

WORK/LIFE BALANCE FACT SHEET

Modern workplace demands, global competition, and new technology that allows workers to work away from the office, means that it is increasingly difficult to strike a balance between work and private life.

Did you know that:

- There is an established link between working excessively long hours, and physical and mental health problems such as increased risk of Hypertension and Depression.
- Men are more likely to spend long hours at work, but women are more likely to experience overall work overload due to greater demands from domestic and childcare duties, in addition to workplace demands.
- High workloads are not sustainable in the long term and lead to burnout, decreased productivity, increased risk of developing disease, chronic fatigue and stress.
- Caffeine is commonly used to combat chronic fatigue, however, when consumed in larger doses, Caffeine actually has the opposite effect on the body—increasing irritability and decreasing the ability to concentrate.
- The average Australian in full time employment spends at least 40 hours per week at work, and a large percentage work in excess of 50 hours. Compare this to the average of only 11 hours spent on leisure activities.
- High demands in the workplace is associated with high turnover levels and a high number of sick days taken each year. Companies that implement Work Life Balance policies, have reported an overall decrease of 15% in turnover rate, and increased employee satisfaction and productivity.

Common Sources of Pressure:

- **Downsizing means fewer workers to completed the work.**
- **Corporate culture rewards those who sacrifice their personal lives to work long hours.**
- **Career advancement in many industries is dependent on being seen putting in in “extra” time at work.**
- **Employees are often highly self-driven to succeed, and will take on additional hours voluntarily.**

Maintaining Work Life Balance:

- **Manage your time. Learn to say “no” more often**
- **Avoid alcohol, drugs and stimulants such as Caffeine.**
- **Learn to accept your limits - understand that long hours do not equal increased productivity.**
- **Make time to exercise each day, and eat a healthy diet to help maximise your energy and wellbeing**
- **Schedule time to devote to your emotional wellbeing. Meditate, have a massage or take a walk in nature.**
- **Don't compromise family relationships and friends**
- **Work on a “positive psychology” - you choose how you respond to external stressors.**

Sources: Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au,
SANE Australia www.sane.org.au