

Harmonizing Personal and Professional:

**Specific Strategies for
Achieving Balance in Academia**

Successful social work careers in academia and happy personal lives are not mutually exclusive!



The Research

Doctoral students

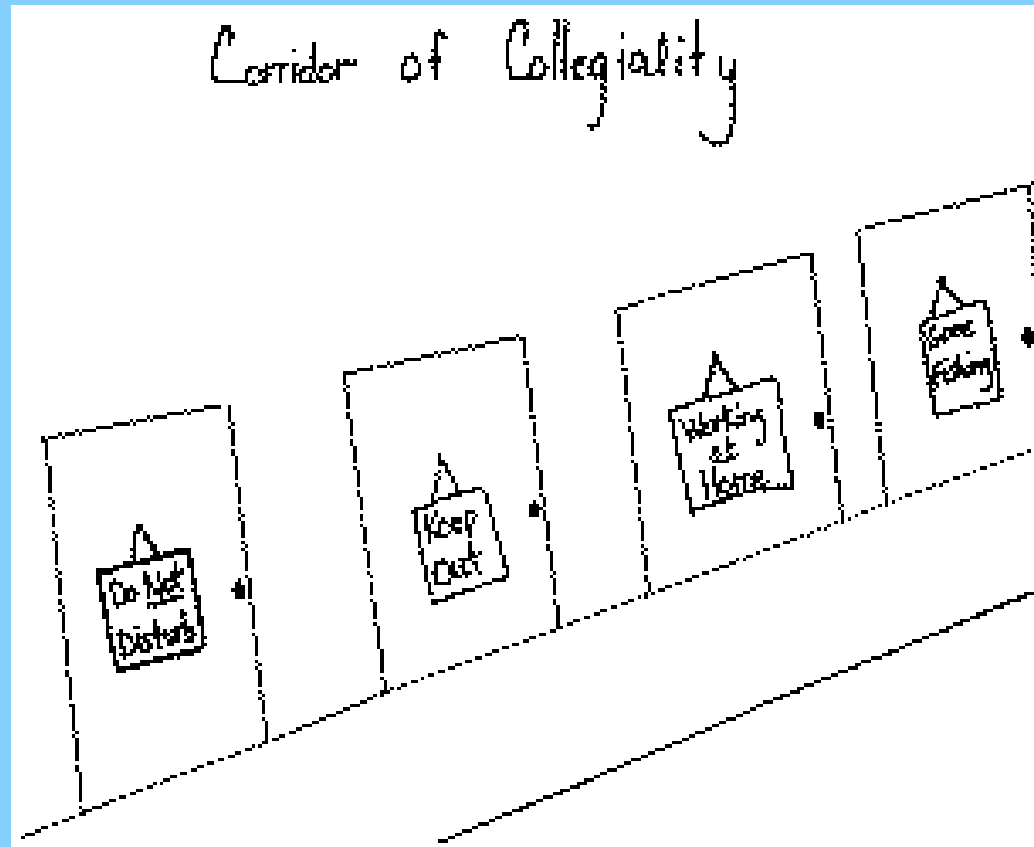
- Struggle to balance personal and professional responsibilities**

Doctoral students/new faculty

- mixed messages about what is important in academic settings**

Strategies: Achieve Balance

- **Volunteer, not research related**
- **Utilize supports (groups, therapy)**
- **Play (run, exercise, art, music)**
- **Spend time with your family**
- **Carve out quality time with friends**
- **Do not check e-mail too often outside the office (and not while on vacations)**
- **Get a good night's sleep, even nap**
- **Create quiet time**



"A sense of isolation and competition seems to characterize the lives of academics, rather than the experiences of community and connection."

Strategies: Right Milieu

Environment supports

- Personal values
- Desired lifestyles

Healthy behaviors

- Practice
- Model

Strategies: Observation

Environmental layout

Atmosphere

Events

Acclimating newcomers

Strategies: Interview

Ask Prospective

- **Employers**
- **Colleagues**
- **Students**

Questions

- **Do they write together?**
- **Do they go to lunch together?**
- **Do their children know each other?**
- **Do faculty members tend to get tenure?**
- **What's tough about working here?**



“It is unlikely that you have ever been exposed to politics as pervasive and at times as vicious as you will find in most institutions of higher learning. . . . Your job is not to be consumed by it, but to learn enough not to be caught in the middle.”

- U. Cal. Berkeley Career Center

<http://career.berkeley.edu/PhDs/PhDtransition.stm>

Strategies: Politics

- Do not get hooked into gossip
- Have lunch with each faculty member at least once and get to know them as people
- Do not raise ideas in faculty meetings unless you are prepared to “champion” them
- Collaborate with people who you genuinely like
- Be thoughtful and vent with prudence
- Have friendships outside academia to have “safe places” to process

**Achieving
balance
in academia
is possible!**



Personal

Professional