Hello. I'd like to welcome everyone to our session today, "Making a Life While Making a Living: Work-Life Balance." Whenever it is that you are listening in to this session, whoever you might be listening in with, we're glad that you're joining us.

My name is Katie Muhlhammer. I will be your technical behind-the-scenes moderator running the show here. And I do want to mention just a couple quick items to help you make the most of this, and then I'm going to introduce our presenter so that she can go through this excellent material. I know she's got practical strategies and tips for everyone today as well.

So if you take a look at the left-hand side of your screen, you should see three different options. One of those is an Event Resources area. We have a copy of the presenter's slide deck uploaded for you as well as a couple additional resources, and takeaways, and activities you can do related to this topic after this session that you're listening in.

We also have an FAQ, or Frequently Asked Questions, section. You may have a question about an attendance certificate, something like that. Take a scroll through there. That may answer your question.

And then, finally, we have an area that says Ask a Question. If you have a question on this topic, you can certainly, when we get to the end, type in that question and click Send, and we'll receive it via email and reply back to you via email usually within a couple days.

So, again, as we get going, I just wanted to make you aware of those tools that you have available to you.

We are very pleased to have as our presenter today Billie Smith-Jones. She holds a master's in counseling with an emphasis on marriage and family therapy, and she's been working in the mental health field since 2006. She has extensive experience working both in outpatient and inpatient settings. And she's also facilitated groups on topics such as depression, self-esteem, and provided psycho education on caregiving.

Additionally, in addition to being a counselor and having that hat that she wears, so to speak, she's also a trainer. She's received certification in training from the Association for Talent Development, and she's currently working on her coaching certification in hopes of really inspiring change for those who might feel stuck, or lost, and just kind of not able to move forward at this point.
Billie has worked with Workplace Options for nine years now. She began as an intake counselor, and now she is the global training coordinator where she not only trains intake counselors but contributes to the development and implementation of training while she oversees a team of global trainers.

So on a personal note, work-life balance is—is not only something Billie is well-versed in professionally, but personally as well, as she is the proud mom of two children ages three years and 13 years. And she strongly believes that laughter heals and nourishes the soul.

So we're very glad to have her presenting this topic for us. Again, whenever you're listening in, feel free to pause at any point, take some notes, download the resources. And Billie, I'm going to go ahead and pass it to you to get us started.

Okay. Thank you, Katie, for that nice introduction. Billie seems like a really nice girl, huh?

So, as she stated earlier, we're talking about work-life balance. So, some of our objectives today, I want to really help us to learn some sources on how we can maintain that work-life balance.

I want us to determine the meaning of work-life balance. What does it mean?

We will also be learning some time management strategies for effectively managing multiple demands. So, how do we manage and juggle everything?

I want us to explore the role of delegation and communication with others.

We will be discussing the benefits of prioritizing important events. So, what's important? What if it's something that we need to do right away? What can wait?

And finally, I want us to develop an action plan to balance work and life demands. By taking responsibility for the choices we make, we can be proactive rather than reactive.

So, I wanted to take some time to really understand what is work-life balance? What does it mean? It's defined as a comfortable state of equilibrium achieved between an employee's primary priorities of their employment position and their private lifestyle.
Most psychologists would agree that the demands of an employee's career should not overwhelm an individual's ability to really enjoy life. And as we know, that can be very difficult to do.

So how we—how do we balance it all?

I want us to take some time to just reflect. And I want you to participate in a short survey, and I want you to ask yourself, "Do I currently have a good work-life balance?" For some of you, you may be unsure. But that is okay. Hopefully throughout this presentation we can really discuss it and—and have you gain more insight into that answer, and how we can improve if the answer is "no, I don't have good work-life balance"?

Katie can tell you—can tell everyone more about how to participate in this survey.

Sure. Thanks, Billie. I sent out the survey to everyone. It should have popped up on your screen. This is all anonymous. Even though this is not a live session and you're listening in, you can still click on which of the options, as you reflect, best describes you. Do you feel that you currently have a good work-life balance in your life? "Yes" or "no" or "unsure." And then once you've closed out of that, you will be able to see a chart come up on the screen where it basically shows everyone who has listened to this presentation up to this point, kind of where they—they ring in with this as well. So just a chance to kind of reflect as Billie goes forward and shares some steps for how to find that healthy work-life balance.

Thank you, Katie.

So, in our first activity, I want us to really identify all the responsibilities involved with our work life and our personal life. What do you currently need to balance? Do I need to make any changes? Is what I'm doing currently not working?

So, these are all the things that I really want us to think about throughout this presentation so we can really define it and really understand the importance of work-life balance. And what do we do to make it even better?

So, list all the activities and responsibilities involved in your personal life. On a weekly basis, how much time do you spend on each? There's times where we're juggling so many things, sometimes our family dynamics can be an important factor.
So, the next slides, we’re going to talk about the different types of families.

Dual-career couples with children. Single parents. Individuals or couples without children. These all can play a huge factor in how we balance everything.

How do you divide the responsibilities? For those who come from that dual-career couple, whether they have children or may not have children, in the past month did you think that you have a good healthy balance between work and family? Have you made time for your partner? Have you made alone time? Do you regularly schedule couple time? What are two changes you would like to make to create more of that harmony in your life? I know at times date night can be super, super stressful because you’re trying to manage children, and you’re trying to find a nice place. So, how do we schedule that? What do you currently do now?

For those that may be single parents, that can be extremely hard because it’s just you. Or a lot of other people. But have you identified those main supports? What does your support look like? In the past month, have you began to live a healthy balance between work and family? How—how have you been managing everything thus far? Do you get alone time? It’s important to spend time with your—or with our children, but it’s also important to give ourselves that same break and that same alone time. What are two changes that you would like to make to create more harmony in life?

What about individuals or couples without children? How do you allocate that time between your work and your personal life? And for those who may be single and don’t have any children, sometimes that can be extremely difficult, so they find themselves just engaging in work, day after day, no work-life balance at all. In the past month, do you think you’ve really had a healthy balance between work and family? Do you find yourself getting that alone time that you need? How do you currently manage everything now? What are two changes that you would like to make to create, again, that harmony, that work-life balance on a day-to-day basis?

Other types of families. There's individuals or couples that are in a caregiving role. A few years ago, I used to assist on the geriatric unit where I used to work with family members who were having loved ones who were experiencing or in the first or second stages of Alzheimer's. So I had to do a lot of education on the role of caregiving and how stressful that can be. Because for those, they're not only caring for their mother, their uncle, their
loved one, but they're also having to work, you know, several hours during the week they're—some siblings or family members are out of state, so a lot of that responsibility at times falls on that one person caregiving for that person they love.

What about single-career couples with children? Single-career couples without children? Who are your supports? Sometimes it can be very difficult to identify that—who is in our corner. And it can also be difficult to even just ask for that help. How do you get alone time? If you are in a relationship, are you scheduling that one-on-one time with your partner? How do you divide the responsibilities between the two? What are two changes that you would like to make in order to create that healthy work-life balance?

When we talk about, you know, balance, every living thing needs to grow. Think about plants. Think about your garden. Growth only happens when it's in a balanced environment. When the balance is disturbed, nothing can really grow from it.

So then there is the action that needs to take place. How do we restore that balance? How do we continue to have that long-lasting, healthy work-life balance on a day-to-day basis? On a month-to-month basis?

So, what does it look like when you are feeling unbalanced? Take some time to really think about, what does that look like for me? When we're feeling off balanced, our attitude is impacted. How we interact and even communicate with other people, especially our loved ones.

Even our effectiveness at work. Sometimes that stifles our creativity. Even our ability to be a leader. For those who are in, you know, are supervising a team, when you're off balance, are you still able to manage your team effectively? What changes take place when you're feeling off balance?

So, we talk about feeling out of balance. How can we really manage that? How can we cope? Some strategies we may talk about. Monitoring your energy level and emotional state. Eating energized and brain foods. Studies have shown that what you eat can really have an impact on your health. Your general wellbeing. Your energy level and emotional state can be directly linked to the type of foods that you eat. I know as a trainer there are times where I'm between trainings, I'm on a go-go-go. And sometimes, before you know it, I've missed lunch. So, what do you currently do? Are you actually getting the—are you actually taking a lunch break? Are you
pacing yourself? This is easier said than done, but pacing yourself can really be a good strategy into creating balance.

And, when we talk about, you know, problem solving. Are you recognizing that a problem exists? Are we looking at different solutions that we can take to help with that?

Lighten up the situation with humor. I love to laugh. I definitely think it's the most important thing. And it really is—and I do believe it really is good for the soul. And it nurtures you. And it keeps you, in a sense, to me, balanced when you can really not take things so seriously.

Assessing your environment can be one of the ways that you can help with balance.

Do you exercise regularly? I know this is very difficult for me, but you do to take that time out to really, you know, how to reduce those high levels of stress. Exercise can help in so many ways. When you're feeling anxious, it can relax you. It can make you feel better about yourself. Also, exercise can actually make you eat better.

So, what strategies can you think of right now to help you with keeping that work-life balance?

How do we achieve balance?

We can focus on reducing their energy drain.

Identifying, you know, what we can change and what we cannot. There are so many times that we focus more on the things that really are out of our control.

How do you align your goals with your values—values and your beliefs?

Setting limits and delegate. This is very difficult to do. But we have to do it.

Creating new challenges that align with our values. This could be very helpful.

Giving yourself frequent breaks.

Seeking support. I used to have a client that she enmeshed in so many things in her community, her work, her children. She had so many things going on. And she would be so hard on herself. And, it was those times that I would tell her, and she would laugh, that, "There you go being human
again." It's impossible for us to do everything and to be everything to everyone. So, really taking that time out for ourselves, even just seeking support, can be very helpful into really making sure that we can maintain that work-life balance so that it doesn't spill over into our work and it doesn't spill over into our personal lives. If we're experiencing high levels of stress in our personal life, a lot of time it will impact our work life, and vice versa.

When we're, again, talking about achieving balance, here are some strategies at home that may be helpful.

Holding family meetings.

Combining tasks.

Rotating the tasks. So for those who may be living in a single-parent home, you know, having your—your children take a part in, you know, day-to-day responsibilities, taking out the trash, helping you with dishes.

Reevaluate our priorities. A lot of times we find that the things that we're holding so important are things that really need to wait. Or can wait.

Planning weekend activities can be very difficult because usually we're working Monday through Friday, and Saturday and Sunday, those are our days to clean, to take the children to sports games. And even if you're—let's say you are an individual without kids, or a couple without kids, maybe entertaining family may be helpful for you. So, looking at different ways in the home could be very helpful into you really improving and maintaining a better quality of life.

If we talk about achieving that balance on a day-to-day basis, what does that look like for you? Are you really using that time wisely? Are you setting limits? Are you effectively communicating your needs? Are you seeking support?

What about being supportive to others? We a lot of times spend more time with our coworkers and at work more so than we spend time with our families and friends. It's really hard for us sometimes to say no. I know, at the beginning of the year, my friends and I, we always come up with mantras for the year. I guess you could call it a New Year's resolution. And my mantra for the years was saying no. Because if I—by saying yes to you, I'm saying no to myself. And I'm still working through making sure that I'm saying no when I need to say no and yes when I need to say yes.
I want you guys to—if you have a pen and paper in front of you, I want you to draw a box, or draw a rectangle. And inside that box, I want you to put in all the things that you deemed from our previous activity as important. Things that needed to get done. Things that you find that you need to really take care of on a day-to-day basis. Anything that falls outside of that box, those are things that you really shouldn’t be trying to engage in. Not saying they’re not important, but whatever you put in that box, those are the things that you really need to focus on. That setting healthy boundaries for yourself. Anything that falls outside of that, is something that really doesn’t need to get done right away.

I really want you to think about those things.

When we talk about time management, that is huge. That can be just as stressful. Because just—you’ve got to find the time for spending time with your family. You have to find the time to finish work tasks. Right?

Think about on the average day, what times during the day do you feel most productive and energized? At what times do you feel the least productive?

After you’ve kind of thought about that, I really want us to think about how we can plan for the most intense tasks that really keep us productive. That are most productive for us.

So maybe just thinking about, you know, the time period that I need to get things done.

Now, Stephen Covey is an American author. He’s an educator, and according to the Time Matrix—Time Management Matrix, he talks about four quadrants. And this is a way to really help us focus on the activities and making time for things that we need.

In quadrant one, this is about managing and producing. We act on things that really need to get urgent. These are the things that we really need to pay attention to and that we consider important. These are usually related to high-priority goals.

In quadrant two, quality is emphasized. However, for most of us, this is something that we fail at. Activities in this session—in this section could be, let’s say, long-range planning. You’re anticipating things to happen. Preventing—this is a preventing stage.
Quadrant three. We tend to focus on—too much of our time on activities that are—we deem as important but are not really important. These could consist of phone calls, meetings, emails, unexpected visitors.

Quadrant four, we tend to fill this time with junk. This quadrant consider wasteful time. Activities in this quadrant could be anywhere from television, the amount of time we look at reality TV, right? Useless chatting with coworkers.

So keeping with this time management matrix in mind can really help prioritize and really have you focus more on, including that work-life balance.

So, we talk about the importance of prioritizing. Stephen Covey does—he explains a really good example in one of his books called First Things First. And I want you guys to really think about this story that he—he talks about in his book. Where he gives students a quiz. So he reaches under the table, and he pulls out a wide-mouth gallon jar. And he says, "How many rocks do you think could fill this jar?" The students then make their guesses, and he says, "Okay, let's find out." He put one rock in the jar, then another, then another, until no more rocks would fit. Then he asked, "Is the jar full?"

Everyone could see that there was no more room for any more rocks, so they all said, "Yes, it's full." He said, "Not so fast." From under the table he lifted a bucket of gravel, and he dumped it—dumped it into the jar and shook it. The gravel slid into little spaces left by the big rocks. He asked once more, "Is the jar full?" A little wiser by now, they all responded, "No." He said, "Good." Then he reached under the table, and he brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in the jar. While they all watched, they saw the sand fill in the little spaces. And once more he looked at them and said, "Now, is the jar full?" They all said, "No." He said, "Good." He then grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it into the jar. It was almost like a quart of water in the jar before he said, "Okay, ladies and gentlemen, the jar is now full. Can anyone tell me the lesson that you've learned from this?" He said, "What's my point?" One of the students said, "Well, there are gaps in the schedule, and if you really work hard at it, you can always find fit—you can always fit more into life." He said, "No, that's not the point. The point is, if I hadn't have put those big rocks in first, I would never have gotten them in."
So I want you all, ladies and gentlemen, to think about how are you prioritizing? Are you putting things that you really need to get done first? Things that can wait? How are you prioritizing?

Some final tips that I want to talk about, you know, in helping us to improve our balance.

Scheduling time alone. It's super important. I'm a believer that you really must take time out for yourself, whether you have children or not.

Spending time and doing what you're passionate about. One of the things that I enjoy doing is I enjoy reading. I also enjoy hiking. So it really is important to me to try to make sure I can fit that in.

Learning to let go. Whatever gets in your way, letting it go. Now, again, I know it's easier said than done, but letting go of the demands and expectations of life, you find that, you know, sometimes you do have to trust what happens, or trust the process. When you let go, you really can have a better understanding of what it really means in life. So enjoying that quality of life. How many of us are—can really say that we have a good quality of life? Are we using it wisely?

Sometimes in creating that work-life balance, it's time for us to allow ourselves change. Change is inevitable. It's the only thing that's consistent. It's the only thing that's constant. Sometimes change can be a good thing, sometimes we can consider it a bad thing. But it's all about embracing it.

Keeping open communication is extremely important. A lot of times we get so caught in the demands of life that we think or we assume that other people know what we want, other people know what we need. And at times it—all it takes is a simple conversation to really help address a problem or resolve the conflict. So it's important to continue to share and communicate.

And even at work, continuing to delegate certain things at work and telling coworkers what you can and what you can't do. I know at times at work, you know, we can often find ourselves being of support to our coworkers. But it goes back to, again, setting those limits, making sure that we're saying no when we need to, and yes when we need to.

So, what's our action plan?

What current strategies are working well?
So what do you currently do now to help with that balance?

What strategies do you need to change?

What resources can I draw from?

What are three things that we can do immediately to increase our sense of time management?

Time is extremely important, but as we talked about earlier, prioritizing that time makes the difference.

One of the things that we—we can do is know when to actually seek help. When to talk to a professional counselor. When our emotions are running high. When we've gone to friends and family. When we're starting to engage in inappropriate behaviors or engaging in things that are really not good for us like using alcohol. Maybe when we're starting to see that we're missing a lot of work. A decrease in our work performance.

Usually sleep is the first indicator that something is wrong. In most cases.

And what about our appetite—when our appetite changes? When we're not eating enough or we're eating too much. I often have clients that say, you know, "I eat when I'm stressed."

And there are those times when things get so overwhelming that we begin to have those unwanted thoughts, those thoughts of wanting to harm ourselves. This is the time when we really need to step back and really say, "Hey, we need a little bit more."

For additional support, you can always contact your Employee Assistance Program. This is a free, confidential service that is provided to employees. That we can assist with—or the Employee Assistance Program can assist with—the emotional needs as well as the practical needs.

Sometimes our stress can come from not having someone to keep our children. Not being able to locate affordable daycare. Or let's say we have—we're taking care of a loved one. Being able to have some assistance. Maybe having a nurse come into the home two or three days a week just to give us a relief.

The Employee Assistance Program can be a really good support, and I always encourage folks to reach out to their Employee Assistance Program to see what services are available to them.
So, hopefully this presentation really got you all thinking about "What am I currently doing to create that work-life balance? What do I need to let go of? What I—what do I need to do more of?"

I want to thank everyone for your time for this presentation, and I want to pass it back to Katie, and she is going to wrap up everything. And, again, thank you, everyone, for your time.

And thank you very much, Billie, for walking everyone through this, for the great information and practical strategies and resources that you shared. I do want to remind everybody that not only Billie's slide deck, but the additional resources, there's a couple on delegating, there's another one regarding the action plan she was just sharing a few minutes ago that you can kind of reflect on and work on after listening to this session. So you'll find those on the left-hand side of your screen in the Event Resources section.

We do also have an Ask a Question area that, again, as I mentioned in the beginning, if you have a question on this topic, do know that your EAP is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You are also welcome to type in your question and send it to us. We do receive it via email, and we will get back to you usually within a couple days or so depending on the nature of your question, certainly within a week at the—at the latest. But you're welcome to type in and send that if you'd like to as well.

So once again, just know your EAP is there for you 24/7, and a big thank you to Billie for her time and expertise, and the information presented today.

Take care, everyone.