

# The Road to Balance

Participant Packet

Solutions to Everyday Problems

1-800-344-4222

[www.concern-eap.com](http://www.concern-eap.com)



# The Road to Balance

## OVERVIEW

Feeling overwhelmed and overextended has become a very common feeling among employees who are striving for balance in their lives. There is no question that the demands of work and family often conflict. As well, it is nearly impossible to have a personal life when trying to meet the needs of everyone else.

In this seminar, you will learn to look at ways to balance the pressures, expectations, and desires in your life by identifying priorities and taking responsibility for choices. As well, you will explore how achieving and maintaining balance can improve the quality of your life.

### Agenda Topics:

- Welcome
- What are you balancing?
- Finding Balance
- Frustrations, Challenges, and Role Models
- Conflicts and Choices
- Strategies for Dealing with Work and Personal Stress
- Taking Responsibility
- Communication Guidelines
- Plan of Action
- Wrap up

Seminar Length:      Approximately 1 hour

## What are You Balancing?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## Finding Balance

What percentage of time are you devoting to each of these areas of your life? After determining how you are presently spending your time, go back over the life activity list and insert the percentage of how you would like to be spending your time.

<b>Life Activity</b>	<b>How is it Now?</b>	<b>How would you like it to be?</b>
Work/Career		
Home/Family		
Friends		
Fun/Relaxation		
Exercise/Nutrition		
Spirituality		
Time Alone		
Community Service		
Other		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **Frustrations, Challenges, Role Models**

***My Biggest frustrations or challenges are:***

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

***Strategies to cope would be:***

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

***My Role Model would handle this by:***

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

## When Differences Arise

- Where are you currently experiencing conflicts in your life?
- What choices have you made?
- What are the goals you want to achieve?
- What influences your choices and decisions?
  - Money
  - Power
  - Prestige or Status
  - Security
  - Love
  - Relationships/Family/Children
  - Pleasure/Fun/Adventure
  - Challenge/Risk/Change
  - Personal mission (professional, spiritual, or artistic)

## Strategies for Finding Balance

### *General*

- **Set limits**

Decide how willing you are to respond to requests. Learn how to say “no”, if you’re feeling over-extended. Set boundaries for yourself and others. Remember “No” is a complete sentence.

- **Accept the fact that things will change**

Be flexible and adaptable; recognize that some things are always in process; accept the things you cannot change and consider letting go of them; pick your battles carefully; anticipate stalls, delays, and emergencies; and be patient with yourself and others.

- **Ask yourself “What are my values and my goals?”**

Write a mission statement about your life, your values, and your goals. Set personal goals for yourself and recognize that big ones are not necessarily better than small ones. Prioritize and tackle the hard things first.

- **Acknowledge yourself and your accomplishments**

Take time on a regular basis to acknowledge the tremendous amount of things you accomplish. Recognize your achievements and reward yourself for a job well done.

- **Take care of yourself**

Remember to eat nutritious foods, get plenty of rest, exercise at least 30 minutes three times a week, use stress reduction techniques as needed (yoga, meditation, deep breathing, visualization, stretching, walks, spend time in nature), etc.

- **Communicate with others**

Negotiate, compromise, cooperate, and tell others what you need from them. Even if your needs aren’t met, by verbalizing what you want you will increase your connection, enhance understanding, and decrease isolation.

- **Get support**

Talk with family and friends who can understand your feelings, wants, and desires. (Cancer patients with a good support system have been found to live longer than those who have minimal support.)

- **Be supportive**

Support your friends/family/colleagues in their efforts to lead a balanced life. Reciprocate by giving them support as they have supported you. This helps to keep the lines of communication open and enhances the opportunity for problem solving rather than blaming. If you have made a mistake, admit it and apologize.

## *Home*

- **Conduct family/roommate meetings**

This creates a forum to discuss issues/needs, to plan activities, and to problem solve.

- **Combine needs/responsibilities that can be met at the same time**

Take a walk with a partner or child or go shopping with a friend.

- **Rotate which needs get met**

Take time alone, do a chore that you have been putting off, do something special for a friend or a family member, or perform community service. You can rotate which need gets addressed on which weekend.

- **Get help**

Hire someone or get household members involved in doing household chores. Barter time for tasks. Exchange childcare or eldercare with another family.

- **Re-evaluate old habits and priorities**

Is it more important to have an immaculate home or to spend quality time with your family or friends? If you regularly prepare meals, can you enlist the help of another family member to cook on certain nights or to order take out? Are you making decisions and arranging your schedule based on what you want or based on an outmoded model set by the previous generation?

- **Stop second guessing others**

If you are given help, accept the offer graciously. If you can't, then don't ask for it. Whoever does the task gets to do it his/her way. Don't undermine the gift by redoing the task or chore. Simplify or eliminate some things in your life.

- **Use a calendar**

To block out time for weekly discussions and to list family commitments and appointments. Couples should plan to spend a weekend together every three months without kids, elderly relatives, or other family members to refresh and renew their relationship.

## *Work*

- **Delegate responsibilities or ask for help when needed**

Work as a team to accomplish goals and reduce the burden on any one person. If necessary, modify your expectations of yourself and others. (Remember that perfectionism causes stress.)

- **Have clear goals and objectives**

Use weekly and daily “to do” lists to monitor progress and to track accomplishments. Use organizational and time management techniques to increase your productivity. When the Demands are greater than the time available, re-evaluate your priorities and ask for assistance to determine what is essential.

- **Use discretionary time to meet personal needs**

Get exercise by walking or joining a nearby health club, run errands at lunchtime to save time on the weekends, meditate or practice relaxation techniques, or do hobbies, read, or perform community service.

## Taking Responsibility

- **Make time to be alone**

“Alone time” often gets sacrificed in the struggle to find balance between work and home. Yet, taking time to reflect, to rest, to heal, and to recognize what you feel and need may be the most important time you can spend.

- **Recognize your passion**

What motivates you and makes you feel most alive? Set your priorities and choices based on what is most meaningful to you.

- **Acknowledge that choices can be difficult**

Our choices are ours alone so make them consciously and don't be afraid to question or change them. Choices can mean either saying yes or saying no. Setting limits can be challenging or even frightening, but failing to set limits may create unpleasant consequences down the road.

- **Learn to let go**

Once your priorities are set, let the rest go. You may not be able to be a star employee, have an immaculately clean house, and become a published author all at the same time. Decide what is important to you today and change the expectations in the other areas.

- **Change is a constant**

As needs, demands, and situations change, so will your choices. Some phases of your life are time limited. Children grow up, careers and relationships change, and our parents age. Sacrifices made to achieve present goals do not have to be permanent.

- **Maintain open and constant communication**

Communication with others is essential to keeping your sense of balance. Checking in with your family, friends, and co-workers will contribute greatly to your sense of well-being, harmony, and balance. Most of us aren't very good at reading someone else's mind! Although, at times you may believe you are successful as a mind reader. Misunderstandings can be avoided by discussing your feelings and needs, and by addressing questions and perceptions promptly.

## Communication Guidelines

- Listen effectively
- Use “I” messages
- Clear, direct messages—no hints or mind reading
- Concrete messages instead of open ended
- Negotiate, compromise and be flexible
- Develop effective joint problem-solving and decision making skills
- Assess your expectations, wants and needs together
- Learn how to ask for help and support
- Focus on your responsibility to the relationship
- Share appreciation
- Set aside time to talk
- Permit the expression of ideas and feelings
- Keep the door open on any subject
- Nurture trust, respect, honesty, support and sensitivity



# Seminar Evaluation Form

# CONCERN: Employee Assistance Program

Please fill out and return to presenter or HR Representative. Your feedback is very important to us. Thank you!

Seminar Title The Road to Balance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

Regarding the Seminar	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1. How well were the seminar objectives met?					
2. Usefulness of seminar information?					
3. Length of seminar?					
4. Effectiveness of exercises?					
5. How would you rate this seminar overall?					

Regarding the Presenter	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Presentation skills?					
2. Ability to answer questions?					
3. Knowledge of subject?					
4. Use of time?					
5. Overall assessment of presenter?					

### Additional Comments

1. What would you recommend to make this seminar more effective? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What part of the seminar did you find most helpful? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Additional comments/suggestions for speaker's improvement? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your feedback.