

SKILL – STRESS MANAGEMENT



1) DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL

This exercise aims to help clients identify the behaviors, beliefs, and conditions that create metaphorical “holes” in the barrier between work and private life. In doing so, clients can better develop a solid barrier between work and private life to help them restore a healthy balance between the two.

Time: 30 minutes

2) OBJECTIVES OF THE TOOL

- Work-life balance does not mean an equal balance of time spent on each area. Work-life balance is not defined by hours but by outcomes. Moreover, psychological detachment is about mentally switching off from work-related issues during off-time; it is not about caring less when at work, which may also be problematic.
- Ensure clients understand that there are no perfect, one-size-fits-all solutions. Work-life balance choices are different for each of us because we all have different priorities and lives.
- Reassure clients that the mind can be easily distracted, which is completely normal. When putting their solutions into action, the mind is likely to wander back to work-related issues. The key is to acknowledge that one’s attention has shifted and then refocus on the task at hand.

3) CONNECTION OF THE TOOL WITH THE SKILL

This tool offers the possibility to train stress management skills and at the same time supports self-responsibility abilities.

This exercise will help you recognize the behaviors, beliefs, and conditions that puncture holes in the barrier between your work and private life. When you know what weakens your work-life barrier, you can identify what is needed to fill these holes and prevent work issues from spilling into your private life.

4) RESOURCE MATERIALS

Pen
Blank sheets

5) HOW TO APPLY THE TOOL

Step 1: Identifying the holes in your work-life barrier: The things you do, your thoughts, and your circumstances can puncture holes in the barrier between your work and home life. For example, taking work calls or checking emails at home will create holes in your barrier that can leave you feeling stressed long after

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work is over. In this step, you will think about the behaviors, beliefs, and circumstances that create holes in your work-life barrier.

Holes created at work : First, think about the behaviors (the things you do), beliefs (what you think is true), and conditions (your circumstances) **at work** that puncture holes in the barrier between your work and personal life. When you have identified these holes, write them down.

Holes created at home: You will now think about the behaviors (the things you do), beliefs (what you think is true), and conditions (your circumstances) **at home** that create holes in your barrier between work and private life. When you have identified the holes created by your behavior, beliefs, and circumstances at home, write them down

Step 2: Filling the holes in your barrier

It takes thought and planning to strengthen the barrier between your work and private life. You must find ways to fill the holes so that a healthy balance can be restored. Now that you have identified the behaviors, beliefs, and circumstances that puncture holes in your work-life barrier, you will identify solutions to fill them. For example, a hole created by checking work-related emails at home can be filled by turning off notifications or turning off your phone after work hours. To give another example, feeling stressed at home because of your workload will likely pierce a hole in your work-life barrier. To fill this hole, you might practice saying 'no' to additional work when you feel it is right to do so. So, what can you do to fill the holes and strengthen your work-life barrier? For each behavior, belief, and circumstance you identified as a hole in your barrier, take some time to think of a solution that will fill that hole and strengthen the barrier.

Step 3: Taking action

Now that you have identified what you need to do to fill the holes in your work-life barrier, it is time to put them into action. For each solution you added to the 'Strengthening the Work-Private Life Barrier' table, think of small steps to include them in your regular schedule. For example, to stop checking work-related texts and emails outside of work hours, you might think about disconnecting when you are at home and changing the settings on your devices so that you will not be bothered by work-related notifications.

Step 4: Reflection

How do you feel after completing this exercise?

How does it feel to strengthen the barrier between your work and private life?

What did you find most rewarding about this exercise?

In what ways has this exercise changed how you think about your work-life balance?

What did this exercise teach you about your work-life balance?

In what other ways can you fill the holes and strengthen the barrier between your work and private life?

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6) WHAT TO LEARN

Cultivating a solid barrier between work and personal life is imperative to psychological detachment. Indeed, the absence of a strong barrier between the two roles may limit opportunities to recharge and unwind from work-related stressors [4]. It is, therefore, essential to identify the behaviors, beliefs, and conditions that create metaphorical “holes” in the work-life barrier. For instance, some actions, like not taking sufficient breaks or believing you must be available around the clock for work-related issues, will puncture holes in the barrier.

These holes weaken the work-life barrier and make it easier for work-related stress to spill over into private life. However, identifying ways to fill these holes and strengthening the barrier between work and personal life offers opportunities to recharge and unwind from work-related stressors

Source: positivepsychology.com



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