

# OVERCOMING WORKING MOM BURNOUT: MULTI-LEVEL SOLUTIONS AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE STRATEGIES

There are over 5 million preventable cases of burnout. Working moms can suffer from job burnout, caregiving burnout, parental burnout and emotional burnout (from racial trauma and daily microaggressions). Burnout can lead to health problems, including suicide. When people are burned out their brains revert to racial and gender stereotypes increasing bias. While reducing workload and self care can reduce burnout symptoms, burnout is caused by lack of reward, lack of autonomy and injustice. Working moms are paid less and promoted less than other groups: the maternal wall. They are considered distracted although they spend more time caring for their team's well being, without reward. Working moms spend over 20 hours a week in unpaid labor in the home. Working moms feel guilty all the time and are expected to be superheroes by society. Dismantling the cause of burnout requires a multi-level approach to increase the number of female leaders across society, to create systems that reduce the structural inequalities created by bias, and to value well-being because it precedes productivity.

## Individual Solutions

- Learn to prioritize and express your needs and emotions. Let go of negative self beliefs and unrealistic expectations.
- Take time away from your kids to recharge and find hobbies of your own.
- Recognize your achievements and contributions and be curious and open to learning from your mistakes.
- Do not default to saying yes, make conscious choices and learn how to set boundaries.
- Let go of the shame and guilt and learn to ask for help.

## Family level solutions:

- Let go of micro-managing and share out the parenting and household tasks among family members.
- Use conscious parenting and positive discipline techniques that empower your kids to help find solutions, so you are not responsible for everything.
- Find activities that the whole family can enjoy and role modeling having purpose not being a martyr.
- Create a village of support and exchange services with others to provide for your family needs.

## Company level solutions:

- Subsidize childcare and provide paid leave as a default. Subsidize coaches for personal and professional development.
- Ban NDAs to prevent harassment. Publish pay bands to limit negotiations. Allow job crafting.
- Have an automatic promotion review process, and achievement logs not self selection or self appraisals.
- Use diverse teams and a system of structured interviews and objective criteria for hiring and promotions decisions. Set targets for diversity and retention of diverse leadership at all levels.
- Include team well being in performance criteria and provide programs and support for well being. Do personal check ins.
- Flexible schedules, paid time off, and times when whole company is not working. Meetings between 11am-2pm.
- Teach inclusive collaboration and communication skills. Create safe spaces for mental health and inclusion discussions.
- Evaluate DEI strategies and well-being programs using learning collaboratives.

## Societal level solutions:

- Government supported childcare, paid leave, pre-K education, and healthcare.
- Increased venture capital for women. Increased number of female leaders in government, media, and advertising.

## Behavior change techniques that work:

### For individual change:

Effective goal setting, implementation plans, accountability partners and social support, environmental cues, behavioral cues and anchoring, role models and mastery, identity alignment, reinforcement and rewards, relapse prevention and problem-solving, and self-monitoring.

### For organizational change:

Use learning collaboratives to evaluate programs through co-design, peer mentoring, data tracking, evaluation and learning cycles, and celebrations. Create a network for dissemination and sustainability.