Good evening. I am Susan Metzger, Chair of the DAR Leadership Training Committee.

The topic of this webinar is finding balance between life, work and DAR. During this presentation I will share my ideas for not only striking a balance among life’s many activities for ourselves but also tips that chapter and state leaders can employ to help our members find that balance.

DAR members are busy women – we are superwomen!

Look around your chapter – your members are mothers, grandmothers, career women, soldiers – and somehow still manage to collectively contribute more than 4 million hours of volunteer service in our communities each year! We are all skilled at finding balance among life, work and DAR.

Balance does not necessarily mean simply equalizing our time and energy among our various life activities. It is unlikely that we spend an equal amount of time at work, with our family and friends, and with our activities such as DAR.

And, it is probably true to say that our time allocations change from month to month – especially when new life events present themselves – a new job, the birth of a child or grandchild, or elderly parents that need care. Life is not static – it is dynamic. Balance in one season is not the same as the next. Balance for one person is not the same as balance for another.

Creating the capacity to balance in the changing circumstances of life is not only important for our personal health and wellbeing, it is key in developing and maintaining great DAR members. Fostering a balance among DAR and our members’ other commitments will help avoid burnout and will ensure our members not only stay members but remain happy, active members.
In developing this webinar I spent time reflecting on my own chapter - thinking of how the busy women in my chapter successfully manage to strike a balance among their careers, families, other community activities all while contributing in their own ways to DAR.

I also drew upon tips and ideas presented in blogs and on-line articles as well as two published books: Life Matters by Roger and Rebecca Merrill and Thrive by Arianna Huffington.

I have come up with six guidelines for finding balance among work, life and DAR. These are based on my own observation and experience. Perhaps you have additional tips making time and space for DAR in your life. Please share those tips during this webinar by typing them in the question box. We will share some of the tips following this webinar.

The six “balance” guidelines that will frame this webinar are: Dedicate, Communicate, Coordinate, Regulate, Delegate and Decline.

The first guideline for balancing life’s demands with our service to DAR is to DEDICATE. DEDICATE a portion of your schedule, skills and talents to the work of this Society.

No matter how busy we may be, we all find the time to accomplish the highest demands of our day. Sure, if we had more hours in the day or could clone ourselves we may pick up more activities or accomplish more tasks. But the reality is we are given one body and 24 hours each day. That means that both consciously and unconsciously we tend to prioritize and spend our time with the people and activities that we value the most. As active members in DAR you have demonstrated that being a member is important to you. You have chosen DAR as an area of your life to which you want to dedicate yourself.
At the chapter level, recognize that your members are there for the same reason you are – because they have chosen to dedicate a portion of their time and energy to DAR. One way to maintain that dedication is to periodically reconnect to the mission of the Society. It is easy to get lost in the details of activities and the function of a chapter – completing reports, collecting dues, scheduling meetings. As a chapter step back on occasion and reflect on the power of an all women service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history and securing America’s future through better education for children. Spend a few minutes at a chapter meeting asking your members to share why DAR is important to them.

What we are dedicated to is not static. As a member, periodically review your commitments and evaluate whether you are spending your time in the ways you most value.

The second guideline for finding balance in our busy DAR lives is to COMMUNICATE.

Our families and friends are key to helping us maintain balance among our work and life responsibilities and our volunteer commitments. Communicating why DAR is important to you and what you enjoy most about the organization with your family, friends and even coworkers will promote understanding. If they are aware of the significance of the organization to you, they will be more likely to help accommodate time spent with DAR in your schedule. Bring your family to a DAR event, talk about your latest chapter event in the break room at work. Communication can play a key role in striking that life, work and DAR balance.

If you can, involve your family in any decisions you make about taking on more commitments. Review your voluntary roles every year and remember that when you first took a position on, your commitments may have looked very different to how they are now. If you can’t say yes to something now, you may be able to return to it at a later date.
The third “Balance” guideline is COORDINATE – or basic time management. As Dr. Seuss shared through the Cat in the Hat, “How did it get so late so soon? It’s right before it’s afternoon. December is here before it’s June. My goodness how the time has flewn. How did it get so late so soon?” Ever feel like there are just not enough hours in the day?

Time management refers to coordinating time effectively so that the right time is allocated to the right activity.

For the most part, DAR has a regular and predictable schedule of events each year. This is true at the chapter, state and national level.

Your chapter’s yearbook includes a list of meetings for the upcoming year. Your state society probably posts a calendar of your state’s activities and deadlines.

The Members’ Section of the NSDAR website also includes a calendar.

Chart out the DAR events and deadlines along with your other life events and commitments. It is OK to not be able to attend all events. Prioritize the activities that fit best in your schedule and are the most important to you.

The next guideline in finding and maintaining balance among life, work and DAR is to REGULATE or pace yourself.

Are you a new member to DAR or have you recently taken on a new leadership position? It is easy to get so excited about the “newness” of the membership or role that we expend all of our energy early in the term. Be sure to harness your energy so you can sustain it for a longer period of time. Don’t try to do too much at once.

Remember, you have a time period to fulfill your role. Whether you have committed to organizing one event or to a leadership term that last 2-3 years, it is important to pace yourself accordingly. Most volunteer leaders commit to a role because they are passionate about the cause, and that passion can fuel a lively energy. You will benefit DAR more if you can harness that energy for the duration of your commitment and not just the first 3 months.
One way you can do this is by reminding yourself that you cannot (and in fact, should not) do everything immediately. So recognize that, and stop trying.

Another helpful way to pace yourself goes back to the Communicate guideline - find an “accountability partner” who can alert you when your momentum starts to overrule your ability to balance life, work and DAR.

Slowing down can make us more productive. Learn to value the role of rest in your busy life. In her book Thrive, Arianna Huffington shares the results of a study conducted by researchers at Stanford University. The study evaluated the performance of Stanford swimmers and basketball players, comparing several weeks of a normal college athletes schedule followed by a schedule that included naps and full nights of sleep. The study demonstrated that the athletic performance of the students actually increased with the intentional focus on rest. These results may not seem surprising, but we could still learn a thing or two from the results. It is OK to rest. Take time for yourself. You will be a more efficient and productive mother, grandmother, worker and DAR member as a result.

The next guideline for balancing Life, Work and DAR is to DELEGATE.

Leadership roles, even if voluntary, can feel isolating. Unfortunately, we often create that isolation ourselves because we believe leadership means doing it yourself. It is important to remember you are not alone. Don’t hesitate to use the variety of resources that surround you.

This may include fellow committee members, mentors and friends, past leaders in the Society, new members, or even knowledge from books, articles, etc.
### SCRIPT
Balancing Life, Work and DAR

| Depending on the level of your leadership role, be sure to collaborate with the other members in bringing action to ideas. Also, remember that for some roles (Regent, for example) your job really is to focus on the bigger picture and strategy—not on directly implementing each idea. In these situations, collaborative delegation is necessary. What does that mean? Empower others to work with you on implementation by asking for help, or appointing specific tasks based on a member’s role and strengths or interests, and always offer to serve as a resource for them. Whether delegating or collaborating, it is critical to set clear expectations for both yourself and those you are working with, and then hold each other accountable to these by checking in periodically. |

| Often we are too hard on ourselves, typically because our passion is driving our service. Give yourself permission to ask for help and advice, to make mistakes during your term, and to acknowledge both your learning opportunities and achievements. It is important as a leader to role model a positive and productive culture, and permission is critical in helping establish that. |

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The final guideline for finding balance in Life, Work and DAR is to DECLINE or just say no.

It’s not always easy to say no to a worthy and interesting request for help, but try to use your head AND your heart when deciding. First of all, ask yourself whether it’s something you feel passionate about and are genuinely interested in? Check exactly what commitment is required of you and for how long. Think about whether this position is going to add value to your life now – does it make you feel positive and excited? Make a list of all the other things you are already doing on a voluntary basis – will you need to make some changes?

If it feels like it’s going to be too much to take on, then say no. Ask your chapter or state leaders to contact you again at a different time. If it feels like a fantastic way to serve others or do something you’ve always wanted to, then say yes and schedule away! If you can’t decide on the spot, say you need to evaluate your schedule and visit with your friends and family before you make the commitment.

Most importantly, don’t feel guilty if you can’t say yes to a request – there will most likely be someone else who can. Saying no may open up a great opportunity for another member.

As chapter and state leaders, you can help members with this last guideline. You know what they say, “No good deed goes unpunished.” We tend to reward the dedication of our members by asking them to take on more. We can help our fellow DAR members in balancing their many life commitments by being conscious of how much we ask them to do for DAR. Share the workload of a chapter including leadership and committee chair positions with many members.

And finally, never underestimate the power of saying “Thank you.” Express appreciation for the time and energy DAR members in your chapter and state share.
Finding balance among Life, Work and DAR is not a perfect science and will not look the same for all members. But in my own experience, these are my guidelines for finding that balance.

Dedicate yourself to the activities most important to you
Communicate those priorities to your friends and family
Coordinate your many life events to ensure proper time management
Regulate your time and enthusiasm so you don’t get burned out
Delegation of activities and responsibilities to others, and finally
Decline – it is OK to just say no.

I hope you have found some of the ideas shared in this webinar helpful as you look to find balance in your own life and in your chapter. As I mentioned before, the six guidelines for finding balance that I shared in this presentation are based on my own experience and observation. Many of you have shared your own tips during this webinar. Let’s take a few minutes to share your ideas with the other attendees.

Thank you for taking the time to attend this webinar. And thank you for sharing your own ideas for finding balance among life, work and DAR!