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KEEP YOUR WORK AND PERSONAL LIVES BALANCED

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Approximately 58% of workers in Malaysia are experiencing burnout, while 51% of workers have an average or bad work-life balance (Employee Hero, 2022). Burnout mostly happens among professionals, especially doctors (Bhende et al., 2020), while people with poor work-life balance can be found in a variety of industries and occupations. It doesn't apply to just one kind of individual, but traits and circumstances can increase a person's risk of experiencing work-life balance issues.

Reasons for the inability to have work-life balance could vary. It may arise among workaholics or individuals who prefer work over other matters. On the other hand, people in demanding professions like healthcare will have more responsibility and longer workdays which might result in the same issue. It is also challenging for entrepreneurs to maintain a work-life balance, particularly in the early stages of starting and expanding a business. Furthermore, it may be difficult for workers to strike a healthy work-life balance if they have unreasonable expectations about their workload, deadlines, or opportunities for career growth. Even though technology and work from home are a blessing for some people in balancing between work and personal life, the boundaries are blurring. Workers are required to work from home during the COVID-19 outbreak and maintain constant internet access on computers and smartphones. Up until recently, several employers still expected workers to reply to emails and messages sent outside of regular business hours. Disconnecting from work is difficult for employees due to technology.

Consequently, burnout may result from an inability to strike a balance between work and personal life. People will experience physical and mental exhaustion, weakened performance, and a sense of disengagement from their work, even though they may not be aware of it. They have a higher risk of developing immune system deficiencies, cardiovascular illnesses, and mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. Furthermore, fatigue and burnout can affect cognitive function, decision-making, and creativity, which eventually hinders overall work performance, which could lead to a decline in productivity (Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020). It is difficult for someone who is overworked and stressed to keep up good ties with their coworkers. This could sour the atmosphere at work and make cooperation and teamwork difficult.

People need to understand how crucial it is to maintain a work-life balance. Prioritizing one's family and personal affairs over work does not imply laziness or a lack of respect for one's profession. Health is the most important thing in life. Keeping a healthy work-life balance additionally provides protection against burnout and stress-related illnesses including depression, anxiety, and heart disease. Employees that get ample rest and take breaks are more rested and motivated, which boosts output. A content worker who enjoys good relationships with friends and family will be more satisfied with their employment, which will increase motivation, engagement, and pleasure at work (Shanker & Kaushal, 2022). As a result, workers will feel more appreciated and supported at work and will have less stress in overall.

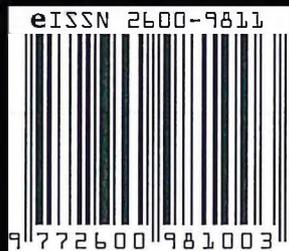
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The willingness to maintain a healthy work-life balance is a personal responsibility. Employees need to set a clear boundary between working and personal hours (Bartlett et al., 2021). To avoid bringing their job home is challenging because employees have experience working at home during the pandemic. It is common for employees to work at home now. Here, an individual must identify the task to prioritize, minimize time spent on less crucial activities and use calendar or planner effectively (Bartlett et al., 2021). Individuals must know their limits and have the courage to say no to additional work or commitments when necessary. Try not to check work emails or messages outside working hours. Turning off notification helps a lot to not think about anything related to work during personal time. If possible, employees can discuss workload with supervisor and stress on having a work-life balance.

Keep in mind that achieving work-life balance is an ongoing process, and employees need to constantly adjust their work and personal life accordingly. The desire to have a balanced and healthy life will come from the individual themselves. We shall achieve our goals if we have courage and determination.

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