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TRAINER'S
MANUAL

BALANCING WORK AND LIFE –TRAINING FOR SUPERVISORS



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Occupational Health

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To the trainer, user of the manual

The Balancing work and life – Training for supervisors programme is a group work method which can be used as internal supervisor training at the workplace. The aim of the training is to develop the way in which supervisors can support employees in balancing their work and life. Another goal is to ensure that supervisors are aware of the concrete policies and possibilities that their workplace has for balancing work and life. Supervisor group meetings also offer the supervisors the opportunity to get to know each other and obtain peer support for their work.

The aim of the programme is that the supervisors learn to understand that balancing work and life promotes work ability, and to give them concrete tools for promoting this balance in practice. When a supervisor has personal experience of the benefits of balancing work with life, they can encourage their employees to use these means and become motivated themselves to develop new means for balancing and facilitating their work. This leads to a family-friendly culture at the workplace, which has positive effects on employees' well-being at work and commitment to work.

The Balancing work and life – Training for supervisors programme can also be implemented for supervisors from different workplaces, in which case it is also important to share good practices. Supervisors from different workplaces can share their experiences, find new ideas to take back to their own workplaces, and receive peer support for their own work as supervisors.

The group training is intended as a HR management tool, even though representatives from other groups can participate in it, and the training offers the opportunity to develop HR practices. Even if the HR representative does not act as the trainer, it is still useful to invite them to the training, so that the group receives information on their workplace's options. In addition, the group's experiences can then also later be used for developing workplace measures.

Strong confidentiality ensures that the group can share their thoughts and have an open discussion about the difficulties they encounter in their work as supervisors. The sessions deal with and solve real supervisor problems; ones that do not always have an existing model.

Each participant formulates their own development plan at the end of the training. The aim of this is to commit the participants to setting targets for their work and to encourage them to try out in practice what they have learnt.

In addition to peer support, the training is based on active learning and a solution-focused approach. The exercises use tasks and measures that have proven to be effective in the group work methods of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH). They are based on several theories on human behaviour and understanding of how resources and personal motivation to change one's ways of doing things can be positively reinforced.

THE AIM OF THE BALANCING WORK AND LIFE -TRAINING FOR SUPERVISORS PROGRAMME IS TO:

- highlight the current practices and possibilities at the supervisors' own workplaces for balancing work and life,
- share the good practices of other workplaces,
- reinforce a positive culture and atmosphere in terms of balancing work and life,
- develop supervisors' skills in interaction and raising difficult subjects for discussion,
- promote equal and unbiased support for balancing work and life for men, women and people in different life situations,
- encourage supervisors to develop and use practices for balancing work and life, and
- act as a tool for those working in developing their leadership and their employees' well-being at work.

Balancing work and life benefits everyone

SUCCESSFULLY BALANCING work and life has positive effects on work performance and thus on the activities of the whole organization. Balancing work and life concerns everyone. The most challenging situations or life phases may be when one's children are small, or one's ageing parents need care. It is particularly difficult to balance work and personal life if one's job does not offer the possibility of flexible working time arrangements, or when one has no social networks in life's other areas, or other arrangements providing flexibility are unavailable.

In practice, the means for balancing these issues usually involve flexible working times, which may already be available at work to promote well-being at work and to facilitate work. Commonly used arrangements are flexi-time and being able to take time worked as overtime as days off.

From the workplaces' perspective, facilitating the employee's ability to balance work and life means *arranging work to optimize the employee's concentration while at work*. Measures to enable balancing work and life are thus means with which to improve work productivity, the quality of service, and employer image.

Balancing work and life not only facilitates work; at best it improves the work community's atmosphere and organizational culture. When practices are applied equally, and ground rules are discussed openly, employees' sense of justice is also reinforced.

On the other hand, conflict in the work/life balance is a stress factor, which burdens employees and can increase dissatisfaction, absences and cause employees to want to look for a new workplace. For this reason it is worth investing in facilitating a successful work/life balance.

Supervisor's key role in creating a family-friendly workplace

At workplaces, supervisors play a key role in how the practices for balancing work and life are implemented. Supervisors who have personal concrete experience of the good results of these measures have positive attitudes towards them. Thus, it is important that information concerning balancing work and life is personal, concrete and easy to apply. Peer support and 'similar thinking' also reinforce positive attitudes. These mechanisms are used in this group work method.

The supervisor's role is also important in other ways. Supervisor support and understanding affect whether employees feel that the measures for balancing work and life are acceptable. In addition, supervisors can themselves give an example by talking about other life areas at the workplace and for instance, leaving work for home at a reasonable hour. Supervisors can consciously make it their aim that issues concerning balancing work and life are talked about in the work community and that ground rules are agreed on together. A confidential atmosphere facilitates raising issues concerning balancing work and life that may be bothering the work community and possibly negatively affecting other employees or their work. For example, the absence of one employee may cause more work for others.

Promoting the balance of work and life can strengthen employee well-being at work and work ability. According to research, work life's current main generations greatly value flexible arrangements. In today's changing work life, with growing demands caused by self-direction, employees appreciate individual flexible arrangements made to facilitate work.

Training programme based on research data and previous development experience

The Balancing work and life – Training for supervisors programme is based on FIOH's long-term research and development activities. Supervisor training has shown to improve employees' experiences of balancing work and life. Although flexible arrangements in terms of working hours and work organization are integral for successfully balancing work and life, good results can also be achieved through influencing the workplace atmosphere. Moreover, people's challenging life situations may require individual support.

FIOH has other, earlier developed training programmes for the different phases of the working career that also use active learning and problem-solving in peer groups. These experiences form the basis of this training course. Although the other group methods focus on moulding one's own working career goals and strengthening resources, we believe that the same principles can also promote learning when the peer group members practice applying the things they learn in their own work as supervisors.

A small-scale effectiveness study of seven workplaces during the programme's developmental phase showed that the supervisor training participants' awareness of the practices for balancing work and life and of family leaves

improved during the training. Moreover, the supervisors felt that it was easier to move things along at the workplace thanks to the training, and that attitudes to the requirements for balancing work and life became more positive. The supervisors also felt that it was easier to raise the subject of family leaves with both mothers and fathers, to take diverse advantage of the workplaces' options, and to find information on the practices and arrange them if required.

Programme implementation and participants

THE GOALS of the Balancing work and life – Training for supervisors programme are best reached if the course is held intensively. The duration of the course is nine hours, and consists of three sessions. Before the course, a preliminary meeting is held for management and HR (unless a FIOH development process is already underway at the workplace, such as an employee survey).

We recommend that you divide the sessions over three half-day meetings, about once a week, so that the participants can continue their work for the rest of the day. The programme can also be conducted over two days (1 x 6 hours and 1 x 3 hours).

The contents and progression of the programme is presented in Figure 1. We have designed the programme so that the exercises build on the learning experiences from the previous exercises. For the method to be productive, it is important that the programme is implemented within 1–3 weeks, so that the issues dealt with can easily be recalled and combined into larger entities. Intensive implementation also helps the group bond and enables the participants to formulate their own development plans.

Implementation options: internally at the workplace or for supervisors from different workplaces

The supervisor training is an excellent way to focus on developing a family-friendly culture at the workplace and to ensure that supervisors are aware of working time and other arrangements that can facilitate the work/life

balance for employees. In large workplaces in particular, the practices of different units and supervisors may have become different over time, which of course feels unfair to employees. When practices and procedures are known to everyone, they are equal and are more likely to be used. In the training, supervisors also get to practice bringing up the subject of balancing work and life in discussions with their employees. In the peer groups, the supervisors can reflect on their own attitudes and share solutions for handling difficult situations. The training can at best also broaden the supervisors' own support networks.

The supervisor training is designed as an internal workplace method, but it can also be arranged for supervisors from different workplaces. In this case, sharing the practices of different workplaces can help the supervisors find new effective ideas to take back to their own workplaces. The training may also expand the supervisors' own networks.

Progression of the programme

THE TABLE below shows the training programme’s content and progression. Before the programme begins, a preliminary survey is carried out in the form of either a management or HR interview, or an employee questionnaire. A form for this interview can be found at the end of the Manual, in the Materials section (*p. 52* Form for identifying workplace practices).

PRELIMI-NARY TASK	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3	FOLLOW-UP
Situations related to balancing work and life that you have encountered in your work as supervisor	Introduction of trainer pair and programme	How do you feel?	Warm-up	Implementing your own development goal for your work as a supervisor.
	Warm-up and getting to know each other interview	Encounters – role play exercises	Busting the myths about balancing work and life	Follow-up with sparring partner.
	Presenting the programme	Consequences of balancing work and life for the work community	Organization-specific task	
	Benefits of balancing work and life	Interim task	Development goals	
	Supervisor as facilitator of balancing work and life		Where are you now?	
	Practices for balancing work and life		Concluding the programme	
	Interim task			

Figure 1. Content of Balancing work and life – Training for supervisors programme.

Working as a group

THE PROGRAMME is based on peer group discussion. During the course, the participants are divided into small groups to do their exercises. Others' views and suggestions increase participants' readiness to act and help them deal with their own work as supervisors. It is useful if the group is heterogeneous (in terms of work experience as supervisors, for example), as this ensures different views and ideas.

When forming groups, pay attention to group size. In small groups of under eight participants, it may be more laborious to generate opinions, and discussions may become trainer dependent. On the other hand, very large groups (over 15 participants) may demand more strict scheduling of the trainers. The recommended group size is 10–15 participants.

During the programme, it is beneficial to change the composition of the small groups, so that the participants talk with as many different group members as possible. Participants often feel this is beneficial. Sometimes you can intentionally choose certain pairs or groups if this is better for working or for the atmosphere.

Strength of the peer group

The course participants are given information on their workplaces' practices and procedures and think together about how a supervisor who takes into account personal life situations should act. The solutions that the participants hear from each other and the information they receive in the peer group are likely to help them act better in situations than tips from experts. Peer advice is easy to accept, and knowing that others have similar challenges and experiences helps them accept the situation and to be active in overcoming challenges.

Active learning

Another important principle that you as trainers must also constantly bear in mind is active learning. In the group programme, this means that you must continuously encourage the group to actively find solutions themselves to the challenges that are raised. You can also support active learning by encouraging the group to answer their own questions. Sometimes you may have to 'hold back' and wait so that the group has time to find the

solution themselves. You can then supplement their answers with information if needed.

The programme also includes, for example, practising raising difficult subjects for discussion. Some participants may not want to take part in role-play or group work. However, they are usually drawn in by the group activity and in the end the participants consider the tasks rewarding. Bravely stepping out of one's comfort zone usually results in the best learning experiences when the confidentiality and safety of the group is established at the very beginning.

During the programme, the participants' confidence in being able to influence their own actions and to develop as a supervisor is strengthened. This helps create supervisor work-related goals and increases the use of effective measures to reach these goals. These in turn promote positive development in supervisor skills.

According to the Social Learning Theory, the following three learning mechanisms, all of which are used in the programme, affect how we see our own skills and talents:

- Personal experiences of one's own performance
- Observing how others perform
- Feedback from others on one's own performance

A fourth factor also contributes to the functionality and effectiveness of these three learning mechanisms:

- Positive emotional state.

Receiving positive feedback is important for the participants' emotional experiences, self-confidence and how they see their own skills. They obtain motivation to participate and learn from both the other participants and the trainers. Therefore, it is important to focus on a positive and encouraging atmosphere in which everyone's views are valued and everyone is heard. Respecting the participants also involves ensuring that everyone has a turn to speak and that no-one gets to dominate discussions too much.

Returning issues to the group

A central technique for guiding a group discussion is bringing issues back to the group. In this technique, the trainer returns emerging problems and

questions to the group for a solution. You must trust the ability of the participants to think, and motivate them to propose solutions.

When participants are encouraged to discuss and share experiences, they gradually come to discover their skills and expertise in problem-solving. As trainers, you can lead the group towards the intended conclusions. The intended conclusions for each exercise are described in this Manual.

In the same way, the group can handle challenging situations by thinking of more general setbacks and obstacles, finding solutions for overcoming them or working around them and practising how to act in these situations. By reinforcing the solution-based working approach, you can enable the common processing of both goals and challenges.

Leading the group

Who can be a trainer?

The Balancing work and life – Training for supervisors programme can be arranged at the workplace by, for example, the workplaces' own HR developers, occupational safety representatives or other experts. A group consisting of supervisors from different workplaces can be led by, for example, labour market organization experts or training providers. This Manual's materials describe the contents of the training, but we recommend that those who want to lead the supervisor training attend FIOH's trainer training. FIOH's experts also arrange supervisor training groups.

Trainers' tasks

Your task as trainers is to encourage the group members, make observations and give them positive feedback on their participation in the group work. It is important to thank the participants for their comments and encourage quieter group members to join in the discussions. Positive feedback is effective when it is directed towards a concrete situation or task and when it is given immediately.

Try to create a positive atmosphere. This motivates individuals to participate, share their experiences and use the training for their own benefit and the benefit of others. The tasks at the beginning of the course and getting to know each other helps diffuse any initial stiffness and provide a model for how to work together. Experience has shown us that participants consider the group discussions easy and pleasant. Even though the programme gives

the training a structure, you must still be sensitive to participant feedback, so that positive, close interaction can take place in the group. In order to create an open atmosphere, it may help if you tell the group about your own experiences and place yourselves on the same level as the participants.

You as trainers and the techniques you use play a vital role in creating an atmosphere that promotes learning. You should learn the participants' names on the first day to be able to address them personally. Nameplates on each desk make it easier to remember names.

Role of the group trainer

It is best that the programme trainers work in pairs, if possible. The intensive programme demands that both trainers constantly divide their attention over many activities, such as following the Manual, observing the group process, communicating with the group, and recording the results of group discussions and exercises.

Co-operation between two trainers makes the implementation of the programme easier and the training does not become too stressful. It also helps maintain the participants interest and issues are dealt with more effectively.

Successful group work also requires establishing respect and trust between the trainers and the group. Your own expertise and the programme's research background help you gain respect. Respecting the participants is also important: their activeness and responsibility in discussions is an essential part of the course. In this sense, you act more as facilitators than trainers. Already during your introductions, present their own backgrounds and experiences, as this encourages the participants to do the same. Everyone's experiences and thoughts are valuable, and tolerance is important when presenting viewpoints.

By setting an example and showing that everyone is entitled to their own opinion, you are supporting the group atmosphere and the development of the active learning process. Successful group activity strengthens self-directed learning and problem-solving, also outside the group.

Keeping to schedule

It is advisable to start and end each day according to schedule. It is your responsibility to ensure that the group keeps to schedule throughout the

whole programme, because this also maintains the intensity of the programme and the interest of the participants. By keeping to schedule you also ensure that important areas do not get neglected.

When you give the participants the exercises, give them clear, effective instructions and a predetermined time limit. During the exercises, make sure they are aware of time passing by giving them reminders. Discussions easily become long and you may allow extra time for some exercises at your own discretion. It is, however, advisable to stick to the predefined starting and ending times.

Plan breaks beforehand.

Before the training

WHEN THE SUPERVISOR training is held in one organization, the trainers must arrange a preliminary meeting with someone who knows HR or someone from management. The purpose of this meeting is to agree on practical issues and schedules, on the organization-specific tasks and to gather the required workplace information for the supervisor training. The meeting should cover the working time arrangements, flexibility options and other possibilities that are already in place in the organization that are related to facilitating the work/life balance. These may be, for example, flexitime, remote work or being able to influence one's own work shifts. During the meeting you can also go through the organization's figures regarding, for example, taking family leave and age structure, and familiarize yourself with current family leave legislation. In larger organizations, these are usually recorded in, for example, their equal opportunities plan, well-being at work plan or age programme, if they have these. You can also use the material at the end of the Manual (Form for identifying workplace practices, [p. 52](#)).

The workplace's practices form the basis of the course activities. The supervisors' own experiences and development plans are dealt with in light of these. It is important that this preliminary meeting is attended by individuals who know the practices and can gather the documents that can be used in the training. Thoroughly identifying the practices ensures that the participating supervisors receive sufficient information on their own workplace's practices and that the workplace commits to dealing with the issues. It is good if the list of practices remains in use at the workplace after the

training and that it can be further developed. Compiling this list can be the organization-specific task that the participants complete during Session 3.

If the training is arranged for supervisors from different organizations, you can gather good practices from each organization before the course or compile general information on the practices. You can ask participants coming from different workplaces to find and gather the practices of their own workplace in terms of balancing work and life beforehand. These can be obtained from HR or, for example, from equality plans, annual reviews, age programmes or employee well-being surveys. You yourselves can also gather information from the participants' workplaces.

If it is not possible to obtain material on the supervisor's own organization's practices for the training, you can give the supervisors a task during the course to think about their own organization's practices and to motivate them to find out about them by as, for example, the programme's interim task. Usually it is enough to go through the practices on a general level to get the participants to realize that their organizations already have many good measures in place. It is easy to progress from this to discussing how they could be used more effectively, how the measures could be raised for discussion with employees and how their equal use could be promoted.

BEFORE THE PROGRAMME BEGINS, MAKE SURE THAT

- you have a flipchart with paper in the classroom
- you have different coloured felt-tip marker pens
- you have masking tape for attaching flipchart sheets to the wall
- you have blank A4 paper and pens
- you have 3–4 pictures for the introductory exercise
- you have all the materials required for the warm-up, for example cards or small toys
- both trainers are aware of the group schedule
- the participants have completed and returned their preliminary tasks, and know the schedule and location of the training course

NOTES

[illegible]

NOTES

[illegible]



PARTICIPANTS' PRELIMINARY TASK

Duration: about 15 minutes

AIM

The preliminary task involves collecting examples of situations involving balancing work and life from along the participants' working careers. Real-life examples concretely and personally highlight the examples and familiarize the participants with the topic.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

→ Participants carry out a preliminary task, which requires them to describe a situation involving balancing work and life that they have encountered and to tell the others how they handled it.

INSTRUCTIONS

The participants independently complete the preliminary task as a written exercise and bring it to the first meeting. Set the task when you give the participants information on the training schedule. The preliminary task is in the Materials section on page 56.

The participants think about a situation or situations in which they have helped employees balance their

work life with another life area, such as a father taking parental leave, an employer being their mother's caregiver or when an employee's partner is seriously ill.

Ask the participants to answer the following questions:

- What situation related to balancing work and life was in question?
- What practice or practices were used in the situation?
- Was the end result successful or how was the situation resolved?

If a participant cannot think of any specific life balance situation, ask them to briefly describe what balancing work and other life area practices or arrangements they know about at their workplace or what kind of situations they could be related to at their workplace. Participants complete the task before the course and bring it with them to the first meeting.



SESSION

The aim of the first day is to get to know each other, to kick start group work and to familiarize the participants with the topic. The first session also presents the work method of the course, that is, the active role of the participants.



INTRODUCTION OF TRAINERS AND PROGRAMME

Duration: about 15 minutes

AIM

The aim is to motivate participants to take part in group work and to create an open, unbiased atmosphere. Participants familiarize themselves with the goals of the programme and its objectives.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

- The trainers introduce themselves and talk about their own working life experiences and experiences of balancing work and life.
- The trainers present the programme to the participants.
- The group agrees on the confidentiality of the discussions during the programme.

INSTRUCTIONS

Introduce the background and aims of the programme (with which you have already familiarized yourself) to the participants. You can also use the description in the box.

Tell them about your own background and your own experiences of balancing work and life.

Explain the confidentiality of the discussions and that sharing individual experiences is voluntary for each participant. The plans and suggestions made in the training can be taken into use at the participants' workplaces, if this is agreed upon. However, this decision must be made jointly by the group.

BACKGROUND AND AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

Balancing work and life – Training for supervisors is a course that targets supervisors, developed by a group of experts at FIOH. Its aim is to provide supervisors with information and practical tips for supporting and arranging employee's work in a way that facilitates balancing work and life. This in turn reduces the burden on employees and increases the workplaces' family-oriented atmosphere.

Discussion during the course covers the workplaces' concrete measures for better balancing work and family life, and also deals with the skills needed in work as supervisors. Such skills include bringing up the subject for discussion, and positive attitudes to employees' life situations. The programme also helps participants anticipate and identify the challenges encountered in work as supervisors and to create possible solutions to them. The aim is that each participant formulates a plan at the end of the programme for their own development and commits to trying out what they have learnt, supported by a sparring partner.

The success of the programme depends on each participant's activeness and positive attitude. Everyone's experiences and thoughts are important, and are shared during the training in discussions and group work.

NOTE

Familiarize yourself with the goals of the training beforehand, so that you can explain them to the group in your own words. In addition, think of short stories about your own experiences. As well as talking about the

successful stories, it is good to talk about challenging phases and situations and how you overcame them. In this way, the participants get an idea of the programme's working methods and of sharing experiences also with the trainers.

1.2

WARM-UP

Duration: about 15 minutes

AIM

The aim of the exercise is to get participants thinking about balancing work and life. The exercise also helps participants get to know each other and gives them an idea of the working methods of the course.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

- Participants look at pictures on the wall and think about how they might relate to balancing work and life.
- The groups who have gathered around the pictures discuss the thoughts that they awaken and share their experiences.
- The trainers summarize the stories resulting from the pictures.

INSTRUCTIONS

You will need four pictures for this exercise. Hang the pictures in the classroom for the participants to see. You can use pictures cut from magazines, cards, photographs, posters, paintings, drawings, etc.

Ask the participants to stand up, look at the pictures more closely and think about how they might relate to balancing work and life.

When the participants have examined

all the pictures, ask them to stand beside the one that most appealed to them or that stayed in their minds.

When everyone has taken their places beside their pictures, ask them to tell each other why they chose it and then to discuss the common points in their accounts.

Finally, each small group shares their thoughts with the whole group and the trainers.

NOTE

If there is only one participant beside a particular picture, you can join them. The other trainer can also take part in the exercise in some way. This allows you to get closer to the participants, diminish the role as expert and reinforce the participants' role in the process.

CONCLUSION

Thank the group for their accounts. Make a short summary of all the accounts, for example what was common to them. Try to combine the accounts without causing rivalry between the groups, even though the accounts may be different. You can tell the group that they will think about different issues related to balancing work and life in the same way during the course.

1.3

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Duration: about 30 minutes

AIM

In this exercise, the group members get to know each other and tell each other about the goals they have related to their work as supervisors. The exercise leads the participants to think about their own role as supervisors and as promoters of employees' well-being at work.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

→ Group members interview each other and then introduce their partner to the whole group.

INSTRUCTIONS

Write the following on the flipchart or give the participants the following text:

Instructions for introducing your partner

- Your partner's name
- What does your partner do during their leisure time? Hobbies?
- To whom is your partner a supervisor?
- What does your partner think is the best thing about their work as a supervisor?

Divide the participants into pairs, preferably with someone they do not know very well. You can also suggest that they themselves chose someone they do not know as a partner, or someone with whom they have least worked with.

Give each pair a flipchart sheet and marker pens. Ask participants to interview their partners using the points above and to make brief notes. Allow about 10 minutes for the interviews.

You and your trainer partner also interview each other. Start by introducing each other and try to keep the presentation brief. Your introductions serve as a model for the group.

NOTE

It is important that each person's details are written down and presented to the group. Hang up the flipchart sheets on the wall for the duration of the course.

1.4

PRESENTATION OF PROGRAMME CONTENTS

Duration: about 10 minutes

AIM

The trainers present the content of the course and its topics and tell the participants that in addition to balancing work and life, the programme will help them develop in their roles as supervisors.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

→ The trainers present the contents of the programme.

INSTRUCTIONS

Write down or make copies of the text in the Materials section (Content of the programme, p. 58):

CONTENT OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

1. *The benefits of balancing work and life*
2. *Supervisor as facilitator of balancing work and life (preliminary task)*
3. *Good practices for balancing work and life*
4. *Encounters role play*
5. *Consequences of balancing work and life for the work community*
6. *Assumptions related to balancing work and life*
7. *Organization-specific task*
8. *Formulating a development plan*

Go through the programme section by section:

1. *The benefits of balancing work and life*

During the programme

- you will think about the benefits of successfully balancing work and life
- you will think about why it is important in supervisors' work to focus on taking the work/life balance into account

2. *Supervisor as facilitator of balancing work and life (preliminary task)*

During the programme

- you will compile challenging situations related to balancing work and life
- you will think about practical solutions for overcoming challenges

3. *Good practices for balancing work and life*

During the programme

- you will diversely look for good practices for balancing work and life
- you will deal with different ways to act in different jobs and situations

4. Encounters role play

During the programme

- you will think about the challenges of raising subjects for discussion in your work as supervisors
- you will practice good ways of raising subjects for discussion

5. Consequences of balancing work and life for the work community

During the programme

- you will think about the effects of balancing work and life on the work community
- you will look for ways to reduce the negative effects

6. Assumptions related to balancing work and life

During the programme

- you will think about the assumptions in work life about balancing work and life

- you will learn successful solutions for busting the myths about balancing work and life

7. Organization-specific task

During the programme

- you will deal with a development task for your own organization
- you will tailor the solution to suit your workplace

8. Formulating a development plan

During the programme

- you will formulate a personal plan to develop your work as a supervisor
- you will learn to understand the significance of the supervisor's actions related to balancing work and life from the perspective of employees and well-being at work.



THE BENEFITS OF BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

Duration: about 20 minutes

AIM

This exercise covers situations concerning balancing work and life and participants think about the benefits that successfully balancing work and life have for employee well-being at work. This exercise also highlights research data on this subject. The aim is to motivate supervisors to focus on this issue in their work. It is important that participants think about the benefits subjectively and realize things themselves.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

- Participants think about situations in which balancing work and life has been either successful or unsuccessful and the consequences of this.
- Participants think about the benefits of succeeding in balancing work and life and the problems caused by not succeeding.
- The aim is to make concrete the fact that successfully balancing work and life is important for work concentration, performance and well-being at work.

INSTRUCTIONS

Ask the participants to think individually for a while about what kind of situations balancing work and life could involve. The situations could be

such that they have encountered or personally experienced during their working careers.

Ask the participants to assess what benefits successfully balancing work and life has led to and what problems it could cause if the demands of work and life are in conflict. How do these consequences show? Make sure that there are pens and paper on the table so that the participants can make notes if they want to.

Record the observations that arise in the discussion on the flipchart or on a PowerPoint slide. Specify the benefits and problems and record a description of how the issue was visible or was noticed.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, you can tell the participants that only a part of salaried workers go through the phase of having small children. It is important to remember that the need to balance work and life concerns everyone, and may differ at different stages of life. These needs do not always even directly concern specific life situations or age: a longstanding worker may have small children to take care of, or parents of small children may also have ageing relatives to care for, etc.

Family and leisure time, as well as

work, are important to people. The importance of family and leisure time to employees may have even grown over the years. Men and women differ only slightly in this issue.

The line between work and leisure time has become blurred in many jobs due to the influence of information technology. This may have good as well as bad sides. Many flexibility possibilities rely on use of information technology, for instance remote work. Some people find integration of work and life as a possibility for self-directed life where they can make their own timetables. On the other hand, work-home integration may cause stress and increase work interfering leisure and family time.

Tell the participants that conflict between work and life is a stress factor, which according to research can cause

- dissatisfaction with work,

- stress and exhaustion,
- absences, and
- wanting to find a new job.

Research also shows that balancing work and life successfully has many benefits:

- commitment to work and the workplace,
- work satisfaction, well-being at work,
- work motivation, 'doing one's best', and
- work productivity.

Balancing work and life successfully is a 'win-win situation', which benefits both employees and the employer. Achieving this requires effective practices and a positive culture and atmosphere.



Figure 2. Balancing work and life successfully benefits everyone (FIOH 2015).

Print and distribute the material from the Materials section, page 59 to the participants.



SUPERVISOR AS FACILITATOR OF BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

Duration: about 35 minutes

AIM

The aim of the exercise is to identify the challenges that balancing work and life may cause supervisors and to guide them in solving them.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

- Participants look at their preliminary task in which they thought about some situation concerning balancing work and life in their own work as supervisors, and discuss what worked well or was challenging.
- Participants work together to think of solutions to challenging situations.

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the participants into small groups and ask them to take out their preliminary task. If they have not all done the task, make sure that there is someone who has done it in each group.

Ask the participants to present the situation that they have written to their group, and to discuss their solutions' successes and challenges with their group.

When the small groups have done this for about seven minutes, open the discussion to the whole group. Ask each small group to tell the larger group about the sort of situations they discussed. What kind of solutions were found?

Write down the situations and their solutions on the flipchart (or Power-Point slide).

CONCLUSION

Tell the group that situations concerning balancing work and life may also involve many challenges for the work community. When one person's work is rearranged, this affects the work of others.



1.7

PRACTICES FOR BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

Duration: about 30 minutes

AIM

The aim of the exercises is to familiarize participants with the flexible working time arrangements and other practices that are already in place at their workplaces for facilitating a work/life balance. The group also thinks about the special characteristics of their own workplace's jobs and the conditions for using flexible arrangements (e.g. the type of working hours). The aim is to find other possible practices and to add to the list.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

- The exercise uses the information that the trainers (or participants) have gathered from the workplace in the preparation phase.
- Participants receive information on procedures and practices.
- The supervisors receive material in paper form, and during the training compile a 'final version' of it, which they can keep as a checklist for later.
- The supervisors realize that many practices, and even small or one-time flexible arrangements can be significant from the employee's perspective and that it is worth looking for new solutions.

INSTRUCTIONS

Present the material on the workplace's own practices and procedures that you have gathered to the participants. You can also distribute material such as information on family leaves. It is good to highlight that fathers as well as mothers have the right to family leave. The group can think about how, for example, fathers' family leaves could best be raised for discussion at the workplace.

Ask the participants to discuss the procedures and practices with a partner and to record the responses to the following questions:

- Are you familiar with the practices?
- Is some practice missing from the list?
- What other practices come to mind?

Add any new practices emerging from the discussion to the list. Next go through a list of ten of the most used methods in 3000 workplaces in Finland and see if you can still add to the list you have made together. You can print the list in the Materials section ([p. 60-61](#)).

TOP 10 WORKPLACE PRACTICES FOR BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

1. Flexible working time arrangements

Flexible working time arrangements and mutually agreed arrangements such as a time banks and flexitime are the main ways to facilitate the work/life balance.

2. Remote work

Remote work could become more common if it was supported through encouraging guidance, good technical implementation and line managers' positive attitudes.

3. Effective substitute arrangements and practical measures for returning to work

It is worth anticipating both predictable and unexpected absences at the workplace. The workplace needs procedures for how, for example, those returning from family leaves receive induction training and are supported.

4. Recorded goals and instructions

Supervisors need top management policies to support their work, and information about the practices that support the balance of work and life.

5. Agreed ground rules and equality

Workplaces should have clear ground rules that apply equally to all employees. Equality does not, however, mean that everyone always has the same rights and duties and that special circumstances are not taken into account. An open, positive atmosphere enables discussion of issues and mutual agreement. It is good to acknowledge that single parenthood and caregiver responsibilities, for example, can be exceptionally challenging life situations.

6. Balancing work and life as part of HR processes

It is worth following the age structure, care responsibilities and how well work is balanced with life at the workplace. For example, performance appraisals and work climate surveys offer the opportunity to raise these subjects in one-to-one discussions or in the work community.

7. Personal life issues as part of occupational health co-operation and maintenance of work ability

Family situations and personal life issues that affect employees' well-being at work need to be included in support structures at the workplace, such as occupational health service activities and surveys. For example, acknowledging caregiver responsibilities and providing advice is useful.

8. Support for employees in balancing work and life

The content of employees' work tasks should be clearly defined at the workplace. Recovering from work is an important skill for us all. Individual solutions for balancing work and life and coping techniques vary, but everyone can practice self-awareness and the management of their own lives. A supervisor or colleague can provide support, and training for this can also be arranged.

9. Services to make everyday life easier

It is useful to discuss at the workplace whether employees feel the need for services that support everyday life. If needed, the employer can determine the workplace's possibilities to provide or arrange these. One example is the workplace providing a service to care for sick children.

10. Taking family into account at the workplace

If the employee's family can visit and get to know their workplace, it helps them understand the work of a parent, partner or child and the demands it places on them. For example, family events at the workplace are a good way in which to do this. At the same time, the employer gets the opportunity to meet the employee's family, which is an important resource.

Toppinen-Tanner et al. 2016

CONCLUSION

Tell the participants that practices and procedures are related to the nature of the work at the workplace. For example, flexitime cannot be applied to shift work in the same way as to office work. A good conclusion is that there are many practices and opportunities

for balancing work and life, and more can be found. It is also important that employees are informed of the practices and that they are equally accessible to all. Using flexible working time arrangements and other practices does not always mean that less work is done.

1.8

INTERIM TASK

Duration: about 10 minutes

AIM

The aim of the interim task is for the participants to assess their own role and actions as supervisors and to start thinking about development goals for balancing work and life.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

- The group forms a work/life balance line at the end of the first session.
- The group receives an interim task related to the line exercise.

INSTRUCTIONS

Tell the participants that together you will draw a work/life balance line. Ask the participants to come and stand in the middle of the floor and to imagine a line, and indicate both ends to them.

Tell them that at one end of the line the procedures and practices for balancing life areas are very familiar and used diversely in their work as supervisors. At the other end of the line, the procedures and practices are hardly known at all and are not

used in their work.

Ask the participants to choose a point on the line at which they feel they currently are, and to stand there. Ask each participant to briefly say why they chose that point.

Next, give the participants the interim task ([p. 62](#)) for the next session. Make sure you have printed the task for them beforehand. Ask the participants to return to their places and answer the following questions:

- At what point on the line did you place yourself? Why?
- At which point would you like to be?
- How would things be if you were at that point?

Tell them that you will return to this task on the third day.

CONCLUSION

In the final discussion, it is good to mention that the practices for

balancing work and life may already be in general use, for example flexible working hours, or one-time, individually-tailored measures. Encourage the participants to look for solutions and to also obtain help elsewhere: their own supervisor, HR and colleague supervisors are good sources of information and support when looking for solutions. It is good when a successful solution can be shared with other supervisors.

Employees may understandably find it difficult to talk to their superiors about their personal lives and related needs, and therefore supervisor support and a positive attitude may be exceptionally important to them.

If you have time left over, inquire how the participants feel at the end of the day by asking them to describe their mood using one adjective.



SESSION

The second session focuses on the challenging situations that arise when balancing work and life and how to solve them in the work community. During this session, participants will practice raising issues for discussion and will be encouraged to actively look for solutions.



HOW DO YOU FEEL?

Duration: about 15 minutes

AIM

The aim of assessing the mood is to prepare the participants to work together and recall the working methods of the programme.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

→ Participants think about their own mood and share their thoughts with the others.

INSTRUCTIONS

Ask the participants to think about their mood when coming to today's session. This exercise can be carried out using different cards or toys. There should be enough of these for

the participants to choose the one that appeals most to them. Participants chose a card or toy that depicts their mood.

Ask each participant in turn to briefly tell the others about their mood. You can begin, in this way providing an example of a short, concise account.

If you have no toys or cards, the exercise can be carried out verbally. Ask the participants to think of two words, the first an adjective and the second an animal. Then follow the same steps as above.



2.2

ENCOUNTERS

Duration: about 75 minutes

AIM

The aim of the exercise is to reinforce the supervisors' readiness to raise the subject of challenging situations concerning the work/life balance with their employees. First, they think about how to constructively broach how an employee's personal life is affecting their work. Next, they think about working time arrangements that could temporarily make the employee's situation easier. Finally, the group discusses how often even small measures at the workplace can support a worker going through a difficult life situation.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

- The trainer pair present three examples of discussions in which the supervisor brings up the employee's reduced work performance due to a situation at home.
- Participants give advice on how to constructively deal with the situation.
- In small groups, the participants practise the conversation between the supervisor and the employee.

INSTRUCTIONS

Tell the group that issues outside of work may either negatively or positively affect work. The supervisor may not always know what else is

going on in an employee's life. Asking about personal issues may feel difficult if people do not normally talk about their personal lives at work. If the supervisor needs to ask what is affecting an employee's work performance, raising the subject may feel difficult. The supervisor may think that personal affairs do not belong at the workplace or that the employee should be the one to bring them up.

However, it is important to encourage openness and speaking about one's personal affairs, and it is good to create an atmosphere and culture at the workplace in which personal life is an important part of an employee's well-being and coping at work. Personal affairs always affect work in one way or another anyway. The workplace can play an important supportive role during an employee's difficult personal situations or crises. Colleagues and supervisors can provide moral support and help in work tasks, and work arrangements can be made to help the employee through their difficult time.

Present two examples of how a supervisor can raise the subject of a challenging situation related to the work/life balance with an employee. Participants make suggestions between the presentations of the examples of how an employee could act constructively. (15 min)

Participants then practise discussions between a supervisor and an employee. The supervisor begins in the same way as the example, and whoever plays the employee continues in a way already agreed on. The observer gives feedback. (45 min)

To conclude, the exercise is discussed in the bigger group. (15 min)

As trainers, one of you plays the role of the supervisor, the other the employee. Act out the two first example situations using the following script.

EXAMPLE 1

Meeting room, conversation between employee and supervisor.

S = supervisor

E = employee

- **S:** (Slightly embarrassed) I've noticed that your work hasn't been as productive as usual. Nothing's changed here at work, and your workload hasn't increased. So, what's happened?
- **E:** Well, things are a bit challenging at home...
- **S:** (Authoritative and hard) Your personal life is your personal life, and you should be able to perform your work regardless. Make sure that you take care of this.
- **E:** (After a moment's silence) Ok, I'll try. (Leaves, holding back tears.)

Tell the group that you will now act out another meeting. The characters are still the same, but this situation takes place about six months later.

- **S:** (Slightly embarrassed) Is everything ok at home? You've been a bit distracted and your performance at work isn't what it normally is. Nothing's changed here at work, and your workload hasn't increased... I was just wondering if there was anything I could do to help...
- **E** (Angrily): My home life is my own business. Occupational health has given me sick leave, and I'm going to stay at home for the rest of the week. I'm perfectly entitled to it.
- **S:** Fine... (Leaves, embarrassed)

Ask the participants for advice on how the supervisor could act more constructively. Write the advice for all to see. Re-enact the situation according to the participants' advice.

EXAMPLE 2

Tell the group that the following characters are the same as those in the first example. However, now the supervisor is prepared for the conversation, and thinks that he too could play a positive role in helping the employee's personal life run more smoothly. This is an example of how the conversation could now go. However, remember to take into account the participants' advice.

- **S:** (Slightly embarrassed) I've noticed that your work hasn't been as productive as usual. Nothing's changed here at work, and your workload hasn't increased. So, what's happened?
- **E:** Well, things are a very challenging at home...

- **S:** I'm sorry to hear that. Do you want to tell me more about it?
- **E:** My child has been very ill. Luckily gran has been able to look after her, but I'm constantly worried. We've been for lots of tests, but still don't know what's wrong with her.
- **S:** It's completely understandable that it's difficult to concentrate on work in a situation like that. But we still need your good input. Can you think of any way in which the situation could be made easier? We have different flexible working time arrangements.
- **E:** Well yes, I have been thinking that if I could leave a couple of hours earlier on a Thursday and Friday for a while, then I could make it to my child's tests. That would make it a lot easier.
- **S:** That sounds good! Let's make a more detailed plan together and see how the missing hours can be made up on the team level. We'll find some solution together.

Ask the participants to think how they themselves as supervisors would raise poorer work perfor-

mance with an employee. They can prepare for the exercise by writing a script for themselves for the situation.

Divide the participants into groups of three, so that they can take the roles of supervisor, employee and observer. The supervisor and employee act out a successful situation in which the subject is raised, and the one playing the supervisor uses the good ideas previously discussed. The task of the observer is to follow the exercise and give feedback afterwards to the supervisors on how they succeeded and what helped the situation progress. After this, the participants change roles, so that each in turn plays the role of supervisor, employee and observer.

CONCLUSION

Finally, lead a short discussion on what thoughts playing the roles of supervisor and employee awakened. Did the exercise feel difficult or easy? Tell participants that in the Materials section of the Manual on page 64 is a list of 'Helpful openings and useful phrases'. This can be used when preparing for a challenging conversation.

2.3

CONSEQUENCES OF BALANCING WORK AND LIFE FOR THE WORK COMMUNITY

Duration: about 30 minutes

AIM

The aim of the exercise is to get the participants to see how measures for balancing work and life are affecting the rest of the work community, and how these situations could be managed. This exercise raises the question of trust and equality.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

- The group thinks about the effects of arrangements for balancing work and life on the work community.
- The group discusses and thinks about successful solutions from the viewpoint of the work community.

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the example story from the Materials section (p. 65). Read it aloud or ask someone from the group to read it.

- Every year, E's department has a very busy period, and many employees' working days are longer than usual; often they have to work overtime. E has always been flexible in the past with his working hours, but this time he does not work longer days or do any overtime. His colleagues wonder why.

Depending on the size of the group, ask the participants to first work in pairs and then in small groups. Ask them to think about what the colleagues are wondering about in this situation. What could have happened to E?

Write down the suggested reasons on the flipchart. Draw a line dividing the sheet and write on one side Challenges. Get the participants to think about what each situation means for E's colleagues and what the situation could lead to.

Next ask the participants to think of solutions to all the possible situations that arise in the discussion and write them down on the other side of the sheet, where you have written Solutions. Think about ways in which the supervisor could act in each situation.

If the group suggests many challenges move on to suggesting solutions. You can always add more challenges with their solutions if you have time left over.

CONCLUSION

At the end, discuss what sort of situations that affect the work community the group has encountered. If it has not already arisen in discussion, highlight the fact that openness and

trust in the work community, as well as broaching subjects early are key to finding good solutions. Positive and participative interaction is also needed, as is mutual agreement and ground rules. Ask how participants think these kind of conversations

could be enhances in the work community? Ask whether in their work community everyone is just treated in the same way regardless of their own life situation. Could we also think that 'to be equal, everyone has to be treated individually'?

2.4

INTERIM TASK

Duration: about 15 minutes

AIM

The aim of this interim task is to recall the issues handled in the previous sessions and to prepare for formulating development goals.

INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions for participants for the interim task

- Review the issues dealt with until now.
- Think first about what issues you

want to reinforce in your own work as supervisors.

- Continue working on this in the third session when formulating your development plan.

CONCLUSION

Thank the participants for their active participation during the day and for the input they have made. Tell them they are welcome to join the third session.



SESSION

The third and last session includes an organization-specific task and personal development plan. Before this however, the group looks at assumptions related to balancing work and life.



WARM-UP

Duration: about 10 minutes

AIM

The aim of the exercise is to warm participants up for the day's programme and help them recall the topics involved in balancing work and life.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

→ Participants tell the others about 1–2 things that they have come to understand or that have stayed in their minds so far on this course.

INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome the participants to the third and final session of the programme. Tell them that today they

will formulate a personal development plan on the basis of the themes dealt with so far on the course.

Tell them that up to now you have dealt with ways in which to balance work and life and the benefits that this provides, and looked together for solutions to challenging situations.

Ask the participants to think for three minutes of things that they have come to understand or that have stuck in their minds during the course so far. Ask them to share one of these with the whole group.

3.2

ASSUMPTIONS RELATED TO BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

Duration: about 40 minutes

AIM

The aim of the exercise is to become aware of assumptions related to balancing work and life which guide our own actions, often without us realizing. The participants see that they can consciously act as a supervisor who promotes equality and the balance of work and life among their employees.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

- The group discusses assumptions related to balancing work and life.
- Small groups look at a few general assumptions related to balancing work and life. They think about these assumptions from alternative perspectives and look for ways in which to prevent them influencing their actions.
- The small groups share their solutions with the whole group.

INSTRUCTIONS

Begin a discussion by asking the participants what kind of assumptions they have encountered in work life or in society in general. Write these down on the flipchart. The following types of assumptions may arise:

- Looking after small children is primarily the mother's job.
 - When an employee works remotely, they most probably laze around because no one is watching.
 - Employees with families are favoured, as those with small children can choose the holiday times they want.
 - Parents of small children are absent from work more than others.
 - Many young women find a job and then immediately go off on maternity leave.
- If the group does not come up with any assumptions, you can begin by asking, for example: Have you heard the saying that looking after small children is usually the mother's job?
- Tell the group that many assumptions related to balancing work and life may be unfounded. For example, having a child does not necessarily reduce a new parent's work motivation or desire to take on demanding work tasks. Moreover, according to research, absences due to sick children are actually only a small portion of all sickness absences. As for laziness during remote work, it is worth noting that when working from
- An employee returning from family leave wants to start work carefully and do less work than before.

home, working time is often saved due to not having to travel, and many get more done on these days as they have no interruptions, as is often the case at the workplace.

Ask the participants to discuss one of the assumptions related to balancing work and life that they have chosen (p. 66) or give each group one assumption to work on. Give each group a flipchart sheet and some marker pens.

Ask the small groups to think about alternative (or opposing) perspectives. Ask the group to also think how the supervisor could act so that the alternative situation would be realized. Allow 10 minutes for this and ask the group to write down their ideas on the flipchart sheet.

Ask each small group in turn to tell the whole group about their solutions.

Discuss how a supervisor can consciously act so that often subconscious assumptions do not affect the way in which they treat employees. Ask the participants to think of situations in which their own thinking and actions take different directions. An example situation could be that the supervisor thinks that caring for children is equally the task of both parents, but does not ask a new father whether he wants to take parental leave.

CONCLUSION

Ask the group to think about how workplace practices could take into account ways of doing things that go against these assumptions or create practices that remind us of the importance of equal treatment of employees. For example, performance appraisals could include questions about balancing work and life, which could be asked of all employees, equally.

3.3

ORGANIZATION-SPECIFIC TASK

Duration: about 30 minutes

AIM

The aim of this exercise is to compile information or methods for the participants' own workplaces. This exercise can be agreed on with HR and the workplace's management in the preliminary meeting.

The task can comprise, for instance

- Compiling or adding to a list of the workplace's practices
- Creating ground rules for supervisors for specific situations concerning balancing work and life
- Including a theme concerning balancing work and life in the workplace's performance appraisal
- Compiling supervisors' wishes and instructions for HR
- Some other task arising from the organization's needs.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

- Participants think about an agreed-upon issue for the task

first in pairs and then in small groups, and record their ideas.

- The ideas of the small groups are discussed in the larger group and the trainers write down the suggested ideas on the flipchart or PowerPoint slide. These are summarized at the end.

INSTRUCTIONS

Distribute the materials that the participants may need and paper and marker pens. Ask the participants to think in small groups about the task and to write down their ideas on the sheet. Allow 15 minutes for this.

Ask each group to present their ideas to the whole group. Collect all the ideas onto the flipchart or PowerPoint slide.

CONCLUSION

Agree on whom the results will be delivered to at the workplace if this has not already been agreed on in the preliminary meeting. Thank the participants for their good work in developing their workplace practices!



3.4

DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Duration: about 50 minutes

AIM

The aim of this exercise is that the participants create an active, concrete view of their own future work as supervisors in facilitating the work/life balance in their own work community. Defining development goals helps put the ideas of the training immediately into practice.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

- Participants think of 1–2 development goals for themselves.
- Participants spar each other in formulating a plan.
- Participants commit to their plan, and present them to the group.

INSTRUCTIONS

Ask the participants to first think individually about 1–2 things related to promoting the balance of work and life in their work community that they want to develop in their work as supervisors. They can use the course materials they have received to help them think of development goals.

Distribute the development target table (p. 67) to the group and ask them to write their goals on it. Development goals can be described by answering the following questions: What should be developed and how? What is the timetable and

how will you notice a difference? Allow 15 minutes for this exercise.

Ask the participants to choose a partner to help them achieve their goal. The partners spar each other in the development task. The partners are best chosen so that they can also work together after the course ends. Ask the participants to present their plans to their partners and to improve their plans on the basis of their discussions, questions and clarifications.

When the participants have discussed their plans with their sparring partners, ask a volunteer (or all participants) to present their development goals to the rest of the group.

The aim is that the sparring partners meet each other later to see together if their goals have been achieved and if any change has taken place. Ask the sparring partners to arrange a meeting, for example, six months after the course.

CONCLUSION

Tell the participants that the aim is for them to tell their own supervisors about their development goals and to put them into practice in their own work communities. Thank the participants for their active participation and wish them success in achieving their development goals.



WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Duration: about 15 minutes

Finally, participants once again take their place on the work/life balance line. Alternatively, you can ask each participant to briefly say in a few words what they have learnt.

AIM

The aim of this exercise is to reflect on the issues covered by the course and their own thoughts on possible changes.

COURSE OF THE EXERCISE

→ Participants position themselves on the imaginary work/life balance line.

INSTRUCTIONS

Give the participants the same instructions as those in the first session.

Tell them that at one end of the line the procedures and practices for balancing life areas are very familiar and used diversely in their work as supervisors. At the other end of the line, the procedures and practices are hardly known at all and are not used in their work.

Ask the participants to choose a point on the line at which they feel they currently are, and to stand there. Ask each participant to briefly say why they chose that point.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the exercise, discuss whether the programme has helped the participants to recognize situations and solutions for balancing work and life.

3.6

CONCLUSION OF PROGRAMME

At the end of the programme, remind the participants that the result of the organization-specific task is to be implemented at the workplace, and that it is hoped that all of them will realize their development plan and meet their sparring partners.

Gather written feedback from the participants on whether they felt that the course was good or useful. You can also ask for feedback on your own role as a trainer, course arrangements, and other practical issues related to the course. You can use the feedback form on pages **68-69** for this.

If you have some additional reading for the participants on the topic, you can give this to the participants.

Finally, give out the certificates. Remember to thank the participants for their active participation and to wish them all the best. Before they leave they can make a 'virtual toast' to each other and thank each other for the discussions and wish each other success in their work as supervisors.



FOLLOW-UP

Duration: about 45 minutes

The aim is that participants meet up with their sparring partner and go through the realization of the development plans that they made during the course and the experiences that have accompanied it.

The supervisors meet their sparring partner on the date agreed in the third session. They each present the development plan they made and how it has been realized.

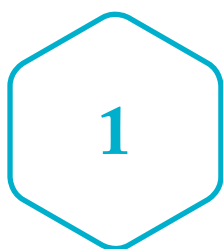
They discuss their experiences of the development plan and whether any changes have occurred in their own work as supervisors, and if so, what

kind of changes. The discussion can be based on, for example, the following questions:

- What was my development plan?
- Did my plan change my way of doing things as a supervisor? How? Why not?
- What do I now think of balancing work and life in terms of my own well-being at work and that of my employees?
- My future plans

NOTES

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



FORM FOR IDENTIFYING WORKPLACE PRACTICES

Does your workplace have recorded practices for balancing work and life, which take into account different life phases? Where are these recorded?

	Yes	No
1. In the company's strategy, values or professional standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. In the equal opportunities plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. In the well-being at work plan, age programme or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. In the occupational safety and health programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. In the guide to remote work or other internal instructions and rules (e.g. induction training)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. In the HR or staff training plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. In the occupational health service plan, well-being at work plan or early intervention model	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Somewhere else, where?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is the balance of work and life monitored at your workplace in any of the following ways?

	Yes	No
1. The use of flexible working time arrangements, family leaves and other leaves is followed (e.g. sabbatical)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The realization of equality is monitored, by following e.g. family-related and parental leaves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Workplace climate surveys or the equivalent cover employees' experiences of balancing work and family life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Occupational health services take into account challenges caused by employees' family life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. Performance appraisal instructions encourage raising issues related to balancing work and family life for discussion | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. The recruitment and induction instructions explain the possibilities for balancing work and family life at the workplace | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. The occupational safety and health committee meetings follow the use and development of practices for balancing work and family life | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Other, what? _____ | | |

Which of the following working time practices and flexible arrangements are in use at your workplace?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Flexitime, which enables flexibility in when you arrive at and leave the workplace | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Able to agree with supervisor on exceptional working hours | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Able to agree with supervisor on taking time off work and how this can be compensated | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Autonomous working and work shift times | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Time bank, into which working hours that exceed normal working times are recorded; these can then later be used as time off | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Able to save some annual leave and take it as holidays later | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Able to exchange holiday pay for days off | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sabbatical | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Study leave | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Part-time work arrangements, able to reduce working hours | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Remote work option | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Meetings etc. arranged so that everyone can attend (for example, those who have to take or get children to/from day care are taken into account) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other, what? _____ | |

Do you think your workplace should arrange/pay for the following practices for supporting the work/life balance?

	Service already in use	Not needed	Yes, provided by the employer	Yes, paid for by the employer
1. Leisure time activities (e.g. employer-subsidized exercise activities or family events)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Voluntary support networks for employees and their families (e.g. peer support group for balancing work and family life)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Carer for sick children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Occasional child care services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Regular workplace crèche	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Afternoon care for children at the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Transportation service for children (to day care, hobbies, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Cleaning services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Catering services (e.g. possibility to buy meals at the workplace to take home)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Other household services (e.g. home renovation services)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Other, what?	<hr/>			

Are the following family leaves generally used at your workplace?	Yes	No
Maternity leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paternity leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leave for special care of family member or immediate relative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



PRELIMINARY TASK

THINK ABOUT a situation in which you as a supervisor have helped an employee balance work and life; for example, a situation in which a single parent finds it difficult to do shift work, an employee is their mother's caregiver, a father is on parental leave, or an employee's partner becomes seriously ill.

Think about and write down answers to the following questions:

- What situation related to balancing work and life was in question?

- What practice or practices were used in the situation (e.g. flexible working time arrangements, unpaid leave)?

- Was the end result successful or how was the situation resolved?

You can also think of unresolved or challenging situations. Write down your thoughts and take your preliminary task with you to the first session.

If you cannot think of any specific situation related to balancing work and life, briefly describe any practices that you know of at your workplace that facilitate the work/life balance.



PROGRAMME CONTENT

CONTENT OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

- 1.** The benefits of balancing work and life
- 2.** Supervisor as facilitator of balancing work and life (preliminary task)
- 3.** Good practices for balancing work and life
- 4.** Encounters role play
- 5.** Consequences of balancing work and life for the work community
- 6.** Assumptions related to balancing work and life
- 7.** Organization-specific task
- 8.** Formulating a development plan



THE BENEFITS OF SUCCESSFULLY BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

TELL THE participants that conflict between work and life is a stress factor, which according to research can cause

- dissatisfaction with work,
- stress and exhaustion,
- absences, and
- wanting to find a new job.

Research also shows that balancing work and life successfully has many benefits:

- commitment to work and the workplace,
- work satisfaction, well-being at work,
- work motivation, ‘doing one’s best’, and
- work productivity.

Balancing work and life successfully is a ‘win-win situation’, which benefits both employees and the employer. Achieving this requires effective practices and a positive culture and atmosphere.



Balancing work and life successfully benefits everyone (FIOH 2015).



TOP 10 WORKPLACE PRACTICES FOR BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

TOP 10 workplace practices for balancing work and life

1. Flexible working time arrangements

Flexible working time arrangements and mutually agreed arrangements such as a time banks and flexitime are the main ways to facilitate the work/life balance.

2. Remote work

Remote work could become more common if it was supported through encouraging guidance, good technical implementation and line managers' positive attitudes.

3. Effective substitute arrangements and practical measures for returning to work

It is worth anticipating both predictable and unexpected absences at the workplace. The workplace needs procedures for how, for example, those returning from family leaves receive induction and are supported.

4. Recorded goals and instructions

Supervisors need top management policies to support their work, and information about the practices that support the balance of work and life.

5. Agreed ground rules and equality

Workplaces should have clear ground rules that apply equally to all employees. Equality does not, however, mean that everyone always has the same rights and duties and that special circumstances are not taken into account. An open, positive atmosphere enables discussion of issues and mutual agreement. It is good to acknowledge that single parenthood and caregiver responsibilities, for example, can be exceptionally challenging life situations.

6. Balancing work and life as part of HR processes

It is worth following the age structure, care responsibilities and how well work is balanced with life at the workplace. For example, performance appraisals and work climate surveys offer the opportunity to raise these subjects in one-to-one discussions or in the work community.

7. Personal life issues as part of occupational health co-operation and maintenance of work ability

Family situations and personal life issues that affect employees' well-being at work need to be included in occupational health service activities and surveys. For example, acknowledging caregiver responsibilities and providing advice is useful.

8. Support for employees in balancing work and life

The content of employees' work tasks should be clearly defined at the workplace. Recovering from work is an important skill for us all. Individual solutions for balancing work and life and coping techniques vary, but everyone can practice self-awareness and the management of their own lives. A supervisor or colleague can provide support, and training for this can also be arranged.

9. Services to make everyday life easier

It is useful to discuss at the workplace whether employees feel the need for services that support everyday life. If needed, the employer can determine the workplace's possibilities to provide or arrange these. One example is the workplace providing a service to care for sick children.

10. Taking family into account at the workplace

If the employee's family can visit and get to know their workplace, it helps them understand the work of a parent, partner or child and the demands it places on them. For example, family events at the workplace are a good way in which to do this. At the same time, the employer gets the opportunity to meet the employee's family, which is an important resource.

Toppinen-Tanner et al. 2016



INTERIM TASK

OWN ROLE as supervisor and facilitator for balancing work and life.

Line exercise.

Imagine a line on the floor.

At one end, the procedures and practices for balancing work and life are very well known to you and you may already be diversely putting them into use in your work as a supervisor.

At the other end, you hardly know these procedures and practices or do not use them at all in your work as a supervisor.

Go and stand at the point on the line at which you feel you are at this moment.

In a few words, tell the group why you chose this point.

Think for a moment about the following questions and then answer them:

- At which point on the line did you place yourself?

- Where would you like to be?

- How would things be if you were at that point?

Take this task with you to the next session.



PREPARING FOR CHALLENGING DISCUSSIONS: USEFUL OPENINGS

HELPFUL openings and useful phrases

- Have you ever thought that ...
- I may be wrong, but the thought came to my mind that ...
- I may have misunderstood, but your colleague NN told me that ...
- I must have explained this to you poorly, but ...
- Has any one of your colleagues remarked that ...
- I'm not sure if I understood correctly, but last Friday after the team meeting, you said that ...
- I may be wrong, but I've noticed recently that ...
- Example or description of situation. What do you think of the situation I just described?
- Could you tell me more...I must have explained it poorly ...?
- What do you think of this situation/the points I just raised?
- What do you see as the options?
- I'd like to hear your solution.
- Think of what we could achieve if we acted differently.

Maisa Gröndahl 2006



BALANCING WORK AND LIFE AND THE WORK COMMUNITY. AN EXAMPLE.

EVERY YEAR, E's department has a very busy period, and many employees' working days are longer than usual; often they have to work overtime. E has always been flexible in the past with his working hours, but this time he does not work longer days or do any overtime. His colleagues wonder why.

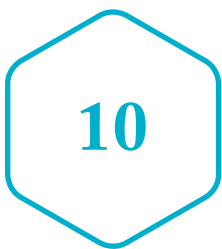
[illegible]



ASSUMPTIONS RELATED TO BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

CHOOSE ONE of the assumptions below related to balancing work and life or think of one of your own. Think of alternative explanations. How could you act in your own role as a supervisor to overcome this assumption?

- An employee returning from family leave wants to start work carefully and do less work than before.
- Looking after small children is primarily the mother's job.
- When an employee works remotely, they most probably laze around because no one is watching.
- Employees with families are favoured, as those with small children can choose the holiday times they want.
- Parents of small children are absent from work more than others.
- Many young women find a job and then immediately go off on maternity leave.



MY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

OUTLINE OF GOAL	IMPLEMENTA- TION: WHAT DO I DO?	TIMETABLE	FOLLOW-UP: HOW WILL I SEE THE CHANGE?

Date agreed with sparring partner for follow-up meeting

____/____ 20____



FEEDBACK FORM

1. I LEARNT new things in the supervisor training and came to understand many things.

- Totally disagree ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Somewhat disagree ☐
- Somewhat agree ☐
- Agree ☐
- Cannot say ☐

2. I CAN use what I have learnt on the course in my work.

- Hardly/not at all ☐
- Very little ☐
- To some extent ☐
- Quite a lot ☐
- Very much ☐
- Cannot say ☐

3. What was good about the course and what worked well?

4. What would you have liked to do differently? What was lacking?

5. What specific exercise or discussion did you gain the most from?

6. What other thoughts or comments do you have about the course?

THE BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

-TRAINING FOR SUPERVISORS course is a nine-hour training programme that aims to improve supervisors' ability and readiness to support employees in balancing their work and life at their workplace. The successful balance of these two life areas is an important element of well-being at work, which in turn enables good work productivity.

During the programme, supervisors learn to utilize their own workplace's working time arrangements and other good practices for balancing work and life in their own work as a supervisor. They obtain information and tips, share their own experiences in a peer group, and formulate a personal development plan.

The programme is meant for workplaces, to be carried out by developers of personnel, HR specialists and others in support functions who have been especially trained in the method. The manual contains the training programme, a description of the basic principles of the process, and material for the participants.



Finnish Institute of
Occupational Health



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