

Teaching / training assignments: Life skills - Balance between parenting and career under project **2023-1-BG01-KA121-ADU-000115419**, Erasmus +

Leader: Association of Psychologists in Bulgaria

Participating organization: APB /Kocatürk Danismanlık Özel Egitim Hizmetleri Turizm ve Proje Hizmetleri Ticaret Sanayi Limited Sirketi

DATES: 29.03.2024 – 07.04.2024

Day 9

Topic1

Identifying Challenges faced by parents in the workforce, such as guilt, time management, and societal pressures.

Guilt and Balancing Act

Parenting often comes with a side of guilt, especially for working parents. The struggle to balance professional responsibilities with family commitments can lead to feelings of inadequacy.

Here's how guilt manifests:

- **Missed Moments:** Parents may feel guilty about missing school events, bedtime stories, or milestones due to work demands.
- **Self-Criticism:** The internal dialogue of "Am I doing enough for my child?" can weigh heavily.
- **Trade-Offs:** Choosing between a career opportunity and a child's needs can evoke guilt.

Time Management Dilemmas

The clock is a relentless adversary for working parents. Juggling work hours, school pickups, extracurricular activities, and household chores can be overwhelming:

Time Scarcity: There's never enough time for everything.

Prioritization: Deciding what deserves attention first—work deadlines or a child's soccer game?

Burnout: Constantly being "on" can lead to parental exhaustion.

Societal Pressures and Stigma

Society often places unrealistic expectations on parents, especially mothers.

These pressures can affect career choices and self-esteem:

Gender Bias: Mothers face scrutiny for their work commitment and parenting choices.

Career Interruptions: Taking parental leave or opting for flexible work arrangements can impact career progression.

"Supermom" Myth: The idea that women can flawlessly manage both work and family perpetuates stress.

Lack of Support Systems

Workplace Policies: Insufficient parental leave, inflexible schedules, and lack of childcare support.

Social Networks: Isolation due to busy lives and limited time for socializing. **Financial Strain:** Balancing work and family expenses can be daunting.

Emotional Toll

Anxiety: Worrying about children's well-being while at work. **Identity Shift:** The transition from "professional" to "parent" can be emotionally challenging.

Self-Care Neglect: Putting children first often means neglecting self-care.

Career Advancement vs. Family Time

Glass Ceiling: Parenthood can impact career growth, especially for women. Trade-Offs:
Sacrificing promotions or career changes for family stability.

Technology Invasion:

Always On: Work emails and calls infiltrate family time.

Digital Overload: Balancing screen time for both work and family.

Conclusion

Recognizing these challenges is the first step toward creating supportive environments for working parents. Organizations, policymakers, and individuals must collaborate to alleviate these burdens and promote work-family integration.

Training games to help participants identify the challenges faced by parents in the workforce. These games can foster understanding and empathy.

"Parenting Dilemma Bingo":

Create bingo cards with common parenting challenges related to work.

Examples: "Missed school event," "Late for pickup," "Work guilt."

Participants mark off challenges they've experienced.

Discuss each challenge as it gets called out.

"Time Warp Relay,,

Divide participants into teams.

Each team represents a different life stage (e.g., new parents, parents of teenagers). Teams race through a relay course with obstacles representing work and family challenges.

Discuss the unique hurdles faced by each life stage.

"Role Reversal Skits,,

Participants act out scenarios where they switch roles with their children.

For example, a parent becomes a child navigating school and technology.

Highlight the challenges faced by both parties.

"Parenting Prioritization Puzzle,"

Provide puzzle pieces representing work tasks, family events, and self-care.

Participants assemble the puzzle while discussing the difficulty of fitting all the pieces together. Reflect on the trade-offs made in real life.

"Stress Ball Toss"

Participants stand in a circle.

Toss a stress ball to someone and share a work or family challenge they've encountered.

The next person shares their own challenge.

Continue until everyone has contributed.

"Parenting Haiku Challenge,"

Invite participants to write haikus (3-line poems) about work-family struggles.

Example:

Late for the meeting, Homework waits on the kitchen table, Juggling roles, heart heavy.

Share and discuss the emotional impact of these concise poems.

"Digital Detox Race,,

Set a timer (e.g., 15 minutes).

Participants turn off their phones and focus solely on a family-related task (e.g., playing with kids, cooking).

Discuss the challenges of disconnecting from work.

"Parenting Perspectives Gallery,"

Create a gallery of visual representations (drawings, photos, or quotes) related to parenting challenges.

Participants walk through and discuss their reactions.

Encourage empathy and understanding.

Topic 2

Write me a training text on Cultivating Self-Care Practices for maintaining overall well-being.

Prioritize Sleep

Quality Over Quantity: Aim for 7-9 hours of restful sleep each night.

Create a Bedtime Ritual: Disconnect from screens, dim the lights, and unwind before sleep.

Consistent Schedule: Maintain a regular sleep routine.

Mindfulness and Meditation

Mindful Breathing: Take a few minutes daily to focus on your breath.

Guided Meditation Apps: Explore apps like Headspace or Calm.

Grounding Techniques: Connect with the present moment through your senses.

Physical Activity

Move Regularly: Find an activity you enjoy—walking, dancing, yoga, or swimming.

Outdoor Time: Nature has a calming effect; spend time outdoors.

Strength and Flexibility: Include both aerobic and strength exercises.

Nutrition and Hydration

Balanced Diet: Prioritize whole foods—fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.

Stay Hydrated: Water is essential for overall health.

Mindful Eating: Pay attention to hunger cues and savor your meals.

Social Connections

Quality Relationships: Nurture connections with family and friends.
Active Listening: Engage in meaningful conversations.
Join Clubs or Classes: Pursue shared interests.

Creative Outlets

Express Yourself: Write, paint, play music, or dance.
Cooking or Baking: Channel creativity in the kitchen.
Crafts or DIY Projects: Engage your hands and mind.

Digital Detox

Set Boundaries: Limit screen time, especially before bed.

Unplug: Take breaks from social media and emails.

Read a Book: Escape into a good story.

Self-Compassion

Be Kind to Yourself: Acknowledge imperfections without self-criticism.

Positive Affirmations: Remind yourself of your worth.

Practice Forgiveness: Let go of past mistakes.

Relaxation Techniques

Deep Breathing: Inhale deeply, exhale slowly.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: Tense and release muscle groups.

Warm Baths or Showers: Soothe your body and mind.

Seek Professional Help When Needed

Therapy or Counseling: Address emotional challenges.

Medical Checkups: Regular health assessments are crucial.

Know Your Limits: It's okay to ask for support.