

# Conversations About Women in the Workplace: Breakout Group Notes

## Session 8: Don't Leave Before You Leave

6/5/14 in Franklin Lobby 1

Facilitators: Lena Zentall and Lourdes Demattos

Participants were divided into groups and given topics from the *Lean In Discussion Guide* (<http://bit.ly/19VY12a>).

The groups were asked to answer the questions and to share a few takeaways about their topic at the end of the meeting. Takeaways included observations, tactics, and motivational statements.

External Barriers:

- Inconsistency among departments (and even within departments) in schedule flexibility.
- Management bias toward staff working in the office and not telecommuting (due to space constraints, working remotely is receiving more attention.)

### Topic 1: Leaning Back

**Leaning back.** Have you pulled back from seeking challenges in anticipation of having to carve out, or someday having to carve out, time for a family life? Have you pulled back in anticipation of leaving a position? Did you miss any opportunities by pulling back?

1. Make a plan for finishing up work you start, but realize you may not finish everything. Don't let that stop you from taking on new and interesting work before you leave.
2. Women sometimes work harder to prove they are not leaning back (e.g., after a maternity leave), which can lead to burnout. Check in with yourself.

### Topic 2: Your chosen field / work environment

What would be the impact of having children on your career? For those with children, has there been an impact on your career? Why or why not? Do you think your chosen field (or workplace) is supportive of employees with children? What can you do to change the environment or create opportunities for yourself?

1. Find ways to rejuvenate yourself: volunteer for a committee or project (PACSW, for example.)
2. Leave your work at work.
3. Let go of perfectionism and recognize when something doesn't need to be done.

### Topic 3: Making plans

How comfortable do you feel discussing your plans to have children in your workplace? If you're a supervisor, how do you create a work environment where employees can discuss their plans for a family?

1. Ask for flexibility in your schedule. Prepare a concrete proposal in advance - do your research and have solid reasons for your request.
2. Don't be afraid to let your desires be known. Keep asking if you're not successful on your first try.

3. Managers can ask for flexibility in their schedules too! (You can expect staff to ask for the same from you.)
4. Suggest a "pilot": Can we try this proposal for 3 months?
5. Think through the implementation process -- a plan may look good on paper, but there may be holes or lack of clarity in how it gets carried out.
6. Build trust by demonstrating you are productive.
7. ERIT is a UCOP program that allows for a reduced work schedule. (see Resources below)
8. FSAP counseling is helpful for reviewing all your options. (see Resources below)

#### **Topic 4: Positive effects**

---

What positive effects does your working have on your children?

1. Make family time a priority. Carve out a regular time (e.g., 7-9pm).
2. Involve your family in your career plans. It's a good opportunity to model the importance of work-life balance, especially for girls.
3. Do an annual planning retreat with your partner.

#### **Reference**

##### **Employee-Initiated Reduction In Time (ERIT) program**

ERIT program is asking for comments until June 10, 2014. It's a program for working reduced time. Have you done this or are you interested in doing this? What do you think the impact on your career/family life would be? <http://link.ucop.edu/2014/05/05/comments-invited-on-employee-initiated-reduction-in-time-erit-program/>

**Faculty & Staff Assistance Program (FSAP)** <http://www.ucop.edu/local-human-resources/op-life/worklife-programs/faculty-staff-assistance-program.html>