



# **BALANCING WORK, LIFE AND COMMAND**

**Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors**

# OBJECTIVES

## Participants will learn:

- The unique stresses of responsibility
- Methods of managing stress and finding balance between career and family



# AGENDA

- What is Work/Life Balance?
- Balancing Career and Family
- Walking the Tightrope
- Healthy vs. Unhealthy Stress
- Statistics on Executive Stress
- Responding to Multiple Demands
- External Stressors vs. Internal Stressors
- ABCs of Stress Reduction
- Energy Wheel
- Importance of Sleep
- Cycles of Work and Rest
- Cut Out Other Health risk Factors
- Perspective/Philosophy
- Self-Acceptance
- Family Rituals
- Achieving Balance



# WHAT IS WORK/LIFE BALANCE?

- Necessary for everyone
- On-going process
- Responding to multiple demands
  - Balancing children's activities
  - Balancing career and family



# BALANCING CAREER AND FAMILY

- Every family is unique
- The family system is dynamic
- Developmental stages of the family
- Cultural/personal histories dictate needs



# BALANCING CAREER AND FAMILY CONTINUED

- Write down family goals
- Stick to your values
- Recognize that imbalance is sometimes inevitable
- Revisit your schedule
- Recognize the benefits of balance
- Manage distractions and procrastination
- Discuss expectations and responsibilities
- Organize your work better



# IS THIS YOU?



# WALKING THE TIGHTROPE

## The unique stresses of responsibility:

- Responsibility without all the authority
- Challenging requirements
- Unpredictable nature of work demands





# HEALTHY VS. UNHEALTHY STRESS

## The stress response is:

- A normal response to the demands and changes of life - both positive and negative
- An individual response
- Necessary for survival and not necessarily unhealthy

**Stress becomes unhealthy when we are habitually confronted with chronic stressors and do not manage them well**



# RESPONDING TO MULTIPLE DEMANDS

## Responding to multiple demands requires:

- Being flexible
- Balancing children's activities
- Balancing professional duties with family life
- Taking care of yourself



# EXTERNAL STRESSORS VS. INTERNAL STRESSORS

## External Stressors

- Work
- School
- Community

## Internal Stressors

- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Expectations
- Behaviors



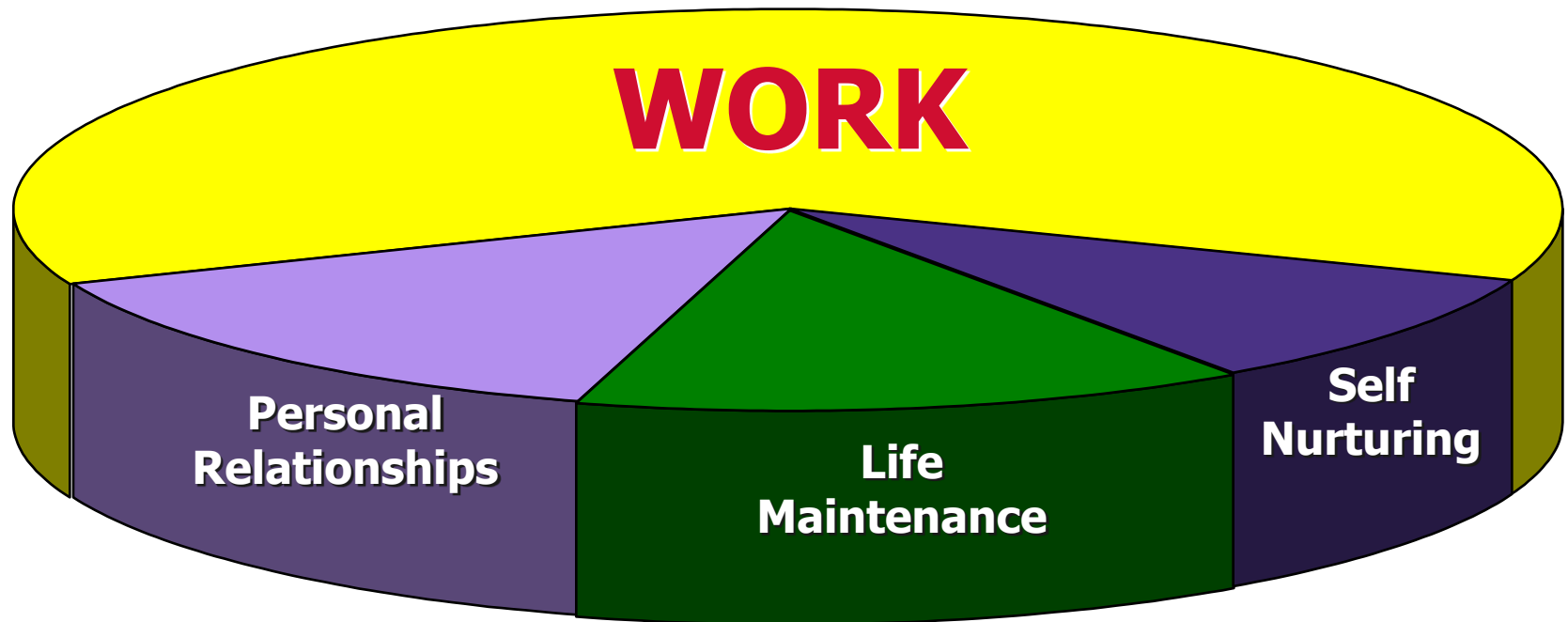
# ABC'S OF STRESS REDUCTION

## A stress reduction action plan includes:

- **A** = Awareness
- **B** = Balance
- **C** = Control



# ENERGY WHEEL



# IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP

## Sleep is important for physical and mental health

Sleep deprivation can cause serious problems in functioning such as:

- Decreased performance and alertness
- Memory and cognitive impairment
- Occupational injury
- Automobile injury



# IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP CONTINUED

- Sleep is as essential to your health as eating – yet it is easy to cut back on

## Plan:

- Develop a ritual around bedtime
- Go to bed at the same time
- Get up within an hour of the same time each day
- Sleep in intense darkness in a cool, well-ventilated room, and wake up with lights



# CYCLES OF WORK AND REST

Alternate periods of intense activity and rest

## **Benefits of rest and relaxation:**

- Gives the heart a rest by slowing the heart rate
- Reduces blood pressure
- Slows the rate of breathing, which reduces the need for oxygen
- Increases blood flow to the muscles
- Decreases muscle tension
- We work more effectively after a period of rest





# STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

- Exercise
- Find quiet Time
- Use humor – watch funny movies, share a joke with a friend
- Change destructive thought patterns
- Get organized
- Limit computer or internet based recreation



# STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

## CONTINUED

- Eat healthy
- Reduce intake of alcohol
- Practice relaxation
  - Slow stretching
  - Deep breathing
  - Visualization
  - Meditation or prayer



# CUT OUT RISK FACTORS

- Alcohol and/or other drugs
- Food
- Displaced anger/frustration
- Overspending



# PERSPECTIVE/PHILOSOPHY

- Embrace a positive, optimistic life philosophy
- Re-frame “failures” as new opportunities
- Challenge the “shoulds”
- Avoid “all or nothing” thinking
- Be compassionate with yourself
- Focus on the present



# SELF-ACCEPTANCE

- Practice “positive self-talk
- Develop unconditional positive regard for self and others
- Every person on this planet is a fallible human being
- Every person on this planet often acts “crazy” and against his or her own best interests at times
- Learn to accept yourself – rate your behaviors, but never rate yourself



# FAMILY RITUALS

## Family rituals:

- Foster a sense of continuity and meaning
- Help create space for bonding and sharing
- Your family should be a sanctuary
- Family needs nurturing and care – it is easy to take them for granted

## Devote time for you family

- Schedule family time
- Be engaged when you are with them
- Turn off your Blackberry or at least stop checking e-mails



# ACHIEVING BALANCE

- Requires thought, effort and flexibility
- Enlist help of spouse, friends and colleagues
- Balance is a dynamic, fluid process with an ebb and flow
- Personal growth leads to familial and professional growth



# SUMMARY

- Work/life balance is an on-going process
- Not all stress is unhealthy
- Managing stress requires awareness, balance and control
- Sleep is vital for physical and mental health
- Maintaining a positive perspective and personal philosophy is an important component of finding balance
- Balance is a dynamic, fluid process with an ebb and flow







**QUESTIONS?**



# RESOURCES

- Military Community Services
- Chaplain and Local Clergy
- Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- TRICARE [www.Tricare.mil](http://www.Tricare.mil)
- Behavioral Health Services



# REFERENCES

- “Leadership Resilience: Overcoming Executive Stress,”  
Colonel Fred P. Stone





**THANK YOU**

