

Southeastern Idahoans learn about work-life balance

AT A GLANCE

Americans are under increasing pressure to provide financially for their households and to be highly productive at work while maintaining personal health, relationships and community participation.

The Situation

Professional obligations and career aspirations can be positive elements in life; however, these elements can become out of balance with regard to personal health, relationships and community participation. An increase in financial burden, interpersonal stress and health challenges can exacerbate imbalance between professional and personal life, negatively affecting individuals, families and communities.

Our Response

University of Idaho Extension family and consumer sciences educator Leslee Blanch presented interactive discussions on work-life balance to educational staff and faculty, individuals returning to the work force and the community at large. These presentations incorporated principles of balancing five aspects of life: physical health; mental, emotional and spiritual well-being; family; friends; and occupation. Discussion of these principles included time-saving guidelines for the planning and preparations of meals and for physical activity, the importance of sleep, relaxation techniques and evaluating the “essential” in both work and in personal life.



Developing a balanced perspective between personal and professional obligations and aspirations.

Program Outcomes

Of 49 participants who completed a post-survey, 34 (69%) reported gaining new knowledge on improving work-life balance. New information related to change-management, self-management and stress-management was noted. New knowledge regarding the following was also noted: Importance of sleep and techniques to improve sleep; guidelines for evaluating what is essential; how to say “no” more often to avoid over-commitment; and how to increase time for relationship building.

Statements of intention for behavioral change were made by 43 (88%) participants completing the post-survey. Intention for change encompassed practicing technology management, designating specific time

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devoted to self-care, practicing relaxation and breathing techniques, prioritizing and setting goals, and requesting help from others when needed.

The Future

Successfully balancing professional and personal aspects of life continue to be a challenge in America's busy society. Periodic review of personal goals and daily schedules helps refocus on what is deemed "essential" in life. This educator will continue to provide wellness education on work-life balance to a wide variety of audiences.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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