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Work-Life Balance for Nurse Managers

It is obvious that the economy and change in working conditions for nurses is taking its toll and nurses may be nearing the tipping point, when their physical and emotional health concerns outweigh their financial concerns. Let's face it, people can only work 50-60 hours a week for so long.

But this is about you, the nurse manager. How many hours are you working? Are you sacrificing your work life balance at the expense of your emotional and physical well being? If you are, stop. You may be hurting patient care just as much as your burned out staff.

How? As their manager, your nurses take their behavioral cues from you, so if you are stressed and burned out, that is going to impact them and the patient care they give. It is pretty simple:

Happy Manager + Happy Staff = Happy Patient

And we all know that happy patients come back to your hospital and recommend you to their family and friends, increasing hospital revenue and making your hospital CFO and CMO happy. Plus when hospital revenue is up, so many other good things happen, new programs that help patients

can be implemented, additional staff can be brought on to improve nurse to patient ratios and so many other side benefits that come with being a financially sound hospital.

So the real question is how do you achieve that work life balance as a nurse manager with so many people relying on you, your spouse, your kids, your parents, your employees?

If you look at your life as made up of three parts, with one leg representing your home/life, another representing your work life and another representing your mental well-being (physical, spiritual, holistic) it is easy to see how letting one area lag or another become too large can really throw you off balance and lead to nurse manager burnout.

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Reduce Your Stress

When did living become so hard? Between jobs or school, household chores, typical errands, raising a family and maintaining general sanity, days are packed to the gills with more than even Wonder Woman could handle!

To combat all those days brimming with things to do, people to see and places to be, here's a list of fun, relaxing and enjoyable things to defeat the stressors in your life this spring. Check them out and see if any of these stress-busters might give you the peace of mind and solace your life is missing.

1. Put on comfy clothes and snuggle up with a good book.
2. And some chocolates.
3. And a cup of tea with some cookies.
4. Take a bubble bath.
5. Give yourself a nice pedicure to pamper yourself AND get your toes in shape for sandals.
6. Determine a maximum amount of money that you are allowed to spend and go shopping for new shoes. And a purse. And clothes!
7. Stop and smell the roses.
8. Make some popcorn and watch a movie.
9. Enjoy a candlelit dinner.
10. Listen to soft, soothing music.
11. Or, if you really need to get out some frustration, listen to rock and roll or hard core music.
12. Play an instrument, especially guitar, if you know how.
13. Ask someone else to play for you if you don't know how.

14. Take an entire night to yourself, to be completely worthless. Order take-out, walk around in your jammies and just enjoy having nothing to do.

15. Exercise! Go for a run, walk, jog, bike ride or other athletic activity. Get some friends together and play tennis or golf, have a catch or do something new and exciting in the world of sports. See: [Easy exercising](#)

16. Go on a boat ride. Canoe, sailboat, yacht, kayak; it matters not the kind of boat but that you have a nice, relaxing time on the water.

17. Take a nap or go to bed early. No lie, if you are feeling completely zonked from a tough week, your body will love you for it.

18. Make some comfort food. Cupcakes, cookies, cakes, pies; anything sweet and scrumptious is fair game!

19. Get together with your girlfriends and commiserate. When you all share your dilemmas and get the frustration out in the open, it's a pretty sure thing that you'll be feeling better in no time.

20. Go on a vacation. Whether you leave for a week or you take a five-minute mental vacation, sometimes an escape from reality is all it really takes to re-energize and rejuvenate yourself.

No matter what types of activities or lack thereof, refuel you and rejuvenate you after a tough workday or workweek, remember that relaxation is only a good nights sleep away.

Maintaining the balance between work and home can take many forms:

- You may be a workaholic who is addicted to the rush of work and taking care of patients, or feels that she can never do enough
- You may be in a situation where you are working more than you want to (and have no choice really) and feel guilty about it

- Or, you may be just a little unorganized and need to streamline some things to get your life back in order

Whatever the case is, the stress can be very real and as you know stress can lead to poor health. I recently heard someone describe this situation as "our priorities don't match our responsibilities" and I would say that pretty much hits the nail on the head. Finding a way to line these two up may not make you less busy, but it does feel good knowing that what you are spending your time doing is what you should be doing.

In addition, your role as caregivers and/or managing caregivers will pretty much automatically guarantee you higher work stress than others; making a solid home life crucial.

Overall the advice is fairly simple sounding, things like accepting help, delegating, guarding your private time, planning times to spend together, etc. but they are all probably a little harder to implement. But sometimes just having the ideas in your head can be enough to get you started and remember, they say it takes 21 days to turn a behavior into a habit. Do you have 3 weeks to create a better work / home balance?

Here are some great websites addressing the issue of work-life balance and stress for the working woman - these can be applied to the working man as well!

bluesuitmom.com/career/balance/

www.womanowned.com/growing/Manage/Balance.aspx

www.workingmother.com

To learn of other ways to help maintain a safe and happy staff call **1-866-633-3548** or visit us at StaffYourHospital.com

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