

## Balancing Your Life

Do all the demands on your time have you feeling like you're too busy performing a juggling act to live your life? Our many tasks at work and home can make us feel like there's no time left for ourselves—or the ones we love. When you begin to feel overwhelmed by your many responsibilities, it's important to remember that you must take care of yourself before you can take care of others. Following these simple tips can help you ease your stress by striking a balance:

- **Prioritize.** Periodically make lists of the things you need to do and rank them in order of importance. Then work on one task at a time, crossing them out as you complete them. You'll get a sense of accomplishment and feel motivated to continue.
- **Be realistic.** If when making your list you feel overwhelmed by all that you need to do, give the list a second look. Is everything listed really necessary? Perhaps you can eliminate some less important things to spend more time with your family or catch up at work. Be realistic about how much you can do.
- **Work smarter.** Take control of your workday, and you'll bring less stress home. Set daily goals for yourself, and don't let others distract you. At the end of the day, prepare your work space for tomorrow. Less worry about work means more enjoyable time at home.
- **Take charge.** Feeling powerless on the job can lead to frustration. Talk to your supervisor about your responsibilities at work, and communicate with your co-workers to keep goals clear. Taking an active role in your job can give you a feeling of ownership over what you do.
- **Be flexible.** No matter how carefully you plan your day, unexpected things can happen. Your child care provider may get sick, your boss may ask you to stay late, or despite your best efforts, you may miss your kid's little league game. Learn to roll with the punches, and have a backup plan when the unexpected occurs. Having someone to step in to baby-sit or pick up the kids can be a big relief.
- **Enlist help.** No one can run a household and work a job entirely on their own. Call family meetings and enlist help by offering family members choices about what chores they would like to do. Being allowed to choose their jobs can make your children feel more proud of a task well done.
- **Beware of daily "hot spots."** Is there one particular time of the day that seems to get out of hand on a regular basis? Plan ahead for these times so they run more smoothly. If morning is your family's hectic time, make it easier on yourself by packing lunches ahead of time or laying out clothes the night before.
- **Take time out.** Don't forget to schedule some "down time" for yourself. Even five to 10 minutes can help. You'll be much more productive at work and home if you take some time out for your own needs.

**Is your stress building up? Need someone to talk with? Looking for helpful suggestions? United participants can call Care24 any time, 24 hours every day to speak with compassionate professionals.**

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