

# Balancing Work and Home in a Pandemic

Handouts to supplement presentation

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# Outline

## Types of Stress

### Home

- Routines
- Using routines to balance home and work

### Work

- Establishing employer expectations
- Communicating your expectations
- Boundaries for a workspace

### Flexibility

- Adaptation
- Process of change

One of the results of this has been that individuals are now responsible for many of the things the other systems used to provide for us. This means you may be finding yourself responsible for more:



## Types of Stress

**Acute:** This is short-term stress that only happens once and resolves in time. It often results in a burst of adrenalin that gives people energy to get through an event. For example, getting into a fender-bender where you need to deal with car repairs, insurance, and some short-term physiotherapy is stressful, but doesn't last very long. While acute stress can be frustrating, it happens in life, and can be unavoidable.

**Episodic:** This is stress that also happens in the short-term, but happens more than once. It often happens in 'bursts,' and while it's not a long-term problem, it is re-occurring in the short-term. It may be the result of a pattern that is controllable, although it may feel uncontrollable. For example, feeling stress to meet a work deadline that occurs at the end of every week or month.

**Chronic:** This is long-term stress that weighs on people continually. Chronic stress cannot be easily resolved in the short term, and goes on for some time, perhaps years or even a lifetime. It results in the body being subjected to stress hormones for a long period of time, which can contribute to medical problems. It may be controllable or uncontrollable. Some examples of chronic stress include having a difficult career or living in an unhappy marriage.

# Home

- Routines:
  - Will help you accomplish your tasks
  - Helps reduce stress
  - Children rely on routine for structure, especially in the presence of many changes
  - Adults are often more productive and healthy with structure; otherwise creates a “slippery slope” problem
  - Allows for more control over daily life
- Also keep a routine for home-related tasks; have a separate one for weekends and weekdays
- For weekend routines, include psychologically healthy activities:
  - Fun activities
  - Exercise
  - Time outside
  - Connect with others (safely)
  - Rest & relaxation
  - Allow for time on your own and time together with family
  - An activity that makes you belly laugh
  - Schedule extra time for certain activities
- For weekday routines, include shorter psychological healthy activities:
  - Fresh air breaks
  - Walk around your block
  - Stretch break
  - Lunch outside

Examples:

#### Weekend Sample

<b>Routine</b>	
8:00am	Wake up, my hygiene routine, help with family morning routine <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shower &amp; get dressed</li><li>• Breakfast</li></ul>
9:00-11:00am	Play with kids
11:00am-noon	Clean
12noon-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00-2:00pm	Clean
2:00-3:30pm	Order groceries online
3:30-5:00pm	Do yardwork, chat with neighbour
5:00-6:00pm	Make dinner
6:00-7:00pm	Dinner
7:00-8:00pm	Exercise (partner does dishes)
8:00-8:30pm	Kids bedtime routine
8:30-11:00pm	Relax – watch movie or Zoom game night with friends

#### Using a Routine to Balance Home with Work

#### Weekday Sample

<b>Routine</b>	
6:00-8:00am	Wake up, my hygiene routine, help with family morning routine <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shower &amp; get dressed</li><li>• Breakfast</li></ul>
8:00-9:00am	Check & respond to work emails
9:00-10:00am	Help kids get onto google classrooms and answer emails from teachers
10:00-11:45am	Work
11:45am-12noon	Check on kids (Partner makes lunch)
12noon-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00-2:00pm	Zoom work meeting
2:00-3:00pm	Help kids with homework, let dog out, work if possible
3:00-4:30pm	Work
4:30-5:00pm	Break – walk dog
5:00-6:00pm	Make dinner
6:00-7:00pm	Dinner & start dishes
7:00-8:30pm	Work (Partner starts children's bedtime routine)
8:30-10:00pm	Finish bedtime routine, (partner finishes dishes), relax time



# Work

## Employer Expectations:

Expectation Example 1: Zoom team meeting every Wednesday @ 1-2pm  
 Fixed  Flexible

Expectation Example 2: Have report submitted by end of every week  
 Fixed  Flexible

Expectation:

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Fixed  Flexible

Expectation:

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Fixed  Flexible

Expectation:

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Fixed  Flexible

↓ June 2020 ↓

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Jun 1	2 1 PM Work on SM	3 1 PM Zoom te.	4 1 PM Work on	5
8	9 1 PM Work on SM	10 1 PM Zoom te.	11 1 PM Work on	12
15	16 1 PM Work on	17 1 PM Zoom te.	18 1 PM Work on	19
22	23 1 PM Work on	24 1 PM Zoom te.	25 1 PM Work on	26
29	30 1 PM Work on	Jul 1 1 PM Zoom te.	2 1 PM Work on	3

## **Your Expectations:**

It's important to communicate with your employer that:

### 1) Your hours have changed

You may let your employer know that you are still working the same number of hours, but that you've had to move your schedule around to accommodate something. For example, you may communicate with them, "since my kids need help with their online school in the morning, I can't be available until 12:30, but I'm working in the afternoon and evenings to make up for that time.

### 2) You are working remotely, but you won't be available 24/7

Just because you're working remotely and have access to video and email, be careful about expanding your availability. If you're able to communicate with your employer during the day, don't allow yourself to be accessible in the evenings, if you weren't already. For example, I typically work week days, but I do work Tuesday evening. I continue to be accessible to my clients during the week and Tuesday evening. Even though I am on my computer in the evenings more, I do not speak with clients any evening other than Tuesday. This helps prevent me from burning out.

### 3) You will still be getting your work done

Just because your schedule has changed, just because there are many changes with the world, doesn't mean that your ability to work has changed. You are still the same person your employer hired prior to covid-19, and you still have the same abilities you had before too. It can be helpful to let your employer know that although there are many changes, you've got the time carved out in your schedule to get the work done. Let them know you may be working in the evenings because you have some commitments during the day, but that your deadlines will be met, and that you'll continue to produce good quality work. If there are any issues, having an open line of communication can help with being able to address them constructively.



**Boundaries for Workspace (Physical boundaries and needs for work):**

To create a workspace DO have:



DO NOT have:



- Desk space with your work on it
- Good internet connection
- Good phone reception
- A comfortable chair with back support
- A door
- Good lighting (either a window or lamp)

- Other people's items in your space
- Items from other rooms in your space
- Distractions around you
- Limited access to what you need for work
- Seating that hurts your back
- Opportunity for unlimited access by others to your space

What are the good and bad characteristics of your physical workspace?

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What can you add to your space, or do to address the weaknesses?

<p>Eg) Purchase office chair from Staples Eg) Close door during meetings</p>
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**Boundaries for Workspace (Psychological boundaries and needs for work):**

- You cannot work without good psychological boundaries
- For instance, others in your household may interrupt you whenever they need something
- There is nothing wrong with being available to others
- But in order to be productive, you need to also have psychological boundaries
- Strategies include:

Have a way of communicating when you're available and when you're not available.

For example, if others enter your workspace all the time, have a system such as: "When I close the door, it means I'm in a meeting (or doing something else where I cannot be disturbed), but you can come into the room when the door is open."

For example, if others want to talk with you, have a structured time when they can: "I will take a lunch break at 12 noon until 1pm, maybe we can have lunch and spend some time together then?"

For example, if others need help: "Send me an email when you need help with homework, and I will come help you when I can take a break from my work."

Write how you can let others know you're available and unavailable:

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Write how others can let you know they're looking for your attention:

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Write how you might address any other psychological boundary problems:

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# Flexibility

## Adaptation:

- People who do best in new situations are those who can adapt
- Adapting to change takes time, patience, and sometimes trial-and-error
- Consider whether you, and others around you, are putting effort into trying to adapt
- You and others may need understanding and compassion while trying to adapt to the new situations due to covid-19

Adjusted Routine	
8:00-9:00am	Wake up, my hygiene routine, help with family morning routine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shower &amp; get dressed</li> <li>• Breakfast</li> </ul>
9:00-11:00am	<del>Play with kids</del> Child has meltdown at 10:45am
11:00am-12noon	<del>Clean</del> Play with kids
12noon-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00-2:00pm	Clean
2:00-3:30pm	Order groceries online
3:30-5:00pm	<del>Do yardwork, chat with neighbour</del> Clean
5:00-6:00pm	Make dinner
6:00-7:00pm	Dinner
7:00-8:00pm	Exercise (partner does dishes)
8:00-9:30pm	Kids bedtime routine
9:30-11:00pm	Relax – watch movie or Zoom game night with friends

**Prochaska & DiClemente's Model:**



**Example:**



**Sources of Reliable Information:**

Government of Alberta: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Alberta Health Services: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>

Health Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada.html>

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) Resources: <https://www.camh.ca/covid19>



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