



SwitchOff

Supporting worker's well
being during remote work

Project No: 2022-1-PL01-KA220-VET-000085734

SwitchOff Training Program – Module 6

CC-BY-NC-SA



This document may be copied, reproduced or modified according to the above rules. In addition, an acknowledgement of the authors of the document and all applicable portions of the copyright notice must be clearly referenced.

All rights reserved.

© Copyright 2023 SWITCHOFF

Deliverable Lead and Editor: Institute of Development, Evie Michailidis
Contributing Partners: Crea360, University of Verona, Mindshift, Cardet, Ahe, Hapsy
Date: 15/05/2023
Dissemination Level:

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the National Agency (NA). Neither the European Union nor NA can be held responsible for them.



Training Programme

Module 6

Disconnecting from work; the role of the manager in creating the appropriate conditions to promote employees' right to disconnect

Module 6	
Module 6	Disconnecting from work; the role of the manager in creating the appropriate conditions to promote employees' right to disconnect (best practices, case studies) Poland
Short description of the module / abstract	This module contains practical information for HR managers whose task is to take on the role of leaders of organizational changes in the area of introducing good practices in isolation from work. Practices for strengthening the well-being of remote employees were also described, and a case study was presented in the area of promoting work-life balance in companies.
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learners will be able to explain the pivotal role of HR managers in implementing policies and practices that promote a culture of work disconnection, emphasizing employee well-being and work-life balance. • learners will be able to identify and assess specific managerial practices that support employee disconnection from work, enhance well-being, and contribute to a healthier work-life balance. • learners will have the ability to analyze real-world case studies and examples to recognize and evaluate managerial interventions and leadership behaviors that have proven effective in promoting employee well-being and fostering work disconnection. • participants will be able to formulate and propose actionable strategies aimed at building an organizational environment that honors employees' right to disconnect, facilitates a healthy work-life balance, and enhances overall employee satisfaction and productivity.
Learning Units	<p><i>Unit 1:</i> Examination of the crucial role of HR managers in fostering a supportive work disconnection culture.</p> <p><i>Unit 2:</i> Identification of managerial practices that facilitate employee disconnection from work and well-being.</p> <p><i>Unit 3:</i> Case studies and examples showcasing effective managerial interventions and leadership behaviors.</p> <p><i>Unit 4:</i> Strategies for creating an environment that supports employees' right to disconnect and achieve work-life balance.</p>

Learning core material	Chapter 1,2,3,4	Learning Material
	Introduction to the module	Text
	1 Recovery from work: concepts, theories and benefits	Text, Articles, Videos
	2 Recovery strategies	Text, Articles, Videos
Assessment method	Chapter 1,2,3,4	Assessment method
	Introduction to the module	-
	1 Recovery from work: concepts, theories and benefits	Validated questionnaire or test
	2 Recovery strategies	Validated questionnaire or test and semi-structured interview
Workload (Estimated study time) (min)	120 minutes	
Author(s)	Małgorzata Klimka-Kołyško, AHE	

LEARNING UNIT 1: Examination of the crucial role of HR managers in fostering a supportive work disconnection culture.

In contemporary work environments, the proliferation of technology and the blurring of work-life boundaries have led To An Increasing Need For Organizations To promote a culture of work disconnection. This culture advocates for employees to disengage from work-related activities outside of regular working hours, promoting a healthier work-life balance and improving overall well-being. “The health and well-being of employees are integral to fostering a positive workplace culture, and it is the responsibility of Human Resources (HR) to prioritize these areas. HR protects employee health by promoting physical wellness, supporting mental health, and implementing stress management strategies.” (Mataac, C. 2023) Human Resource (HR) managers play a pivotal role in fostering and implementing such a culture within an organization.

HR managers are responsible for shaping policies, practices, and guidelines that set the tone for work disconnection within the workplace. They collaborate with organizational leadership to develop and communicate clear expectations regarding off-duty work communication and availability. HR managers are instrumental in developing policies that encourage employees to refrain from responding to emails, calls, or work-related activities during non-working hours, promoting a culture that respects employees' personal time and rest. “To address this challenge, HR can lead stress management initiatives and programmes to mitigate its effects. This can include implementing flexible

working arrangements, introducing wellness programmes and developing strategies to improve work-life balance.” (Burke, R. J., i Richardsen, A. M., 2019)

Furthermore, HR managers facilitate training programs to educate employees and supervisors on the importance of work disconnection and the potential negative impacts of constant connectivity on well-being. Through workshops, seminars, and educational campaigns, HR managers raise awareness and instill a culture where employees feel empowered to set boundaries between work and personal life.

In addition to policy development and training, HR managers play a crucial role in modeling work disconnection behavior. By demonstrating disconnection practices themselves, HR managers set an example for employees, reinforcing the importance of work-life balance and encouraging others to follow suit. “Working with managers, HR can identify and eliminate specific stressors in the company workplace, such as excessive workloads or communication interruptions. Identifying and mitigating these stressors is key to supporting a healthier and more productive workforce” (Biron et al.,2015).

In summary, HR managers serve as the linchpin in fostering a supportive work disconnection culture. Their role in policy development, education, and modeling appropriate behavior is indispensable in creating a workplace environment that prioritizes employee well-being and work-life balance.

To complete this Learning Unit you have to:

Read the online article: [Ma Prieto, I. and Pilar Pérez-Santana, M. \(2014\), “Managing innovative work behavior: the role of human resource practices”, *Personnel Review*, Vol. 43 No. 2, pp. 184-208. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-11-2012-0199](https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-11-2012-0199)

LEARNING UNIT 2: Identification of managerial practices that facilitate employee disconnection from work and well-being.

Supporting employees in disconnecting from work is a vital aspect of promoting a healthy work-life balance and enhancing overall well-being. Various managerial practices can be implemented within organizations to facilitate and encourage work disconnection. “In today’s always-on world, achieving a work-life balance is essential to maintaining productivity, physical and mental health, and social connections. Employees who earn a healthy employees work-life balance can focus on their job while finding time for personal interests, family, friends, and rest” Bonifacio, R. (2022).

Here are several strategies and practices:

- **Establish Clear Policies and Guidelines:**

Develop and communicate explicit policies that set expectations regarding work hours, off-duty availability, and the expectation of not engaging in work-related tasks outside these defined hours. Clear guidelines help employees understand the boundaries and feel more comfortable disconnecting from work.

- **Communicate Expectations Effectively:**

Clearly communicate to employees that it is acceptable and encouraged to disconnect from work outside regular working hours. Ensure that managers and supervisors lead by example and adhere to these guidelines, reinforcing the importance of work disconnection.

- **Encourage the Use of Paid Time Off (PTO):**

Encourage employees to utilize their paid time off, such as vacation days and personal days, to take breaks and disconnect from work. Educate employees about the benefits of taking time off and emphasize the importance of recharging and rejuvenating away from work responsibilities.

- **Implement Technology Guidelines:**

Establish guidelines regarding the use of digital communication tools (e.g., emails, messaging apps) after work hours. Encourage employees to limit their use of these technologies during evenings and weekends, allowing for uninterrupted personal time.

- **Set Reasonable Workloads and Deadlines:**

Ensure that workloads and project deadlines are reasonable and manageable. Avoid overburdening employees, which can lead to a constant need to work outside of regular hours. Proper workload management promotes a better work-life balance.

- **Provide Flexible Work Arrangements:**

Offer flexible work options, such as remote work or flexible hours, allowing employees to tailor their schedules to better accommodate personal needs and commitments. This flexibility can help in managing work and personal life effectively.

- **Encourage Regular Breaks:**

Encourage employees to take regular breaks during the workday to refresh and recharge. Managers should promote a culture where breaks are seen as beneficial for productivity and overall well-being, thus reducing the pressure to continuously work without interruption.

- **Offer Employee Wellness Programs:**

Implement wellness initiatives that focus on physical, mental, and emotional well-being. These programs could include stress management workshops, mindfulness sessions, or physical fitness activities, all of which contribute to a healthier work-life balance.



- **Promote Time Management Skills:**

Provide training and support in time management and productivity skills to help employees optimize their work hours efficiently. Equipping employees with tools to manage their time effectively can lead to less need for working beyond regular hours.

- **Conduct Employee Surveys and Feedback Sessions:**

Regularly solicit feedback from employees through surveys or feedback sessions to gauge their experiences regarding work disconnection. Use this feedback to make necessary adjustments to organizational policies and practices, ensuring they align with employee needs and expectations.

By implementing these managerial practices, organizations can create a culture that supports employees in disconnecting from work, fostering a healthier work-life balance and improving overall job satisfaction and well-being.

To complete this Learning Unit you have to:

Read the online article:

<https://www.thoughtfull.world/mental-health/five-best-practices-to-reconnecting-disconnected-workplaces>

<https://www.mckinsey.com/mhi/our-insights/addressing-employee-burnout-are-you-solving-the-right-problem>

UNIT 3: Case studies and examples showcasing effective managerial interventions and leadership behaviors

Introduction:

In this case study, we explore a real-life example of an organization that successfully implemented a work-life balance policy, emphasizing the importance of employee well-being and achieving a harmonious equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life.

Case Background:

ABC Technologies, a mid-sized software development company, recognized the need to address the increasing stress levels and burnout among its employees due to extended working hours and a demanding workload. They decided to develop and implement a comprehensive work-life balance policy to improve employee well-being and enhance productivity.

Objective:

The primary objective was to create a work environment that promotes a healthy work-life balance, reduces stress, and increases employee satisfaction and overall job engagement.

Key Elements of the Work-Life Balance Policy:

- **Flexible Working Hours:**

ABC Technologies introduced flexible working hours, allowing employees to tailor their schedules around their personal obligations and preferences while ensuring they meet their work requirements.

- **Remote Work Opportunities:**

The company encouraged remote work options, enabling employees to work from home or other suitable locations when needed. This allowed for a more flexible work environment, reducing commuting time and enhancing work-life balance.

- **Clear Leave Policies:**

The organization defined clear and transparent leave policies, encouraging employees to utilize their vacation and personal days. Managers were trained to support and promote the use of leaves for rejuvenation and relaxation.

- **Regular Breaks and Wellness Initiatives:**

ABC Technologies implemented a policy that encouraged employees to take regular breaks during the workday to unwind and refresh. They also organized wellness initiatives such as yoga sessions, mental health workshops, and on-site fitness facilities to support employees' overall well-being.

- **Workload Management:**

The company emphasized proper workload management, ensuring that employees were not overwhelmed with excessive tasks. Teams were regularly assessed to maintain a healthy workload distribution.

Outcome:

The implementation of the work-life balance policy at ABC Technologies resulted in several positive outcomes:

Improved Employee Satisfaction and Retention: Employees reported higher satisfaction levels and appreciated the company's efforts to address their well-being. This led to increased employee retention and a positive word-of-mouth reputation, attracting new talent.

Enhanced Productivity and Efficiency: The policy led to a more motivated and energized workforce, resulting in improved productivity, efficiency, and higher-quality output.

Positive Employer Branding: ABC Technologies gained a reputation as an employee-centric organization that values work-life balance, attracting top talent in the industry and establishing itself as a preferred employer.

Conclusion:

ABC Technologies' successful implementation of a work-life balance policy showcases the positive impact such initiatives can have on employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall organizational success. By prioritizing employee well-being and fostering a healthy work environment, the company reaped the benefits of a more engaged and content workforce. "Model your company's commitment to boundaries around work-life balance with internal policies that promote flexible work schedules, vacation, and time to relax outside of working hours" (Durkovic, L. 2022)

UNIT 3: Strategies for creating an environment that supports employees' right to disconnect and achieve work-life balance.

Creating an environment that supports employees' right to disconnect and achieve work-life balance involves a combination of strategies that promote clear boundaries between work and personal life while prioritizing employee well-being. Here are key strategies to achieve this goal:

- **Establish Clear Policies and Guidelines:**

Develop and communicate comprehensive policies and guidelines that clearly define expectations regarding off-duty availability, response times, and appropriate communication outside of working hours. These policies should emphasize the importance of respecting employees' personal time and promoting work disconnection.

- **Educate Employees and Managers:**

Conduct training and awareness programs for both employees and managers to educate them about the importance of work-life balance and the right to disconnect. Provide guidance on how to effectively manage workload, set boundaries, and use communication tools responsibly.

- **Promote Flexible Work Arrangements:**

Offer flexible work options, such as flexible hours, remote work, or compressed workweeks. Allow employees to choose arrangements that align with their personal circumstances, enabling them to better balance work and life responsibilities.

- **Encourage Taking Breaks and Time Off:**

Foster a culture that encourages employees to take regular breaks during the workday and utilize their allotted paid time off. Discourage the practice of working during vacations and promote the benefits of disconnecting to recharge and rejuvenate.

- **Lead by Example:**

Leadership should model the desired behavior by adhering to work disconnection guidelines and demonstrating a healthy work-life balance. When leaders prioritize their own well-being and set boundaries, it encourages employees to do the same.

- **Limit After-Hours Communication:**

Encourage employees and managers to limit non-urgent communication outside of regular working hours. Use communication tools that allow scheduling messages for the next working day to reduce after-hours interruptions.

- **Implement Technology Boundaries:**

Set guidelines for the appropriate use of communication and collaboration tools, especially after work hours. Encourage employees to disable work-related notifications during their personal time to minimize intrusions.

- **Create a Supportive Work Environment:**

Foster a positive workplace culture that supports employees' personal lives and well-being. Offer resources like counseling services, stress management workshops, and wellness programs to help employees cope with work-related stress and maintain work-life balance.

- **Monitor Workload and Expectations:**

Regularly assess employees' workloads and expectations to ensure they align with realistic timelines and capabilities. Avoid overloading individuals, which can lead to working extra hours to meet unrealistic demands.

- **Solicit Employee Feedback:**

Actively seek feedback from employees regarding their experiences with work disconnection and work-life balance. Use this feedback to make necessary adjustments to policies and practices, demonstrating a commitment to employee well-being.

- **Celebrate Achievements and Milestones:**

Recognize and celebrate employees' achievements and milestones, encouraging a culture of achievement within reasonable working hours. Avoid expecting employees to work excessive hours to meet performance goals.

- **Encourage Physical and Mental Well-Being:**

Encourage employees to engage in physical exercise, practice mindfulness, and pursue hobbies outside of work. Providing wellness programs and facilities within the workplace can promote overall well-being and work-life balance.

By implementing these strategies, organizations can create a supportive environment that respects employees' right to disconnect and prioritizes work-life balance, leading to a more engaged, productive, and satisfied workforce.



To complete this Learning Unit you have to:

Read the online article:

<https://generationsrecruitment.com/the-right-to-disconnect-finding-the-optimal-balance-between-work-and-life/>

<https://blog.trello.com/the-right-to-disconnect>

<https://www.shiftbase.com/glossary/work-life-balance>

<https://www.corporatewellnessmagazine.com/article/burnout-prevention-strategies>



References:

Burke, R. J., i Richardsen, A. M. (2019). Workplace stress, well-being, and performance: A review and conceptual synthesis. *The Routledge Companion to Well-being at Work* (3-20). Routledge.

Biron, C., Karanika-Murray, M., i Cooper, C. L. (2015). Improving organizational interventions for stress and well-being: An integration of micro and macro-level approaches. *The Oxford Handbook of Work and Organizational Psychology, Vol. 2*, 162-180). Oxford University Press.

Durkovic, L. (2022) The right to disconnect: Why leaders should encourage employees to unplug <https://blog.trello.com/the-right-to-disconnect>

Mataac, C. (2023) The Role of HR in Promoting Employee Health, Well-being, and Workplace Culture

www.switchoffthework.eu



SwitchOff

Supporting worker's well
being during remote work

Project No: 2022-1-PL01-KA220-VET-000085734



Co-funded by
the European Union

