

MOTHERS AND THE PANDEMIC: ONE YEAR LATER

The COVID-19 pandemic's emotional, physical and mental toll on working mothers created what economists have dubbed a "Shecession," and put women's labor force participation at the lowest it's been since 1988. Millions of women left the workforce, and millions more find their mental health at a tipping point. In Allison+Partners recent survey, we explored the pandemic's staggering emotional impacts on mothers, everything from mental health and home life to their careers and feelings on a return to work. Outlined below are the key findings from our research.



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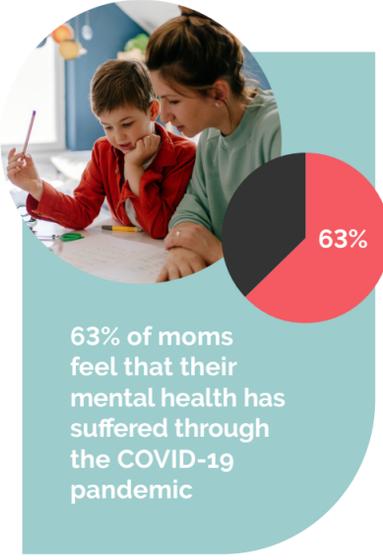
GENERAL FINDINGS

- Although 71% of moms believe that work-life balance can be achieved as a working mom, a set, non-flexible work schedule is not realistic
- 42% of moms do not believe that a set, non-flexible work schedule is realistic for moms who work
- Flexibility is key - according to the survey data, 80% of moms believe that employers should offer flexible working hours to alleviate the pressures of balancing a career and a family, along with 71% who believe that a flexible work environment, such as working from home, would alleviate these pressures
- Half of moms believe that improved or expanded paid parental leave (53%) and programs for childcare reimbursement (49%) would alleviate the pressures of balancing a career and a family
- When asked what kind of work environment would make them feel truly supported as a working mom, moms most often referenced one with flexibility (31%), the ability to work remote (21%) and somewhere that's generally safe, positive, quiet and/or calm (14%)



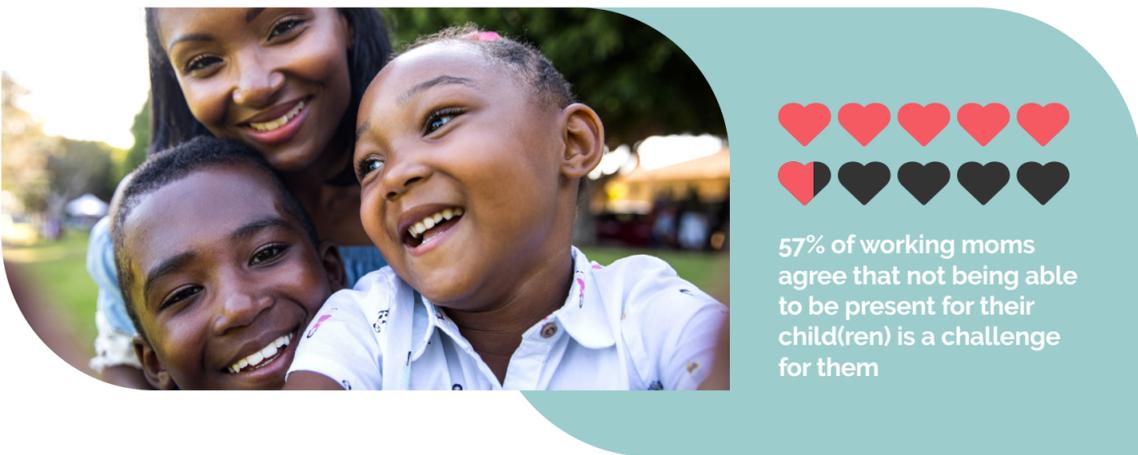
IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Nearly half of moms agree that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased tension between their home and work life (47%)
- Three-quarters of moms agree that the demands on them as a mother have significantly increased since the start of the pandemic (75%)
- 68% of moms agree that they now have a stronger bond with their child(ren) as a result of the pandemic
- 34% of moms say that their relationship with their partner has been negatively impacted through the pandemic
- More than 6 in 10 moms feel that their mental health has suffered through the COVID-19 pandemic (63%)
- Over a quarter of moms 'strongly agree' that their mental health has suffered through the pandemic (26%)



UNEMPLOYED MOMS

- 64% of moms who were employed since March 2020 but decided to leave their job, did so because of family reasons:
 - Becoming the primary caretaker for their child(ren) is the most common family-related reason that a mom decided to leave their job (63%), followed by the desire to be more present for their child(ren) (42%)
- 29% of moms who were employed since March 2020 but decided to leave their job, did so for health and/or mental health reasons:
 - The top health-related reason that moms left their job was because their own mental health was suffering (65%), followed by being worried about their health (47%)
 - 24% say it was because their family's mental health was suffering
- 24% of moms who were employed since March 2020 but decided to leave their job, did so because of reasons tied to the workplace
- 10% of moms who were employed since March 2020 but decided to leave their job, did so for financial reasons
- Of those who left their job during the pandemic and those who were unemployed prior to the pandemic, nearly 60% said they would consider returning to the workforce if they felt truly supported as a working mother (59%)



WORKING MOMS

- Half of working moms use negative descriptive words to describe their current work-life balance (49%) and only one in three 'definitely' feel supported as a working mom at their current job (32%)
- 41% of working moms use positive descriptive terms when describing their current work-life balance
- When asked about the challenges they face as a working mom, nearly 60% say that they worry they are not doing enough, followed by an almost equal amount who struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance (59% and 58%, respectively)
 - 57% of working moms agree that not being able to be present for their child(ren) is a challenge for them
- Neglect of their child(ren) is the most common reason for feeling guilty as a working mom (55%), followed by the neglect of their partner (36%) and the judgement from others for their decision to be a working mom (29%)
 - One in every 5 working moms has felt guilt for loving their work (20%)
 - Only 15% of working moms have not felt guilt related to being a working mom
- Working moms most often suspect that their coworker(s) and/or manager(s) assume they are always stressed out or only working because they need the money (38% each)
 - On the contrary, 34% of working moms suspect that their coworker(s) and/or manager(s) assume they are successfully balancing everything in life
- Nearly half of moms who are currently working have considered leaving their job since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (47%)
 - The top reasons that working moms have considered leaving their job are family reasons (65%), health reasons (46%), reasons tied to the workplace (30%) and financial reasons (27%)
- Questioning if the money is worth being away from their child(ren) is the most common financial reason that working moms to consider leaving their job, similar to the reason that unemployed moms did leave their job (55%)
- Almost equally, 53% of working moms said they considered leaving their current job in search of better benefits for themselves and/or their family
- The desire to be more present for their child(ren) is the top family-related reason that has caused working moms to consider quitting their job (64%)
 - 38% of working moms considered leaving their job because they thought they could no longer manage a true balance of family and work
 - 37% of working moms considered leaving their job because they were considering becoming the primary caretaker for their child(ren)
- 6 in 10 working moms indicate that a decline in mental health is the health-related reason that made them consider quitting their job (60%)
- When looking at working moms who considered leaving their job for reasons tied to the workplace, the most common reason was that the pressure from the workplace was becoming too great (52%), followed by not feeling supported by their workplace (45%)
- The majority of working moms ultimately stay at their job because they cannot afford to leave (62%)
 - However, there is an equal percentage of working moms who stay at their job because they genuinely love it, and it gives them sense of purpose/identity (35%, each)
- Nearly 6 in 10 working moms say that an employer has made them feel supported by offering flexibility and simply showing support (57%)
 - Comments around flexibility and support most commonly referenced work schedules that were amenable to the needs of their children, the ability to leave in the event of an emergency, and ample time off
 - 19% of working moms said that their employer hasn't made them feel supported as a working mom, or they are unsure how they have done so
 - A handful of working moms mentioned an instance when someone showed them empathy or grace as a time that they felt supported as a working mom (15%)

METHODOLOGY

Allison+Partners surveyed 1,000 individuals in the U.S. who identify as female and as the parent or guardian of a child under the age of 18 who resides in their household. Of this group, 500 individuals were employed and 500 were freelance, self-employed, or unemployed at the time of survey completion. Panel was sourced from Lucid and the survey was hosted in Qualtrics. Fielding took place in April 2021.