



Mentoring Working Group

April 15, 2026

Introduction

- Managing both family responsibilities and career demands is a common struggle, particularly in fast-paced sectors such as satellite and space technology.
- Many professionals face the challenge of balancing caregiving duties with extended work hours and irregular schedules.
- This presentation will cover topics including feelings of guilt, effective time management, setting boundaries, and variations across industries.
- Source: Pew Research Center, “Parenting in America Today” (2023) — 66% of working parents indicate challenges in balancing work and family life.

Guilt Factor – Caregiving Support is Key

- Many professionals experience guilt when caregiving responsibilities conflict with work demands.
- Emotional strain is common among parents (mothers AND fathers) in high-pressure roles.
- Support networks and flexible policies can reduce this burden.
 - If you're lucky enough to have found a spouse who's a true partner you're ahead of the game.
- On-site childcare, flexible hours, and remote work options help balance responsibilities.
- Mentorship and peer support groups improve emotional resilience. (That's us!)
- Source: American Psychological Association (APA), Work and Well-Being Survey (2023)
 - 59% of working parents report feeling guilty about not spending enough time with family.

Setting Boundaries and Scheduling Non-Negotiables

- Boundaries protect mental health and prevent overcommitment.
 - Examples: turning off notifications after hours, setting “no-meeting” blocks
 - Limit evening/weekend work hours and let people know that you don’t expect responses during non-work hours unless it is time-sensitive/an emergency.
- Communicate boundaries openly and clearly with supervisors and teams.
- Boundaries must be respected by both colleagues and family members.
- Identify “non-negotiables”- school drop-off/pick-up, family dinners, school events, etc.
 - Use “defensive calendaring” to protect these commitments.
- Sources: Harvard Business Review, “How to Make Time for What Matters” (2023)
Forbes, “The Science of Setting Boundaries at Work” (2023)

Time Management in Demanding Fields:

Space Sector Insights

- Aerospace and space tech roles often involve long project cycles and irregular hours.
- Prioritization frameworks (like Eisenhower Matrix) help manage competing demands.
- Delegation and automation tools can reduce burnout.
- Government agencies (e.g., NASA, ESA):
 - Structured schedules, strong HR support, but bureaucratic rigidity.
- Private space companies (e.g., SpaceX, Blue Origin):
 - Fast-paced, innovation-driven, often longer hours.
- Research institutions: More flexibility, but funding cycles can add stress.
- Sources: Space Foundation, “The Space Workforce Report” (2024).
McKinsey & Company, “Productivity and Well-being in High-Performance Teams” (2024).

Balancing Work, School, and Family – Extra Credit

- Professionals pursuing advanced degrees face additional strain.
- Structured routines and shared calendars help coordinate responsibilities.
- Support from employers (like tuition assistance or flexible deadlines) is key.
- Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Adult Learners and Work-Life Balance (2023).

Lessons Learned and Closing Thoughts

- Work-life balance is not static—it evolves with career and family stages.
- Flexibility and communication are key to sustainable balance.
- We can't do it all, all the time. The goal is harmony, not perfection.
- It's great to say “family comes first,” but leaders have to create a culture through their actions letting teams know it is okay to prioritize family needs without fear of reprisal.
 - Investing in mental health and family support improves retention and performance.
- Supporting one another in professional and personal growth benefits everyone.
- This is why SSPI-WISE and our mentorship program exist!
- Sources: World Economic Forum, “Global Workplace Well-being Index”(2024).
Deloitte Insights, “The Future of Work and Family Integration” (2024).