



# Balancing act

To achieve a good work-life balance, find what works for you

By Susan Birkholtz and photos by Marian Lockhart

**F**inding the right balance between work and the rest of your life can be a high-wire act—put too much weight on one side and you could lose your footing.

Add to this balancing act the pressure and longer work days that result from a challenging business environment, and it is more important than ever to manage stress and find a work-life balance.

But what is a good balance?

“It’s difficult to define work-life balance because it means different things to different people,” said Rene Vaughn, who works for Boeing and helps oversee the Employee Assistance Program and Family Care Resources. “For one person,

it could mean not letting electronic accessories rule his or her life. For another person, it could mean finding time to work out each day. And for yet for another person, it could mean having time to spend with family.”

Kirsten Aranda, Human Resources leader for Boeing Shared Services Group and a single mother of three, said each person must define what work-life balance means to him or her. “I’ve found techniques that really help me find balance even though I work more than 40 hours a week,” she said. “I blend my work and family time during the week with no set start and stop times for work, but I carve out specific family time.”

Putting a different spin on it, Karen McCune, vice president of Work-Life Services for OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions, Boeing’s Family Care Resources provider, said she encourages people to think about work-life effectiveness instead of work-life balance. “When you talk about balance, you think about a scale where everything needs to be 50-50 all the time,” she said. “But I think it’s more beneficial for people to ask themselves, after considering their current family situation and their current work situation, ‘Am I being effective in both?’”

If your answer to that question is “no,” this three-step process might help:

### Step 1: Identify stresses

If you are stressed, it can affect your ability to be effective on the job and at home.

Figure out what aspects of your life, if any, are causing you stress and try to find solutions.

### Step 2: Create a plan

Formulate a personal plan to achieve work-life balance. Don’t be afraid to ask for help when developing your plan. The Boeing Employee Assistance Program can help employees define work-life balance and strategies to achieve it.

### Step 3: Seek support

Boeing offers employees and their families a wide variety of resources to help achieve work-life balance, including the Employee Assistance Program and Family Care Resources. (These two programs are confidential and managed by outside parties; no personally identifiable information is shared with Boeing.) The programs—available to employees and their families at no cost—are designed to help manage stress for improved productivity both at work and at home. ■

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*For more information, employees can visit the Well Being Resource Center at <http://wellbeing.web.boeing.com> on the Boeing intranet.*

**PHOTOS:** Kirsten Aranda, Human Resources leader for Boeing Shared Services Group (shown at work, left, and at home), makes work-life balance a priority.