EAOHP Invited forum: Work-life balance: What works?

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What is work-life balance and why is it important?

“Negative and positive associations relating to an individual’s work and non-work roles, including family but also other salient areas of engagement (e.g. sporting, recreational, community)” (Brough & O’Driscoll, 2010)

- The primary workplace health and safety concern
- Wide-ranging impact on individuals, families and organisational functioning
The need for multi-level interventions

- The individual level
- The organisational level
- A systemic approach
"The psychological and physical ways we manage relationships between our job and our personal life"

- PE fit and perceived control are more important for wellbeing than the extent of separation/integration
- Need to assess boundary management styles and behaviours using evidence-based frameworks
- Need to enhance PE fit and control via increased opportunities for flexibility and job crafting

Kinman & Jones, 2008; Kossek & Lautsch, 2008
Using a KSA approach to develop work-life balance competencies to help managers improve WLB in their staff.
WLB competencies for social work managers

**KNOWLEDGE**

- How the emotional demands of the job can threaten WLB; the need for recovery
- The need for an equitable and an evidence-informed approach
- The availability of guidance, training and support (internal/external) - is this fit for purpose?

**SKILLS**

- Giving emotional and instrumental support
- Creating opportunities for WL enrichment
- Recognising and reducing stigma of uptake of WLB initiatives
- Anticipating changes that can impact on WLB
- Modelling self-care/WLB

**ATTRIBUTES**

- Emotionally literate and reflective
- Offers safe disclosure
- Appropriately empathic
- Creative approach to WLB solutions
- Optimistic, but realistic

Kinman & Grant, 2014
E-resilience: A joint responsibility

- Technology can enhance and threaten WLB

- E-resilience: “The characteristics of individuals and organisations that help them engage with technology in a healthy, efficient and sustainable way”

- Helping individuals and organisations develop competency frameworks to build e-resilience

Kinman et al. 2016
e-resilient organisations take a systemic approach

- Are they aware of the drawbacks of ICT as well as the benefits?
- How could their e-mail challenge be reduced?
- Is their e-mail culture healthy and sustainable?
- Are their e-mail expectations communicated?
- Do they raise awareness among managers of risks and best practice?
- Do they include e-mailing when assessing the formal workload?
- Do they monitor e-mail practices and competencies?
- Do they assess e-mail training needs and offer mentoring and coaching?
- Are they aware of diversity and the need for ‘e-courtesy’ and respect?
- Do they resist simplistic ‘solutions’?
e-resilient individuals take control

- Manage technology (not vice versa)
- Identify their flex-style and preferences for ICT use
- Consider whether this is congruent with their organisation and their co-workers
- Respect boundaries (their own and others)
- Manage expectations
- Reflect on their behaviour and consider alternative actions
- Use techniques such as peer coaching and mindfulness to manage boundaries and achieve recovery
Key messages:

- New approaches to WLB required that acknowledge the realities of new ways of working – is ‘separation’ now achievable?

- WLB is a shared responsibility requiring multi-level interventions

- Interventions based on PE fit and crafting approaches are effective

- Competency frameworks based on KSA approaches are useful

- Vital to anticipate future threats to WLB from rapidly-changing working environments