

# Work life balance Strategies in Family Policy

## Mental health and wellbeing in work and family environment

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Vilnius, Lithuania

Silvija Stanić, psychologist and psychotherapist

Parents Association Step by Step, Croatia

# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN WORK AND FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

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- I feel privileged to speak about the work life balance and mental health
- Are we all privileged to speak about the work life balance and mental health?
- Are we all privileged to take a part of this panel discussion?

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- Without going into details, a rough assumption is that most of us have:  
Jobs, families, children, we are educated enough to participate in the discussion, we or our employers are aware of the importance of this topic (we took days for travel, someone payed for the costs), we have enough social support to take few days out of home or regular work, we have more or less willing or power to influence changes and improvements.

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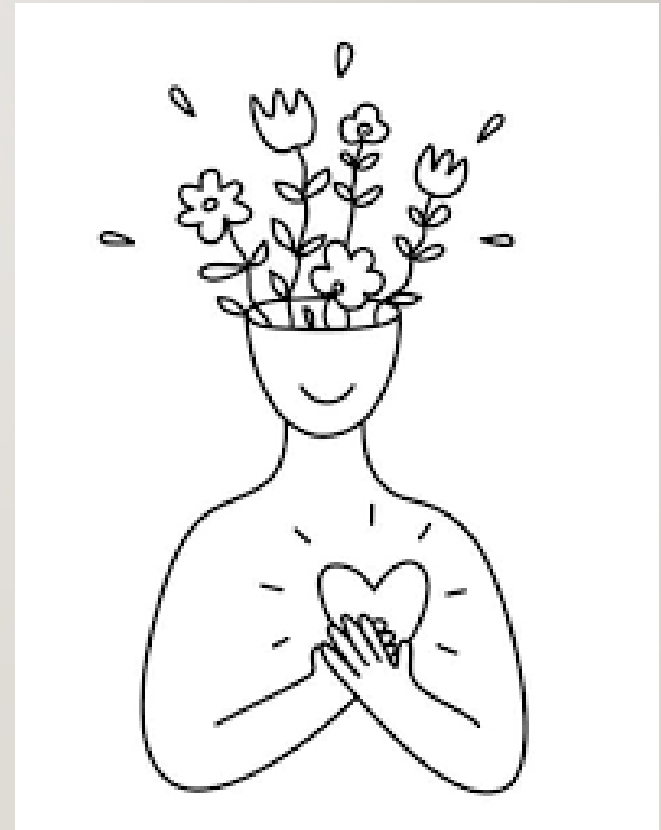
A large number of families in Europe do not have this privilege. Many of them would like any kind of job. Many families are under a lot of stress and their physical and mental health is threatened due to the struggle for basic living conditions. Even though it is not our focus for today's discussions, I felt it is very important to mention that, as investing in health, well-being, mental health is extremely important, also in situations and very specific conditions.



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- Mental health is state of well-being in which the person can cope with the normal stresses of life and, can work productively, and can contribute to the community. Improving the work-life balance can improve overall well-being, including the physical, emotional, and mental health.



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- **Stress** can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way we respond to stress, however, makes a big difference to our overall well-being.
- **Anxiety** is a feeling of fear, worry, or unease. While it can occur as a reaction to stress, it can also happen without any obvious trigger.
- **A difference between stress and anxiety** is the presence of a specific trigger. Stress is typically tied to a specific situation. Once that situation resolves, so does the stress. Anxiety, by contrast, doesn't always have a specific stressor.



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- Most people experience some feelings of stress and anxiety at some point, and that isn't necessarily a "bad" thing. **Stress and anxiety can sometimes be a helpful motivator to accomplish tasks**, but unmanaged stress and anxiety can start to interfere with your daily life and take a toll on your mental and physical health.
- **Burnout is a state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion**. It can occur when you experience long-term stress and feel under constant pressure. The condition of burnout isn't medically diagnosed. But burnout can affect your physical and mental health if you don't acknowledge or treat it.



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## Psychological resistance

- Ability to adapt when dealing with various losses, traumas and significant life stressors.
- Positive adaptation and preservation of mental health, despite experienced difficulties.
- Coping with a stressful event, orienting towards a positive outcome and putting effort into dealing with stress.

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## How does all this look in a working environment?

- Is there a difference in the approach to physical health or condition and mental health or condition in employee?
- **Is it acceptable to work actively with some light chronic illness or the conditions?** (respiratory problems, occasional migraines, arthritis, diabetes, thyroid disorders, hormonal imbalance, back pain, cardiovascular system problems, high blood pressure, obesity...)
- Is there a difference in approach to employee, colleague if they are facing some of those conditions? Can they still work or have to take a sick-leave? (Is it even possible?)



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How does all this look in a working environment?

- Is it necessary to take sick leave in cases of lighter mental health issues or conditions (stress or anxiety, eating disorders, sleeping problems, different fears, feeling overwhelmed or depressed)?
- Is easy for someone to share with employers or colleagues he is facing mental health issues and is in the mental health treatment (taking psychotherapy session)?
- Do employers see such employees equally? What about colleagues or co-workers?
- Do we still have a prejudice? Is there still a stigma about the mental health?



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## And what is reality?

- Every sixth EU citizen lives with a mental disorder.
- In Croatia, even 50 percent of all mental disorders begin before the age of 14, and 75 percent before the age of 18.
- It is estimated that only depression in the total population will be the second leading cause of the global disease burden by 2030, while in Croatia a 20 percent increase in mental disorders is predicted among young people, then women, and other vulnerable groups.
- Investment in mental health is recognized as very important. This follows the three main principles of the EU - effective prevention, access to high-quality healthcare and treatment, and reintegration into society after recovery, which is also in line with the Strategic Framework for the Development of Mental Health in Croatia.

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Investments in work-life balance can improve our overall well-being, including our physical, emotional, and mental health. It can improve the efficiency at work, it can reduce level of sick-leaves from employees.

There are various forms of ensuring a better balance between work and life. Not all jobs are the same, sometimes it's hard to find the right WLB forms and methods. There are no universal tips that will be applicable to all forms of work and flexibility opportunities.

Many companies will say that they implement WLB policies. This can certainly contribute to the reputation of the company as socially responsible. Some of them generally support the idea without real investment, while some others are actively finding solutions to improve the well-being and satisfaction of employees because they really care for them.

Where there is a good intention, it is possible to find a solution. There are many good and inspiring examples.



THANK YOU 😊  
YOUR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ARE WELCOME

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