

## GM@W Suggested Responses

Please consult the *Selection of GM@W Suggested Actions* and *Selection of Effective Actions: Applying a Quality Framework* documents to help you select GM@W suggested actions to undertake for Balance.

### PF11: BALANCE

**OBJECTIVE:** A work environment where there is recognition of the need for balance between the demands of work, family and personal life.

PF1: GM@W Survey Results (check rating, if applicable)	SERIOUS CONCERNS	SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS	MINIMAL CONCERNS	RELATIVE STRENGTHS
PF1: GM@W Organizational Review Results (check rating, if applicable)	SERIOUS CONCERNS	SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS	MINIMAL CONCERNS	RELATIVE STRENGTHS

Serious Concerns = 5 to 9 Significant Concerns = 10 to 13 Minimal Concerns\* = 14 to 16 Relative Strengths\*\* = 17 to 20

\* Although this is a Minimal Concern, it is important to attend to it and review the GM@W Organizational Review Results and the GM@W Survey Results for any additional or individual-identified areas of concern.

\*\* Although this is a Relative Strength, it is important to review the GM@W Organizational Review Results and the GM@W Survey Results for any additional or individual-identified areas of concern.

The list below contains actions that you can take to respond to actual or potential concerns related to **Balance**. Many of these actions have been found to be effective in research studies, have been recommended as best practices, or have been found valuable in applied settings. Some have been informed by emerging case law and regulatory requirements. The actions are drawn from diverse industries and sectors, and not all may be applicable or feasible in your particular workplace. This list is not exhaustive, nor is it intended to be prescriptive. Rather, these are suggestions for possible courses of action.

If **Balance** has been flagged as a **Relative Strength** in your workplace, it is important not to overlook this finding. You can do this by developing policies that protect this relative strength and engaging staff in discussions of how this strength can be enhanced by implementing the suggested actions below.

If **Balance** has been flagged as an area of concern in your workplace, consider which of these actions might be appropriate. In making your decision, it can be helpful to keep the following six key quality dimensions in mind: Appropriateness, Acceptability, Accessibility, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Safety (see *Selection of Effective Actions: Applying a Quality Framework* for more information).

The actions below fall into four main categories: (1) norms, values and practices of the work environment; (2) training and development initiatives; (3) communication strategies and approaches; and (4) formal policies and programs. You may have already initiated some of the actions – but consider the others. You may also have other ideas for actions you could implement – there is a space for writing these down at the end of this document. **Remember, not every action that might enhance Balance in your workplace is listed here. Implementing the following actions, however, will provide a strong foundation for building a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.**

### **Work Environment (Norms, Values & Practices)**

- Have management support and model positive work/life balance behaviour (i.e., ensure that messaging is consistent with demonstrated behaviour/expectations)
- Facilitate balance by providing opportunities that promote health and balance (e.g., on-site gym/fitness facilities, provision of “personal time” off, options for unpaid leaves)
- Offer supports (e.g., appropriate technology and resources) for staff who work from home/off-site

### **Training & Development**

- Provide information on creating and sustaining a balanced approach to the demands of work and personal life (e.g., enhanced resiliency, coping and problem-solving skills)
- Provide training opportunities for managers/supervisors to support both themselves and their employees in the management of work/life demands
- Provide a range of educational opportunities (internal and external) on non-job-related topics (e.g., attending “lunch-and-learn” sessions on childcare or eldercare issues)

### Communication

- Communicate organizational commitment to balance as integral to overall health and productivity
- Increase awareness of existing company and community resources/programs that support work/life balance
- Support staff who wish to share non-work-related accomplishments (e.g., birth of children, major anniversaries, accomplishment of lifelong goals)

### Formal Policies & Programs

- Provide flexible work arrangements, where possible (e.g., compressed work schedules, work from home, virtual conferencing, part-time work, contract opportunities, job sharing)
- Provide appropriate support for shift workers (e.g., limit split shifts, provide advance notice of shift changes, permit trading of shifts)
- Offer personal and family supports for both child and elder care (e.g., comprehensive benefits, daycare, fitness facility access, health education, family responsibility leave)
- Assess employees' perceptions of the value of benefits when making decisions concerning these programs (e.g., provide flexible/"opt-out" options)
- Offer opportunities to earn time off during peak work periods (e.g., to use during lower workload demand periods)
- Encourage use of allocated time off
- Develop parameters around communication, availability and technology use (e.g., email, phone) during off-work periods and have leaders model this approach

Additional resources have been created to help you take action, including: presentation slides and supporting materials (freely available at [www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/ota](http://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/ota)) and a new resource - *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers*, developed on behalf of the Mental Health Commission of Canada Workforce Advisory Committee, that is a practical tool designed to help employers develop implementation plans on the basis of GM@W findings (freely available at [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Workforce/Workforce\\_Employers\\_Guide\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Workforce/Workforce_Employers_Guide_ENG.pdf)).

We encourage you to review these resources for additional suggested actions.

**Other Actions:**

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There won't be a perfect set of actions – often it's a matter of choosing the actions most likely to accomplish positive outcomes while generating the fewest potential problems.

Once you have selected one or more actions to undertake, enter them into the corresponding *GM@W Action Planning Worksheet*, pick your start date, identify who will be involved – your Action Team, and get started!