

Ep #74: How to Find Work-Life Balance as a Clinician



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Heather Branscombe

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Welcome to *Clinicians Creating Impact*, a show for physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists looking to take the next step in their careers and make a real difference in the lives of their clients. If you're looking to improve the lives of neurodiverse children and families with neurological-based challenges, grow your own business, or simply show up to help clients, this is the show for you.

I'm Heather Branscombe, Therapist, Certified Coach, Clinical Director, and Owner of Abilities Neurological Rehabilitation. I have over 25 years of experience in both the public and private sectors, and I'm here to help you become the therapist you want to be, supporting people to work towards their dreams and live their best lives. You ready to dive in? Let's go.

Hi there, friend. I hope you're doing well today. As I am recording this, it is the end of May and we are kind of finishing up what I like to call PDR season here at Abilities. And I have to say it's my favorite time of year. PDR stands for Professional Development Review. And it's a time where clinicians reflect on their practice, and then we meet to talk about how they're doing and how we can best support them.

Now, I really love this time of year because, one, supporting clinicians is actually one of my favorite things to do. It kind of gives me the same feeling as the clinical work that I used to do, just in another form. And then on a larger scope, it really helps me to assess the overall health of the organization, because ultimately, an organization is only as healthy as the people that work within it are, or at least that's what I think.

So as I meet with clinicians, one of the things that we've been talking about a fair amount is work-life balance. So I wanted to share one perspective on how to find work-life balance that can help you to feel more content in general.

Before I share that perspective, I know you may already know this, but this podcast is an amazing passion project of mine because I want all clinicians to have the ability to use this kind of tool set and tips in a way to magnify their

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impact, both for themselves and for the clients that they're seeing, even if they never either work alongside us or work with us at Abilities.

I consider myself so lucky to be able to do this and to share this as part of my work week. Talk about amazing work-life balance. It's so great. It is my fun part of my work week. So you can help me to make this more meaningful by helping to spread the message. Better clicks help more clients and more clinicians, so let's work together to make that happen.

So you can help me to spread the message in a couple of ways. One, you can follow, rate, and review this podcast wherever you're listening to it, and that helps to feed the algorithm so, again, when a clinician just like you is searching for something just like this, this kind of podcast will come up for them. And second, if you share this podcast, or even better yet, if you can share your favorite episode with a favorite colleague, that would be most amazing.

Again, if you've heard this before and you've meant to do it, maybe you've heard me say this and you've meant to do it, but you haven't done it yet, it's okay. I know we all get busy. Let this be the sign, today is the day that you can help your fellow clinician friends.

If this is your first episode, amazing. Welcome. Thank you so much for listening. And hopefully, as you listen, you can decide who of your clinical besties would love to hear more of this kind of information to help them at work as well. So thank you in advance so much for your action here. And with that, let's get back to the episode.

So I want to start first by zooming out a little bit bigger than giving you those first few nitty gritty tips. Now, I will give you those nitty gritty tips later on, but sometimes zooming out can be really helpful to make sure we are actually more precise in the tools that we use to get to the goal that we want.

So in this case, I want to start by asking what work-life balance actually means to you. And I ask that question because it sounds like it's some kind of fact or some kind of universally agreed upon final destination. But I can tell you in my experience, myself as a clinician over my clinical career, as well as supporting

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many other clinicians, that work-life balance means different things to different people.

Now, your brain may go to what work-life balance may actually physically look like. And that makes total sense because, first, our brains love to solve for the how. And second, our brains like to think that situations create feelings. But if you've listened to my podcast for any length, you would know that more often than not, it is not the situations or the facts that are creating our actual feelings.

So let's zoom out for a moment and decide what does work-life balance actually feel like for you? So if you can, I'd invite you to name that feeling in a single word. It could be something like freedom, peace, ease, or something else that's meaningful to you. And then for bonus points, take a moment and imagine what that feeling has felt like or would feel like in your body. Where would you feel it? And how does it actually feel in the body?

Now, this is the bonus points question because feeling is actually as much about sensation as the language we use to describe it. And yet, I find that so often we only use the language and forget to feel what the actual feelings actually feel like. Isn't that funny?

Once you know what work-life balance feels like to you, then we actually have a tangible goal to work towards. Not just the language of the one-word feeling, but we actually have the tangible sensation that we're going to work towards. And I like having that tangible goal from a broader perspective because now we know what we're actually aiming for. And then as we experiment to help you to get to your goal, we'll be better able to recognize it when it's there and when it isn't there.

Most people don't actually realize that when we work towards a goal, it's not because of what we achieve by getting there, but it's actually what we think the achievement will help us to feel. And I want to just share with you, the truth is that that feeling is available to you all along the way. This is not just a final destination. It's not like one day you're going to figure it all out and then you're going to feel like you have work-life balance, whatever you've named that feeling like to you.

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It's much more likely that you're going to have glimpses of it. Very, very small glimpses at first. And then as you work towards it, maybe more sustained periods of it. And then if you're lucky, meaning you've actively worked towards this with meaning and strategy, that feeling can be an almost constant companion. I know that because I live that today. I am lucky and I've worked really hard towards that goal.

The trick is really to approach your work life as a kind of science experiment and to try things out and see how they actually feel. Because remember, the closer to the feeling you identified just earlier, the closer we are to that goal. And how we get to that goal may change over time because the circumstances of your life are going to change over time.

If you go back to previous episodes, I have a few episodes on how to, for example, how to get things done at work, how to document faster, how to increase your compensation, all things that could possibly help in your science experiment to get your work-life balance and to achieve that feeling, that tangible goal that we're working towards. But until we have a clear view on what that feeling is like for you, the more effective that these tips and strategies are actually going to be.

So the final thing that I just want to share with you about work-life balance is that work is actually part of life. Isn't it funny that we separate work and life? Work is part of your life. We like to separate it often because we think that problems at work really affect what's happening outside. But I want to say from my experience from, again, my experience of me and my experience of supporting a lot of other clinicians just like you, is that often the root source of challenges we have or the suffering that we are enduring at work is the same or is mirrored as what we experience outside of work.

So what I mean when I say that is if you have a problem with people pleasing at work, I bet that that's an issue outside of work as well. If you overwork at work, I bet you there are things outside of work that you overdo, such as maybe eating or drinking or social media or something else that you do to distract yourself from the pain and the suffering that you are feeling.

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And again, I say this not from the mountaintop at all. I say this because this is definitely my own experience. I'm here to tell you my work and my work has and is my ultimate place of personal development. And as I work on my own personal development, it's resulted in a much more peaceful work and a much more peaceful life. So if that is you, know that it's also me and actually it is each of us in our own unique ways.

And finally, know that you don't have to do this alone. When you decide that the feeling that work-life balance would actually feel like in your life, when you have that goal and you imagine what that would feel like in your body, you can then notice in the next week the glimmers of that feeling of when they do come up and what you're thinking or doing at that moment.

And then you can notice when that feeling isn't there. Notice what feelings are coming up and what you're thinking and feeling at those times as well. And if you need some help to unpack that and to figure out what that means, that's where you can seek help from a coach or other mental health professional that you love.

So to achieve work-life balance as a clinician, decide what the feeling is when you have work-life balance and then go after it just like a scientist. And let me know how it goes. Please feel free to email me at heather@abilitiesrehabilitation.com. Because yes, I am busy, we're all busy, but I am never too busy to talk to you. With that, I hope you have an amazing week and I'll talk to you soon.

If you enjoyed today's show and don't want to worry about missing an episode, you can follow the show wherever you listen to your podcasts. And if you haven't already, I would really appreciate it if you could leave a rating and review to let me know what you think and to help others find *Clinicians Creating Impact*.

It doesn't have to be a five-star rating, although I sure hope you love the show. I'd really want your honest feedback so I can create an awesome podcast that provides tons of value. To learn more about me and the work that I do, visit my website at www.abilitiesrehabilitation.com/clinicianscorner to download your free Getting it All Done at Work process and to see what I'm up to. Thanks so much.

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Thanks for joining me this week on the *Clinicians Creating Impact* podcast. Want to learn more about the work I'm doing with Abilities Rehabilitation? Head on over to abilitiesrehabilitation.com. See you next week.