

Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Supporting a culture of work-life balance

In tough economic times, many organizations operate with smaller workforces and fewer resources to maintain a healthier bottom line. As a result, many employees find themselves picking up the slack. But taking on greater responsibilities with fewer resources can raise stress levels and fatigue, leading to job dissatisfaction and even the loss of team members, as they seek out healthier work environments.

Though employers may think it's their market when it comes to recruitment, the benefits of investing in employees and retaining them far outweighs the cost of replacing them. Think about that talent on your team and the time it takes to orientate, train and develop each member. Think of your strongest staff members and the how the loss of their contributions could affect your organization. Work-life balance is an important component of any organization seeking to attract and retain its talent by creating a productive and positive work environment.

Communicate

Communicating your expectations is integral to creating a work environment conducive to work- life balance. Let your team know that practices such as staying past working hours is not your ideal. Encourage employees to take their lunch breaks, and *not* at their desk. Listen to your team and work with them to resolve issues that could be causing them to be overworked, such as unmanageable workloads and unrealistic deadlines. Let them know you respect and value their ersonal time and will work with them to protect it.

Get a life

You've heard the saying "Do as I say, not as I do." As a leader, you set the example for your team and your actions speak louder than your words. If you burn the midnight oil, you set an unhealthy expectation for your followers that encourages them to stay late, which could in turn contribute to 'presenteeism'—or workers that are there physically, but not able to perform job duties to the level needed. Get out of the office at a decent time, show employees you're not 'all talk' and that you value work-life balance in your own life too.

Be flexible

Do you have employees commuting from a long distance away? How about caring for an elderly parent, or small children, or both? Every employee lives a different life and you can help create work-life balance and accommodate these differences by:

- **Assigning 'home work'**. Because of modern technology, many employees don't need to be physically in the office every day to do their job, interact with clients and colleagues and meet their deadlines. Provide optional work-from-home days so employees commuting can have the odd day without travel time, or so the parent of a sick child can stay at home without scrambling to find childcare.

- **Negotiating start and finish times.** Offer flexible start and finish times to accommodate different lifestyles and schedules. For example, if an employee is taking evening classes at the local college, he or she may want to arrive an hour early and leave an hour early to make it to class on time. Find out how flexible your start and finish times can be, whether it is a half hour, an hour or more. You don't have to

throw normal working hours out the window, but be flexible and see what works best for your clients, your team and the organization as a whole.

- **Supporting summer hours.** When the good weather hits, help your staff make the most of their summer. If possible, allow them to book in extra time Monday to Thursday so they can get out earlier on Friday afternoon so they can beat the cottage country traffic or travel to that out of town game.

Value vacations

Are you turning down vacation requests because you can't back fill an employee during their absence? Vacations have the power to rejuvenate, providing rest and relaxation that can result in a more positive attitude and fresh perspective when employees return to work. Encourage workers to take vacations, and not just a long weekend. Cross-train your team members so they can provide backup for each other for more than a day or two, so each person can enjoy more consecutive time off when they need or want it.

Lead the way

Whether its yoga or meditation, nutrition or health promotion, providing health and wellness programs or classes will encourage your employees to live balanced lives as well as provide some guidance and resources for implementing change. Invite guest speakers or instructors to come in over lunch hours or before or after work. By investing in your employees work-life balance, you invest in their productivity and morale.

Press 'pause'

Have you ever had to reread a page in a book because you had lost focus while reading? Our minds aren't made to work under extended periods of concentration. Talk to your employees about taking a quick pause every 90-120 minutes to shift tasks, look away from their computer (if applicable) and shift their focus. They will return to their task with better concentration, enabling them to move through it more quickly.

Foster fun

Encourage an atmosphere of ‘work hard, play hard’ in your office by bringing fun into the workplace. Read below for some ideas on how to incorporate fun into your office.

- **Plan a potluck** or a barbecue on site. Nothing brings people together like food. Take a break as a team to chow down on some homemade lasagna or freshly grilled burgers and leave work-related talk off the menu.

- **Move your team meeting** outside or to the local cafe on a nice day. Do you remember how much fun recess was in elementary school? You may be a little older, but a change in setting, especially when there’s great weather, can still be a liberating experience.

- **Celebrate together** individual and shared accomplishments, rewarding hard work and motivating your team to continue on towards their next milestone. If you are in sales, for example, take the last half hour of work every Friday to go over the major 'wins' of the week. Applauding your team’s accomplishments is a great way to end the day and work week.

Work-life balance should be a priority to any leader seeking to attract and retain good talent. It not only improves productivity, but also creativity, as your team is able to work with healthy and strong minds and bodies. Employees are not a commodity, they are diverse group of people that require respect and some flexibility (when possible) to perform to their full potential.

If you require support to deal with a sensitive employee situation, contact LifeWorks·fgi to find out more about the consultation and training services your Employee Assistance Program provides.

© 2026 Morneau Shepell Ltd. Your program may not include all services described on this website,

please refer to your benefit material for more information. For immediate assistance, call 1.844.880.9137.