

Speaker Notes

Title of Presentation: Life in Balance: Relaxation and Stress Relief

Page 1 –

- (Introduce yourself. Ask the audience what prompted them to attend this particular workshop. If there is time, allow time to go around the room and have everyone give their reasons.)
- (Note responses on flip chart or board. Refer back to this list at the end of the session to assess how well the workshop fulfilled the expectations.)
- (Ask participants to think about what “balance” means. What is the definition?)
- (Note their responses on a separate flip chart or board.)

Page 2 – Introduce what this presentation will cover. Read each bullet aloud.

Page 3 –

- This is a picture that comes to some people’s minds when we talk about balance...being on a tight rope with so many things to keep aligned so you don’t fall.
- That seems uncomfortable and scary.
- How about viewing balance as a desirable state that produces a feeling of wellbeing, of being in command of your life?
- The question we will explore is how to gain that sense of well-being and control.
- What picture comes to mind when talking about positive balance?

Page 4 –

- (Review this list, discuss each item briefly.)
- (Refer to the definitions you noted on the flip chart. Were any of these included in the definitions offered by the participants?)
- (Ask participants for samples of their multiple demands.)

Page 5 –

- Pressures that affect work life balance are both external and internal.
- (Use this for discussion and ask for examples of external and internal stressors.)
- (Review bulleted items)
- (Ask participants to identify two examples of stressors from their own lives.) With demands like these on time and energy, how can you get the things done that “need” to be done and still have time for yourself?

Page 6 – Clarifying your values is a way of looking at the big picture and can help you decide what the important things are that you need to focus on and prioritize.

Page 7 –

- **The energy wheel concept:** We each have a limited amount of time and energy each day. How we use it to realize our mission and achieve our goals is what balance is all about.
- The four segments:
 - **Work** - earn money
 - **Personal Relationship** - family, friends
 - **Life Maintenance** - shopping, laundry, grocery store, etc.
 - **Self-Nurturing** - hardest to define, most frequently overlooked in struggle to get everything done; a massage, walk in the park on a warm, sunny day, etc.
- Balance is not a matter of figuring out how to do everything that comes along, it is about balancing everything that comes along against your inner values, goals, and focusing your energy on those things that matter while letting go of the others.

Page 8 – The stress response is physiological and many chemical and physical changes occur within a matter of seconds when faced with a stressor.

Page 9 –

- Physical: headaches, muscle aches, low energy etc
- Emotional: feeling overwhelmed, sad etc.
- Mental: difficulty making decision and remembering things.
- Behavioral: engaging in risk taking behaviors, excessive use of alcohol and drugs (both prescription and illegal).

Page 10 –

- (Review this list aloud. Comment on each – for example, alcohol abuse can lead to personal relationship issues, run-ins with the authorities and more.)
- Poor food choices can lead to health, weight and self-esteem issues.
- Distorted thinking such as: “This is horrible and I’m not going to survive this.”

Page 11 – none.

Page 12 - none.

Page 13 – none.

Page 14 – What we think and say to ourselves about situations is directly related to how we feel and cope with things. (This leads to information on next slide.)

Page 15 – (Talk about each bullet and how it defines the meaning of cognitive reframing.)

Page 16 – (Ask participants for examples of how these different areas affect them and others. You may want to give your own examples first.)

Page 17 – (Review each bullet and encourage the audience to share their responses to each.)

Page 18 – What does it mean to be “stress hardy?”

Page 19 –

- **Awareness:** Having awareness of the problem/s and the stress symptoms you may be experiencing.
- **Balance:** Look at the different areas of your life and deciding where you need to focus more attention. Having the different areas of your life balanced can give you increased energy and change your perspective of the difficult stressors.
- **Control:** Decide which issues you have control over and which ones you do not. If there are areas that you cannot change (example, spouse is deployed), then look at the ways you can learn to cope with the situation.

Page 20 – Review items:

- *Think positively:* Look on the bright side and try to maintain a sense of humor. While everyone feels sad, angry or frustrated sometimes, laughter can help ease difficult situations and change your perspective.
- *Work more efficiently:* Develop ways to work smarter at home and at work. Combining or consolidating tasks may be more effective than trying to squeeze as many task as possible into the least amount of time.

Page 21 –

- **How to find your stress triangle:**
 - Place your left hand on your right shoulder. Move your fingers halfway in toward your neck. You’re at one point of the triangle.
 - The second point is the same place off your left shoulder.
 - The third point is on your forehead, between your eyes. This “stress triangle.” This is where most people experience stress-related muscle tension and pain.

- **Meditate** – Sitting with eyes closed, repeat to yourself a phrase that’s meaningful to you. This can be self-talk along the lines of “I’m a valuable and productive person just the way I am.” Or choose an inspirational passage from a favorite book or scripture.
- **Deep breathing** – Slowly breathe in through your nose, imagining a peaceful scene. Hold the breath for a count of five, then slowly exhale through mouth, then repeat three times.
- **Progressive muscle relaxation** – This not only helps you relax your muscles, it also makes you more aware of when there is tension in your body and where the tension is located. This also helps calm other reactions to stress, such as rapid breathing and heartbeat, stomach problems and headaches. (explain the process of tensing and releasing the muscles)
- **Visualization** is a kind of “guided daydreaming” to help you relax when stress is getting the better of you. It takes only two or three minutes, though you may want to get ready for it by doing another relaxation exercise such as deep breathing before you begin.
- **Laughter** is a great way of releasing the body’s endorphins. Try sharing a joke with a friend, watching a funny movie. It helps to change our perspective if we can see the humor in ourselves and some of our situations. A positive approach can dramatically affect your perspective. You may find that your life is already more in balance than you initially thought.

Page 22 – none.

Page 23 – You will never reach a plateau where you can say, “Okay, I’ve obtained perfect balance.” There will always be new challenges which you will face and which will require you to re-adjust your priorities again.

Page 24 – none.

Page 25 – none.

Page 26 – none.

Page 27 – none.

Page 28 – none.