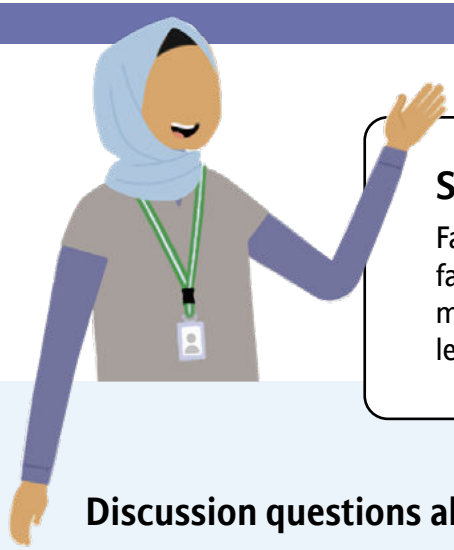
LET'S TALK ABOUT

Balance

Balance is a key part of psychological health and safety. When it's missing, it can lead to stress, burnout, and safety risks. Your JOHSC plays a vital role in noticing when Balance is off and helping the organization respond.

Protective vs. Hazardous

Protective	Hazardous
The organization encourages workers to take breaks and time off.	Workers feel constantly tired or burned out from work.
People can balance the demands of work and personal life.	Work gets in the way of personal or family responsibilities.
Leaders support workers when personal or family issues come up.	Lack of support causes stress, frustration, or resentment.
Workers have energy left at the end of the workday for their personal lives.	Poor balance leads to injuries, missed work, and higher turnover.
Work prioritization provided.	Failure to set clear priorities.



Scenario

Fatima (she/her), a nurse practitioner at a rural hospital, is struggling to manage her demanding work schedule and family responsibilities. She is often called in on her days off because of staffing shortages. Feeling pressured, the staff member accepts the shift, making it difficult to rest, spend time with family, and manage personal responsibilities, leading to fatigue and frustration.

Discussion questions about the scenario

1. **What are we seeing or hearing that tells us Balance might be a concern?** *Things to consider:*
   a. *Are work demands reasonable?*
   b. *Do workers feel it's easy to talk to their leadership about work demands?*
   c. *How easily can workers ask for and get direction to prioritize when workload is heavy?*
   d. *Does leadership encourage workers to take their entitled breaks?*

2. **How does a lack of Balance affect safety, health, and team morale?**

3. **What workplace practices support Balance? What practices make it harder?**

4. **What data could help us understand the issue better?**
   (For example: overtime, sick time, vacation use, EFAP usage)

5. **What can your JOHSC do to support better Balance?**

The Balance discussion guide helps your committee:

Identify evidence of imbalance in your workplace.

Understand how Balance can be protective or hazardous.

Use data and observations to make recommendations.

Support safe, healthy work environments.

What can your JOHSC do to support Balance?

Your committee plays a key role in identifying psychosocial hazards and recommending improvements. Here's how you can support Balance in your workplace:

1. **Observe and listen:** Pay attention to what staff are saying about their ability to manage work and personal life. Look for signs of stress, fatigue, or frustration.
2. **Review available data:** Ask for information on relevant data, such as overtime hours, sick time, and EFAP usage related to family issues or stress.
3. **Ask questions:** During inspections or meetings, ask about thoughts on scheduling practices, flexibility, and support for time off.
4. **Identify patterns:** Are certain roles, departments, or shifts more affected by imbalance? Are there recurring concerns?

Review and Reflect

- How has our understanding of this Psychosocial Factor evolved?
- How are we already protecting psychological health and safety related to this factor?
- How do we see those protections or hazardous aspects showing up in real work situations?
- How did the information surprise us or confirm what we expected?