

Strand: Investing in the Future of the Organisation

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Type 6: Workshop, Invited DOP submission

Title: Managing work-life balance - a workshop for practitioners

Overview

This workshop provides delegates with the tools required to help their clients manage work-life balance (WLB). Whilst academic literature on WLB has increased, evidence-based guidance is lacking. We draw on theoretical advances in the field and our own practice experience to consider how WLB can be managed more effectively at the individual and the organisational level. Following a brief introduction, delegates will review and discuss case studies to identify best practice solutions.

Abstract

Work-life conflict is the number one health and safety concern in the UK (GRiD, 2012). A large body of research has associated work-life conflict with wide-ranging negative consequences for organisations and employees and their families. Evidence-based interventions are clearly required to maximise individual wellbeing and job performance, as well as organisational success. In the public domain, work-life balance (WLB) "tips" and "advice" are provided from a wide range of sources that are not necessarily informed by sound evidence. Drawing on the expertise of members of the DOP WLB Working Group, this workshop aims to share best practice to help occupational psychologists develop a "tool-box" of strategies to help organisations manage WLB more effectively.

This workshop is aimed at practitioners with varied levels of background experience. We expect that attendees have some intermediate experience of working with organisations, not necessarily within the field of WLB.

The envisaged learning outcomes are:

- a) To refresh delegates with up to date WLB theory and how this can be translated into evidence-based practice;
- b) To highlight the benefits of utilising a solution focused, rather than a problem-focused approach to working with organisations to facilitate WLB;
- c) To share best practice and frameworks for interventions.

We will present delegates with case studies of WLB interventions. These will be based on our personal experience of practice and research, as well as derived from other interventions that have emerged from the peer reviewed literature and the public domain. Each case study will be reviewed by small groups of delegates in terms of: (a) evidence-base; (b) 'face validity'; (c) fitness for purpose; (d) acceptability by

organisations and employees; (e) potential generalisability to other organisational contexts.

Practitioners will also be invited to reflect on their own practice situations, giving delegates the opportunity to engage with prominent academics and experienced practitioners in the field. We will also provide delegates with tips for further reading and professional development.

The findings will be used to inform the content of a factsheet, which will provide occupational psychologists with a "tool-box" of evidence-based strategies to help their clients manage the work-home interface more effectively. In 2012, the WLB Working Group published three factsheets (targeted at employees, managers and coaches) which covered the risk factors for work-life conflict and the potential impact. These factsheets were very well received and are currently used widely by practitioners, employees and organisations.