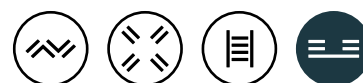




## FACILITATING WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION

# RECOGNISE AND ENABLE CARE WORK BY WOMEN AND MEN

**Women are still underrepresented in leadership positions. A central reason for this is that women are still mainly responsible for so-called “care work”, i.e., family work. This added responsibility impacts employment and career development for women – the same applies to men who are primary caregivers or care workers. Support, flexibility and understanding are needed here. The following gender-inclusive leadership practices offer you concrete possibilities for action in your everyday leadership and help to contribute to better work-life integration.**



## **“I enable and promote mobile working and home office in my area of responsibility”**

- Ensure that what is taken for granted during the pandemic is maintained afterwards.
- Make sure that both women and men (with and without children) can work from home equally.
- Use more trust and care in your leadership – instead of control and pressure.
- Be aware that women and men in leadership positions work full time, but the partners of the men are predominantly part-time. At the same time, the partners of the women are also employed full time – so women in leadership positions are more dependent on flexible working hours and locations than men.
- Even if your own life and work routine allow for presence and full-time work, put yourself in the position of those primarily responsible for family tasks. Ask them about their needs, and let them describe their everyday lives to you. Adapt new ways of thinking and propose mutual solutions with your employees for professional disadvantages that might arise with the responsibility of care work.
- Set a good example and work (temporarily) outside the office.

## **“I enable and encourage part-time and job sharing in my area of responsibility”**

- Establish part-time work as a matter of course for all employees – because it is not only mothers and fathers who want work-life integration.
- Offer part-time work not only to mothers but also to fathers.
- Offer job sharing to both women and men.
- Create job sharing as pilot projects and communicate them in your management circles as good examples worth imitating.
- Consider whether part-time work by both women and men can be included as a performance criteria for career development. This way, competencies acquired outside the workplace are valued. Many employees acquire competencies and skills that can also be significant for the job (e.g. organisational talent, flexibility, patience). These skills could be considered when the employee is seeking career development.
- Make part-time and job sharing in management positions the (new) norm.
- Do not misinterpret part-time requests as a lack of career ambition.
- Free yourself, your clients and stakeholders from the belief that part-time work is impossible and unreasonable and is only done by lazy and unambitious people. This belief is entirely unfounded – on the contrary, many part-time employees are especially efficient and creative.



**“I reduce my own workload  
for better work-life integration  
and encourage colleagues to  
do the same”**







### **“I encourage men to also work part-time”**

- For establishing part-time work as a matter of course, you need to have more men working part-time within your organisation. As the overwhelming majority of men work full-time – and this is particularly true for management positions – the desire and the need to work part-time are often regarded as “women’s problems”.
- Proactively offer part-time options in career development talks with men and especially with young fathers.
- Reassure your team that part-time work is not an obstacle to further career development.
- Initiate discussions on part-time work. What are men’s desires and needs? What are they afraid of? And how do women perceive the situation?
- Encourage your colleagues within management to increasingly work part-time.
- Promote more part-time work for men in management meetings and ask your colleagues to do the same.
- Participate in developing company-wide campaigns, measures and regulations to increase the proportion of men working part-time.

### **“I make sure that meetings end in such a way that mothers and fathers can pick up their children from daycare and look after them.”**

- In particular, schedule recurring appointments within the opening hours of daycare centres and schools.
- Set a good example and consistently ask to reschedule meetings outside the opening hours of daycare centres and schools to which you are invited.
- Advise facilitators and participants to keep to the scheduled end of the meeting – so that parents do not have to leave the meeting in a hurry.
- Also, try to avoid “emergency meetings” in the evening hours – check the (supposed) urgency if necessary.

### **“I do not answer emails and phone calls after hours and/or during holidays (if possible) – and I do not expect my staff to do so”**

- Even if you don’t always succeed, try to stick to the email- and phone-free times.
- Motivate your staff to do the same.
- Make it clear to your employees (from time to time) that you do not expect them to respond to emails for example, during non-working hours – and thus contribute to a changing work culture by challenging “permanent accessibility”.
- In case of home office and/or flexible working hours, clearly communicate and make it understood when each person has “closing time” and must leave the meeting.
- Critically question in the team and management circle the necessity and belief principle of “permanent accessibility” – and critically examine “urgencies”.

### **“I reduce my own workload for better work-life integration and encourage colleagues to do the same”**

- Be a role model and be openly visible as a role model.
- Point out that a family-friendly corporate culture is a valuable asset that massively increases attractiveness as an employer and contributes to improved recruitment and staff retention.
- Report on your experiences, advantages, and disadvantages, as well as motivation and hurdles.
- If possible, keep to your reduced working hours.
- Contribute to establishing job percentages below the 100 percent norm in management positions.
- Motivate others to do the same.

## **Meaning of Work-Life Integration**

We have deliberately chosen not to use the term “work and family integration” because it is often associated with being a problem of women only. This means that “private life” is narrowed down to “family”, and part-time work due to voluntary work, sport, or hobbies does not have the same relevance. Introducing the notion of “work-life integration” we want to make it clear that our lives consist of gainful employment *and* private life – which not only need to be reconciled with each other but also that the goal is a corporate culture in which both spheres are valued and accepted.

LEADERS  
FOR  
EQUALITY

With “Leaders for Equality” our focus is on male leaders as relevant actors for gender equality.

“Leaders for Equality” is financially supported by the Federal Office for Gender Equality in accordance with the Gender Equality Act.

Graphic Design: Isabelle Meyer | meyer Müller.ch  
Photos: iStock, Adobe Stock, Unsplash



University of St.Gallen

**Contact**

Prof. Dr. Julia Nentwich  
Dr. Gabriele Schambach  
Dr. Nilima Chowdhury  
University of St.Gallen  
Research Institute for Organizational Psychology  
Girtannerstr. 6, CH-9010 St.Gallen  
T: +41 (0)71 224 26 38  
E: [leaders4equality@unisg.ch](mailto:leaders4equality@unisg.ch)  
[www.leaders4equality.ch](http://www.leaders4equality.ch)