

Teaching / training assignments: Life skills - Balance between parenting and career

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Leader: Association of Psychologists in Bulgaria

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DATES: 29.03.2024 – 07.04.2024

Day 7

Topic1

Have a Plan B and don't wait for a crisis to use it.

Workshop

The importance of having a Plan B and being proactive rather than reactive when it comes to crisis management

Whether you're a business leader, a project manager, or a working professional, having a solid contingency plan is crucial. Waiting for a crisis to strike before implementing Plan B can be risky.

Objectives

1. Understand the significance of having a Plan B.
2. Learn practical steps to develop and implement a contingency plan.
3. Explore real-world examples of successful Plan B execution.
4. Cultivate a proactive mindset for crisis management.

1. The Power of Anticipation

-Why Plan B Matters: Acknowledge that uncertainty is inevitable, and having a backup plan is essential.

-The Cost of Complacency: Waiting for a crisis to force action can lead to irreversible consequences.

2. Crafting Your Plan B

- Identify Critical Scenarios: Brainstorm potential risks and disruptions specific to your context.
- Mitigation Strategies: Develop actionable steps to minimize damage.
- Resource Allocation: Allocate resources wisely to support Plan B execution.

3. Implementing Plan B

- Early Activation: Don't wait for the storm to hit; activate Plan B as soon as warning signs appear.
 - Communication: Ensure everyone is aware of the backup plan and their roles.
 - Adaptability: Be ready to adjust and improvise as circumstances evolve.

4. Case Studies

- The Unforeseen Supply Chain Disruption: How Company X's proactive Plan B saved the day.
- Navigating a Leadership Crisis: Lessons from CEO Y's swift response using a well-prepared contingency plan.

5. Selling the Idea of Flexibility

- Advocating for Flexibility: Encourage open dialogue about flexible work arrangements.
- Negotiation Skills: Learn how to present your case for flexibility convincingly.

Training games to reinforce the importance of having a Plan B and encourage proactive thinking in crisis management

"Plan B Scenarios"

Objective: To brainstorm potential scenarios where Plan B would be crucial.

Instructions:

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Provide each group with a scenario (e.g., unexpected power outage during a critical presentation, supply chain disruption, sudden team member absence).
- Ask them to create a Plan B on the spot.
- After a set time (e.g., 10 minutes), have each group present their Plan B.
- Discuss common themes and creative solutions.

"Contingency Tower"

Objective: To emphasize the need for flexibility and adaptability.

Instructions:

- Give each participant a set of building blocks (e.g., LEGO bricks).
- Explain that they need to build a tower as high as possible.
- After a few minutes, introduce a "disruption" (e.g., remove some blocks, change the rules).
- Participants must adapt their strategy and build a new tower (Plan B).
- Discuss lessons learned about agility and quick thinking.

"Crisis Role Play"

Objective: To practice implementing Plan B in a realistic scenario.

Instructions:

- Assign roles (e.g., team leader, project manager, customer service representative).
- Describe a crisis situation (e.g., product recall, IT system failure).
- Participants act out their roles, making decisions based on their contingency plans.
- Facilitate a debrief: What worked well? What could be improved?

"Plan B Pictionary"

Objective: To reinforce creativity and adaptability.

Instructions:

- Prepare cards with different crisis scenarios (e.g., natural disaster, sudden budget cut).
- Divide participants into teams.
- Each team takes turns drawing a scenario and illustrating their Plan B.
- The other teams guess the scenario and discuss the effectiveness of the Plan B.

"Emergency Drill"

Objective: To simulate a crisis situation and test Plan B execution.

Instructions:

- Set up a mock emergency (e.g., fire drill, data breach).
- Participants follow their contingency plans.
- Evaluate their response time, communication, and adaptability.
- Discuss improvements and share best practices.

Topic 2

EARLY-CAREER PSYCHOLOGY Balancing kids and careers

Introduction

Navigating the delicate balance between professional aspirations and family life can be both rewarding and challenging. The intersection of kids and careers requires thoughtful planning, adaptability, and self-care. In this training text, we'll explore strategies to harmonize these essential aspects of life.

Acknowledge the Dual Role

Early-career psychologists often find themselves juggling multiple roles: clinician, researcher, educator, and parent. Recognize that both your career and family are vital components of your identity. Embrace the duality and understand that it's okay to prioritize one over the other at different times.

Set Realistic Expectations

Career Goals: Define your professional aspirations realistically. Understand that progress may be gradual, especially during child-rearing years. Set achievable milestones and celebrate small victories.

Parenting Expectations: Be prepared for the unexpected. Parenting involves flexibility, patience, and resilience. Accept that perfection is elusive, and imperfections are part of the journey.

Time Management and Boundaries

Structured Schedules: Create a well-organized daily schedule that accommodates work commitments, family time, and personal well-being. Allocate specific blocks for each role.

Boundary Setting: Establish clear boundaries between work and family life. When you're with your kids, be fully present. Similarly, when working, focus on professional tasks without distractions.

Leverage Technology and Remote Work

Telehealth: Explore telehealth options for client sessions. It allows flexibility and reduces commuting time.

Remote Work: Negotiate flexible work arrangements with your employer. Remote work can enhance work-life balance.

Seek Support Networks

Professional Networks: Connect with other early-career psychologists. Share experiences, challenges, and coping strategies.

Parenting Communities: Join parenting groups or online forums. Learn from others who have successfully balanced kids and careers.

Self-Care Matters

Prioritize Health: Regular exercise, adequate sleep, and proper nutrition are non-negotiable. A healthy you benefits both your family and your career.

Delegate and Outsource: Don't hesitate to seek help. Delegate household tasks or consider hiring a babysitter when needed.

Communicate Transparently

With Your Partner: Regularly discuss career goals, parenting responsibilities, and emotional well-being. Be each other's support system.

With Your Employer: Advocate for family-friendly policies. Discuss parental leave, flexible hours, and remote work options.

Embrace Imperfection

Let Go of Guilt: Understand that perfection isn't attainable. Sometimes, you'll miss a soccer game or a work deadline. Forgive yourself.

Celebrate Small Wins: Acknowledge your achievements, whether it's a successful therapy session or a bedtime story with your child.

Conclusion

Balancing kids and careers is an ongoing journey. Embrace the ebb and flow, learn from setbacks, and cherish the moments when your child's laughter blends seamlessly with your professional accomplishments. Remember, you're not alone—many early-career psychologists have walked this path and thrived.