ABOUT AS@W

How was *Antidepressant Skills at Work* developed?

The guide was developed by British Columbia Mental Health and Addiction Services (BCMHAS), an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. The guide and accompanying materials have been authored by **Dr. Dan Bilsker**, **Dr. Merv Gilbert**, and **Dr. Joti Samra** – registered psychologists and scientist-practitioners with expertise in issues relating to workplace mental health. These psychologists are with the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction (CARMHA), Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University. The guide was written on the basis of a review of the scientific literature; consultation with employers, unions, mental health providers and employee groups; and adaptation of existing self-care depression programs.

How can the manual be accessed?

The manual is available for viewing and free download at www.carmha.ca/antidepressant-skills/work/ or from www.bcmhas.ca/research. Individuals or organizations are free to print and make multiple copies of the guide, with permission from CARMHA (publications@carmha.ca). Print copies and audio CDs are available at a low cost from our ordering page at www.carmha.ca/ordering.

For further information about AS@W and associated resources and materials, please visit www.carmha.ca/selfcare. This information will be updated on a regular basis.



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