

# ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH WORK ADDICTION?

With our progressive use of email and instant messaging services like Slack, experts are making a case that maintaining a work-life balance is much more difficult today than in the past. For example, **over half of all adults questioned by 60 minutes stated** that they spend time outside of work monitoring their emails, with this number rising to 70% for younger generations.



What these statistics show is that our current workplace culture may be encouraging early forms of work addiction, where individuals either feel anxious or guilty when they aren't available to work or respond to messages. As a result, licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs) today are treating a different kind of addiction: work addiction.

## VACATION & TIME OFF

Is vacation a luxury that can't be afforded, or something that employees choose to give up because they believe working is more important?



### VACATION TIME



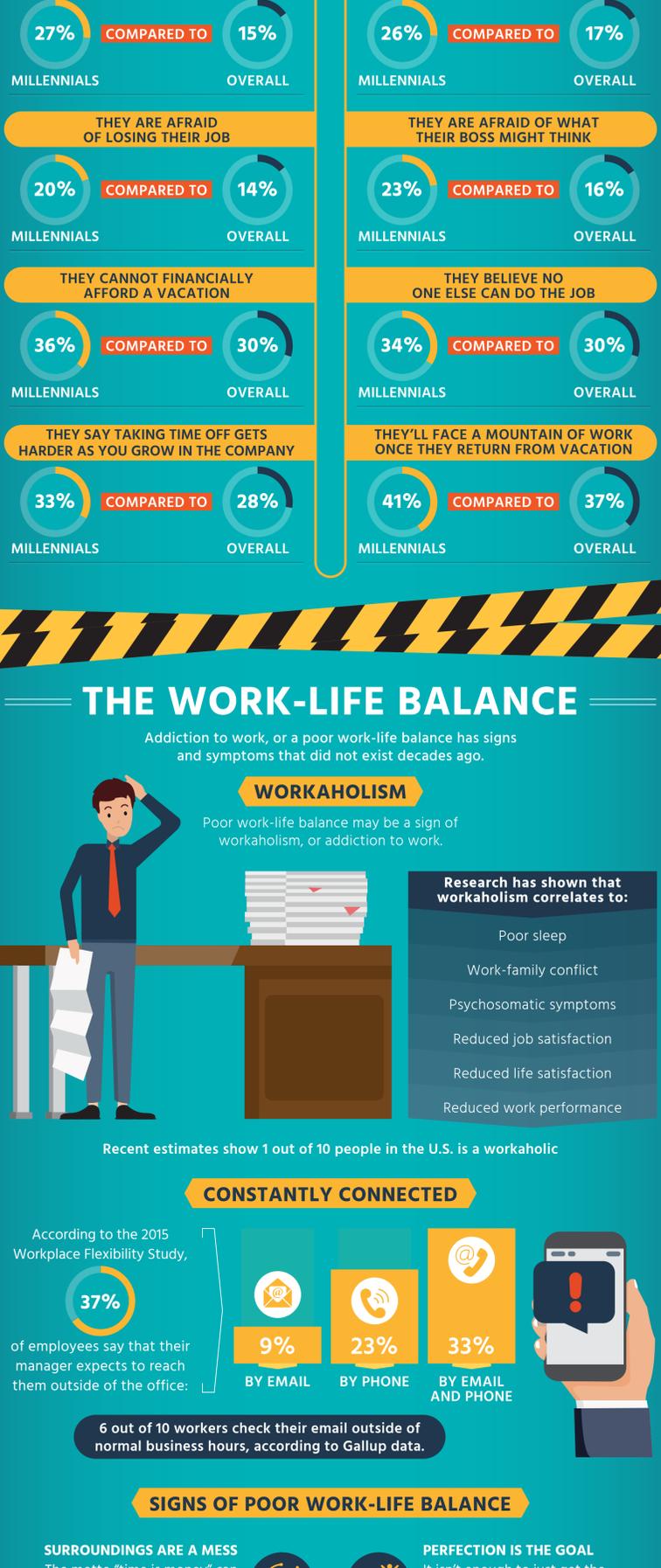
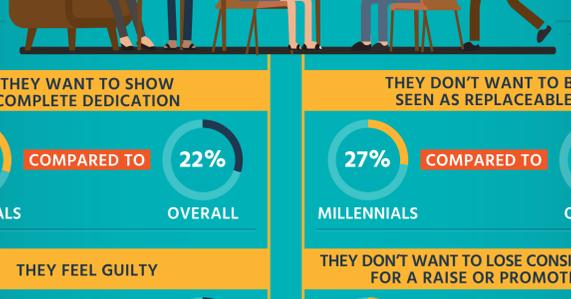
In 2000, the average of 20.3 vacation days per year began to decline.

### WORK MARTYRS

A survey by Project: Time Off found that nearly four in 10 (39%) employees "want to be seen as a work martyr" by their boss



### TOP 10 REASONS MILLENNIALS HESITATE TO TAKE TIME OFF



## THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Addiction to work, or a poor work-life balance has signs and symptoms that did not exist decades ago.

### WORKAHOLISM

Poor work-life balance may be a sign of workaholism, or addiction to work.



- Research has shown that workaholism correlates to:
- Poor sleep
  - Work-family conflict
  - Psychosomatic symptoms
  - Reduced job satisfaction
  - Reduced life satisfaction
  - Reduced work performance

Recent estimates show 1 out of 10 people in the U.S. is a workaholic

### CONSTANTLY CONNECTED



### SIGNS OF POOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE



## TIPS FOR MANAGING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Pursuing work-life balance is a choice. The first step is making it a priority.

- PRACTICE MINDFULNESS**: Track how much time you spend — or waste — on your smartphone and other digital screens. Identify the triggers that make you start scrolling and think about how you can better spend your time.
- DO A DIGITAL DETOX**: Try hiding your smartphone, logging out of apps, or simply turning off your phone after normal work hours. Stop turning to screens as a time-filler and learn to "live in the moment".
- REDEFINE SUCCESS**: Recognize the value of high-quality relationships; physical, spiritual, and emotional wellness, and community engagement. Make an effort to prioritize and pursue these goals.
- MODEL WORK-LIFE BALANCE**: Lead change in your workplace by modeling healthy habits. Re-structure your schedule and improve time-management — coworkers and managers will notice.
- ENLIST SUPPORT**: Ask coworkers, friends, and family to keep you accountable and help you stick to boundaries.



### WHEN SOCIAL WORKERS STEP IN

Because the life of an employee is intertwined with the lives of their families, friends, and communities, the effects of work addiction reach beyond the individual employee. The social worker can help the individual make visible progress by:

- PROVIDING INFORMATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS**: For those who just don't know where to start, social workers can provide up-to-date and accurate information about work addiction. Social workers may also refer individuals to community programs and resources.
- PROVIDING ONE-ON-ONE OR GROUP COUNSELING**: This could help individuals stay motivated and be accountable to their social worker or group members.
- REFERRING THE INDIVIDUAL TO A SUPPORT GROUP**: Those living with work addiction can find support and encouragement from group members going through the same struggles. A social worker should be able to refer the individual to a local community group.
- PROVIDING CLINICAL THERAPY**: For people suffering from work addiction, a licensed clinical social worker can provide clinical counseling or therapy. Therapy can help uncover the underlying issues related to work addiction such as causes and areas for change; and from that the licensed clinical social worker can work with the client to create a personalized treatment plan.

No doubt today's highly connected workplace has increased communication options for employees, becoming more evident. However, the negative effects of being constantly connected have become more evident, with employees becoming hesitant to take time off and choosing to check their work email during vacation. But work-life balance doesn't have to be an elusive target; LCSWs can be a part of the solution, helping individuals identify habits that lead to their lives being out of balance and make an effort to change.