

CareerIQ

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Healthy You, Healthy Career

by Catherine Crawford

In order to successfully set and obtain career goals it is important to make sure you are leading a healthy, well balanced lifestyle. If you have a healthy foundation, you will be able to cope better with challenges and changes that arise along the way.

The Public Health Agency of Canada¹ reports that our psychological health has a profound effect on how we feel, perceive, think, communicate and understand the world around us. When we are mentally unwell, we experience alterations in thinking, mood or behaviour that cause us distress and impairs how we function in life. Building new healthy habits and creating new rituals can drastically improve your performance, and ultimately your career if you are operating at your best all year round.

Career health means: having a well developed sense of self and goals to work towards, meeting career goals in a healthy way, challenging yourself to new life experiences, having friends and peers who share similar goals and support one another in achieving them.

Set yourself up for career success by establishing a healthy you. McMaster University encourages its employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Know how to manage stress during organizational change and attend the Healthy Workplace programming that is offered throughout the year. This, combined with the multitude of professional development opportunities McMaster offers, will put you on the path to career success.

Maintain a **Work-Life Balance**

- ➔ **Get enough sleep.** Without enough good quality sleep, our bodies can't repair or restore themselves. Sleep is very important for mental alertness.
- ➔ **Make time for family and friends.** Maintaining positive and supportive relationships in your life are important. These positive relationships with close family members, friends and colleagues are essential when faced with challenges.
- ➔ **Participate in new activities you enjoy.** Make time for those activities that bring you joy and fulfillment. Learn a new skill, discover a new hobby, play games and read.
- ➔ **Take breaks at work.** Find ways to wind-down or pause. These moments can recharge you both physically and mentally. Breaks are essential to maintain a satisfying, productive and healthy work experience.
- ➔ **Get outside and enjoy the outdoors.** Natural light affects our mood. Sunshine boosts our levels of serotonin which is the body's natural happy hormone. That's why we tend to feel happier and more energetic when the sun shines.



Managing Stress during Organizational Change

McMaster University must constantly change to keep its competitive edge. New technologies, new processes and new strategies are always being introduced. These changes are essential but not always easy to deal with according to Homewood Human Solutions.² Change can be a very stressful time for employees and it can negatively affect your health and your career if you don't have the tools in place to deal with it. Here are some ways to cope with workplace change:

- ➔ **Share your experience.** Provide feedback when possible. Just talking to others about challenges can provide a sense of relief.
- ➔ **Be accountable for your learning.** There are typically many resources available to you which will allow you to become more informed about why the change is occurring. Also, signing up for training modules to make you more comfortable with new systems or processes will help reduce anxiety.
- ➔ **Be respectful.** Although there are various emotions employees can go through when accepting change, always make sure you are respectful.
- ➔ **Have fun!** Make sure to keep things in perspective. Inject humour when possible and understand that with time there will be acceptance across the organization.

It is important to realize that transitioning is a process that people experience as they strive to accept the change. It is individualized and often emotional. Understanding what resources are available to you during this time of change will ultimately ease the transition.

Workplace Wellness Promotion

McMaster strives to optimize the health and well being of our employees by providing comprehensive workplace wellness strategies. Our Healthy Workplace Program provides employee assistance, health promotion and wellness services. Our shared goal is to create and nurture a healthy workplace conducive to a productive, respectful and supportive environment where employees feel recognized and valued. Programs such as Employee & Family Assistance, wellness seminars,

Myth

Change Management is focused on the needs of the business.

Truth

Change Management is focused on balancing business as well as human needs.



Flu Clinics, Healthy Workplace Month and Athletic and Recreation instructional classes are just some of the resources available.

It is vital that managers support and encourage their employees to participate in Healthy Workplace Programs. Employees who feel their workplace cares about them will ultimately look for opportunities to be productive, innovative, and to exceed expectations. For more information, visit:

 workingatmcmaster.ca/healthy-workplace

Homewood Human Solutions provides McMaster's Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), which is a professional service that offers counseling, coaching, information and support for all issues relating to:

- mental health
- career
- life balance
- health management
- achieving greater personal well-being

 workingatmcmaster.ca/humansolutions

Resources

- 1 Talking about mental illness. (2014). Homewood Human Solutions. Life Lines, 4(5). Retrieved from http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/med/document/LL_V_EN_V4_5-1-37.pdf
- 2 Supporting employees through organizational change. (2014). Homewood Human Solutions. Vitality, 4(4). Retrieved from http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/med/document/Vitality_Nov2014_EN_V4_4-1-37.pdf

What Tools are Available?

Work Life Balance – Take the Quiz.....cmhahamilton.ca/worklifebalance.htm

Homewood Human Solutions.....workingatmcmaster.ca/humansolutions

McMaster Professional Development Opportunities.....workingatmcmaster.ca/development

Career Services.....employeecareers.mcmaster.ca

“The Heart of Change” by John P. Kotter

“Who Moved My Cheese” by Spencer Johnson