



Reduce harmful work stressors

Improve job quality and health

Work Stress Solutions

Reducing work-family conflict

Work-life conflict is a lack of time and energy to adequately meet both the demands of work and non-work life. It is a source of stress that can lead to burnout, sleep problems, higher blood pressure, and productivity impacts. Reducing work-life conflict can promote gender equity, since working women are still the primary caretakers of children and the elderly and benefit greatly from work-life balance policies.

I. Workplace Policies & Practices¹

These are recommendations or resources for implementing changes in an organization to improve work-life balance and reduce the stress associated.

1. **ADOPT POLICIES (if none exist) on alternative work schedules (AWS), fair and flexible work schedules** appropriate to the industry that allow working people to balance work and life responsibilities and reduce this major source of stress. These can include:
 - a. job sharing
 - b. working from home (remote/hybrid)
 - c. working reduced hours (with similar benefits)
 - d. employee ability to change work hours
 - e. advanced notice of schedule or changes
 - f. employee input into schedules and hours
 - g. working a set number of hours with a flexible schedule
 - h. working compressed hours, or more hours over fewer days
 - i. four-day work weeks

2. **ENSURE ADEQUATE STAFFING** to carry out work-life policies (above).

3. **ESTABLISH LIMITS** to avoid excessively long work hours, weekend hours (where possible), and after-hours emails.
4. **EXPAND** or **DEVELOP BENEFITS AND PROGRAMS** to assist with managing personal and caregiving needs, including:
 - a. financial help for child care or for care of older adults
 - b. workplace breastfeeding support
 - c. a workplace nursery or subsidized child care facility
 - d. maternity and paternity pay above the required minimum
 - e. sick leave pools to help employees during hardship leaves
5. **MAKE AVAILABLE ADEQUATE PAID VACATION TIME** to provide all employees with work-life balance and recovery time. Encourage use of vacation time.
6. **EDUCATE & COMMUNICATE POLICIES** to all employees throughout the organization using posters, emails, and social media.
7. **TRAIN SUPERVISORS** on [Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors \(FSSB\)](#), an evidenced-based training from the [Oregon Healthy Workforce Center](#). **Learn** how to communicate about and support employees to use existing work-life policies and programs (e.g. avoiding scheduling meetings during child care pickup or drop off time periods), and role-modeling work-life balance behavior.
8. **ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION:**
 - a. to give feedback on current problems regarding work-family conflict (anonymously);
 - b. in decision-making about what new policies or programs would be beneficial or how to make them more effective.

¹Adapted from [Job Stress Intervention Guide](#), TWH Center for Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace, 2015

II. Healthy Work Strategies Case Studies and Resources

- Reducing work-family conflict through supervisor training on Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors (FSSB) Work-Family Health Network Toolkits to Achieve Work-Life Balance
- Improving team communication and work-family balance (SHIP)
- Work-Family Health Network (STAR)
- Colorado Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit - Colorado Dept of Public Health & Environment
- Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC) - Employer Toolkit
- Better Work Toolkit

III. Making Changes Beyond the Workplace

Laws and regulations (city, state, or national) are widely-used strategies by employers, unions or worker advocacy groups to improve Work-Life Balance, including: paid family/sick leave laws, affordable child care, pregnancy and breastfeeding policies, and laws to control “on call” scheduling, mandatory overtime, or hours.

- Laws prohibiting mandatory overtime for nurses
- Work scheduling laws contribute to more stable employment Pregnant Workers Fairness Act
- US Breastfeeding Policies & Programs
- Family Values at Work - Paid Family & Sick Leave Initiatives
- Paid Sick Day Statutes
- State Paid Family Leave Laws
- CA Affordable Child Care Family Fees Act (AB92)