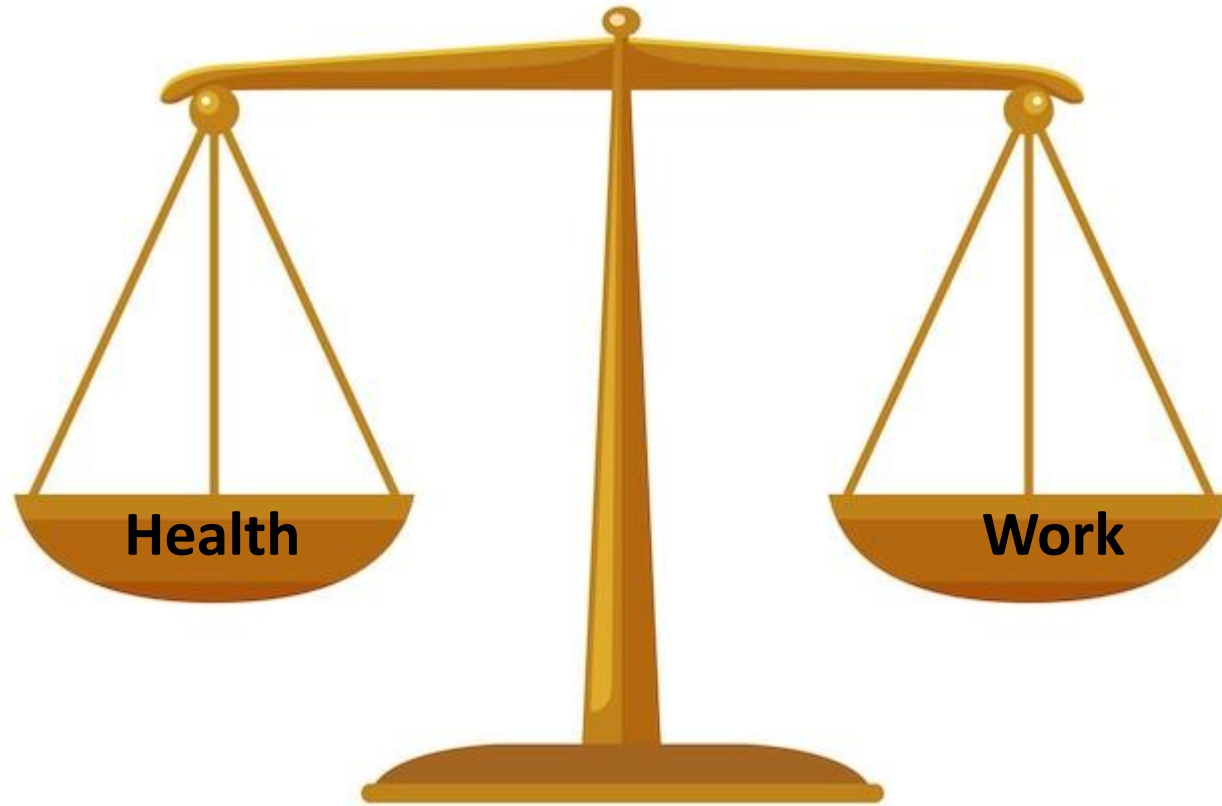


Holistic Health: Navigating Work-Life Balance in Academia

Achieving Well-being in a Demanding
Environment

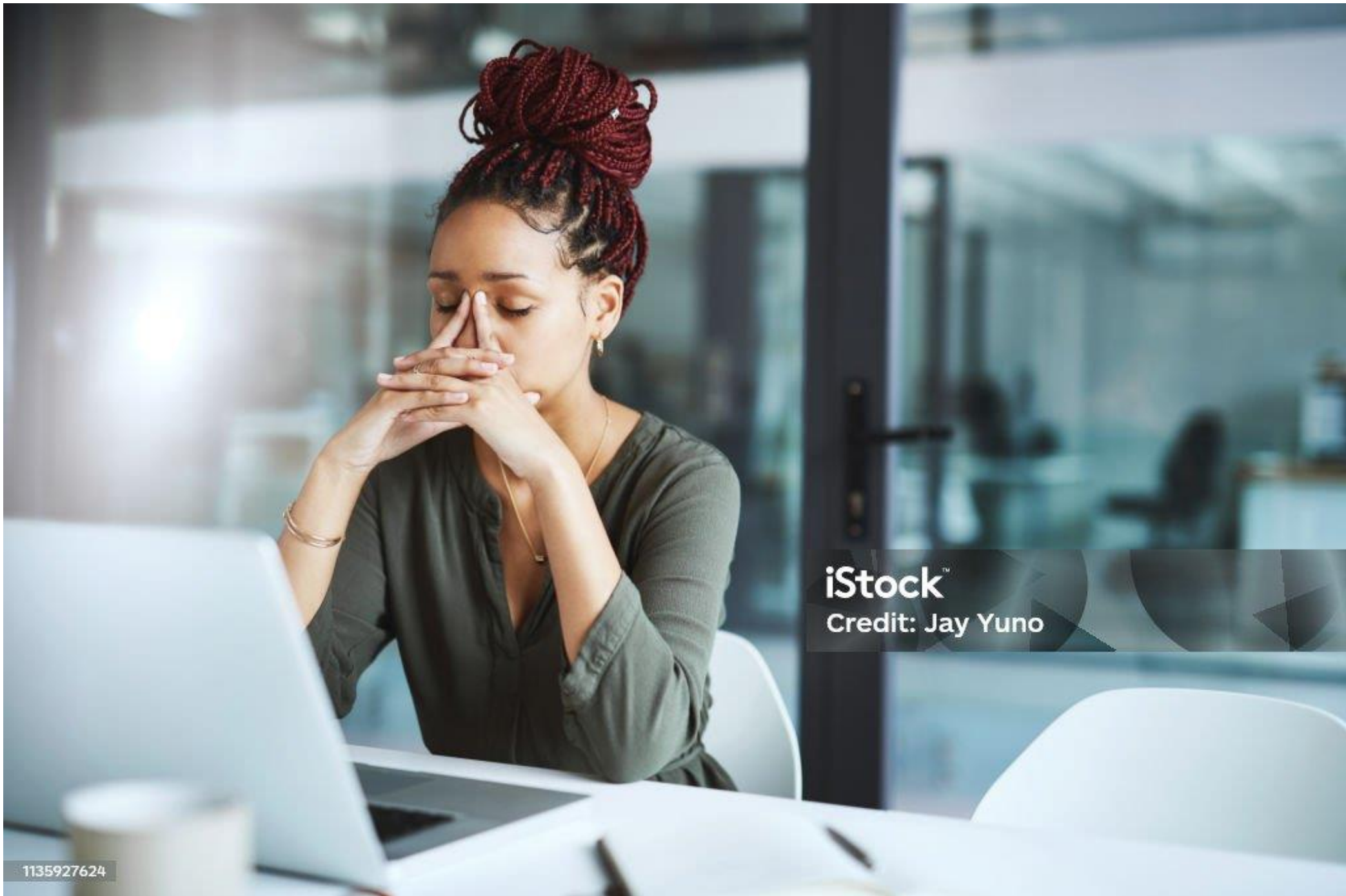
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Striking a balance

Introduction

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO)
- Holistic health is an approach to life that considers multidimensional aspects of wellness. It encourages individuals to recognize the whole person: physical, mental, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual.



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Case Scenario: Dr. Vivian's Dilemma

- **Background:**
- Dr. Vivian is a 35-year-old associate professor in the Department of Psychology at a Nigerian university.
- She is married with two children (ages 7 and 9).
- She is expected to teach, conduct research, and publish papers to secure tenure.

- **Challenge:**

- Dr. Vivian's department has increased her teaching load, and she must also complete a research project within the next 6 months.
- Her children require attention due to school and extracurricular activities.
- Her husband works long hours as a Resident Doctor in a teaching hospital, leaving Dr. Vivian to manage the household and childcare responsibilities alone.

- **Conflict:**

- Dr. Vivian feels overwhelmed and stressed, struggling to balance her work and family responsibilities.
- She fears that neglecting her work will jeopardize her tenure, while neglecting her family will lead to feelings of guilt and inadequacy.

- **Questions:**
- How can Dr. Vivian prioritize her responsibilities and manage her time effectively?
- What support systems can she leverage to alleviate stress and increase work-life balance?
- What boundaries can she set to protect her personal time and energy?

• **Discussion Points:**

- Identify potential solutions and strategies for Dr. Vivian to achieve work-life balance.
- Discuss the importance of self-care, communication, and boundary-setting in maintaining well-being.
- Explore the role of institutional support and resources in promoting work-life balance for academic professionals.
- This case scenario can spark a discussion on the challenges of achieving work-life balance in academia and potential strategies for overcoming them.

Challenges to Work-Life Balance in Academia

- Heavy Workload and Long Hours
- Blurred Boundaries
- Limited Control and Autonomy
- Unclear Expectations and Priorities
- Lack of Support and Resources
- Culture of Overwork and Sacrifice
- Technology and Constant Connectivity

- Pressure to Conform to Traditional Academic Norms
- Limited Job Security and Stability
- Personal and Family Responsibilities

Effects of poor work-life balance on Academia

- 1) Burnout
- 2) Decreased Productivity
- 3) Strained relationships
- 4) Physical and mental health problems.
- 5) Reduced Job satisfaction.
- 6) Increased turnover
- 7) Decreased creativity
- 8) Institutional costs
- 9) Decreased student satisfaction.

Strategies for Physical Well-being in Academia

1. **Schedule Physical Activity:** Incorporate exercise, walking, or stretching into your daily routine.
2. **Healthy Eating Habits:** Plan nutritious meals, snacks, and limit processed foods.
3. **Prioritize Sleep:** Establish a consistent sleep schedule, aiming for 7-9 hours of sleep.
4. **Take Breaks and Move:** Regularly take short breaks to stretch, move, and refresh your mind.
5. **Access Campus Resources:** Utilize campus fitness centers, health services, and wellness programs.

Strategies for Emotional Well-being in Academia

1. Practice Self-Compassion: Treat yourself with kindness, understanding, and patience.
2. Seek Support: Connect with colleagues, mentors, or mental health professionals.
3. Engage in Mindfulness: Regularly practice meditation, deep breathing, or yoga.
4. Set Realistic Goals and Boundaries: Prioritize tasks, learn to say "no," and maintain a healthy work-life balance.
5. Celebrate Achievements: Acknowledge and celebrate your accomplishments, no matter how small.

Strategies for Mental Well-being in Academia:

- 1. Mindfulness and Meditation:** Regular practice to reduce stress and increase focus.
- 2. Cognitive Training:** Engage in activities that challenge and stimulate your mind.
- 3. Seek Social Support:** Connect with colleagues, mentors, or mental health professionals.
- 4. Prioritize Self-Care:** Make time for activities that bring joy and relaxation.
- 5. Set Realistic Goals and Expectations:** Break tasks into manageable steps, and celebrate achievements.

Conclusion

- Poor work-life balance in academia has far reaching consequences that affect not only individuals but also institutions and the broader academic community.
- It's essential to recognize the signs of burnout, prioritize self-care and implement strategies to achieve a healthier balance between work and personal life.

Thank you
for
listening!

