

Parents and Carers Series – Maintaining Harmony at Home

While working from home, the boundaries between work and life become easily blurred. To help retain distinction between work and life, there are a range of strategies you can employ such as establishing a routine, scheduling work and family time, adopting work attire, or setting up a designated workspace. However, even with the best laid plans and intentions, it can still be difficult, if not unrealistic, to match the same balance achieved when there was a clear geographical distinction between work and home.

When it comes to working at home with children, a more flexible approach is necessary. The important thing is to find what works best for you and your family. Remember, this may change over time. There will continue to be good days and bad days, so don't be afraid to change the way you work if you aren't feeling right about the outcomes for your work or family. If you feel you are struggling or need additional support, the [Community Wellbeing Team](#) is here to help and can assist you to access the appropriate support.

The below tips and suggestions have been collated from various sources and members of the ANU community to help others maintain harmony in their home while working remotely. However, every family is different, and so what works for one family, may not work for another. Work-life harmony should reflect the nuances on how you see work in the context of your own life and family.

- **Don't be afraid to go with the flow** - It can be very beneficial to isolate yourself in the home to avoid the chaos, but as parents this can be impossible at times. Throughout the day, depending on the type of work, your mood, your household mood – it may be more productive working on the couch in your pyjamas for the morning.
- **Turn off** – It can be easy to feel the need to be 'on' 24/7 while working remotely. If you have a set space for work – try keeping an alternative space that is work-free. This can be a physical or timing boundary depending on the space you work from. This could also mean no devices in that space or during a set period.
- **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate** - No matter what you decide works best for you, don't assume your family, partner, children, or colleagues will have come to the same conclusion on their own. Let your colleagues know you have 1 hour set aside each day with a no device rule. Ask a family member for help whether it be a work or family issue. And don't forget to listen – active listening is an important skill in any relationship, professional and personal.
- **Show appreciation** – Gratitude can contribute to happiness, well-being and satisfaction in life. When it comes to your household aim to show your partner/spouse, parent or child appreciation in big and small ways as often as you can. Remember they are also adjusting to remote work and schooling. It is also important to publicly appreciate your staff and colleagues for excellent work during these times.
- **Think about work and family in terms of outcomes** - Rather than just a set time of the day. You may get more out of both if for this week, you work towards finishing work tasks x, y, z and doing a, b, c with your family. In the family context this might mean going for a walk/hike/bike ride together or going over a remote learning school project.
- **Don't be so hard on yourself** - Working from home can be very difficult at the best of times but even more so if it was never part of your plan. Remember that this will be true for most people during this period. So, while you should show empathy to all in our community and expect this in return, you should also remember to practice self-compassion. Harmony in the home is a mindset and in this current context how we perceive and react to challenges is about the only thing we can control (with practice).



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Want more information about establishing daily routines?

Read

- Fast Company - [Find a balance working from home...](#)
- HBR - [How Working Parents Can Let Go of Perfectionism](#)
- Trello - [How To Be A Happy And Productive Remote Worker](#)
- Lifehack - [How to Practice Active Listening](#)
- Think Little Big - [Best 7 tips on working remotely in harmony with your staff](#)

Listen

- University of Sydney - [Wellbeing and COVID-19](#) – 21 April 2020

Watch

- Hopscotch & Harmony - [Choose mental health over academic progress for remote learning...](#)

Have feedback, questions or would like to suggest other topics? Email community.wellbeing@anu.edu.au.