

CHAPTER 4

CONTEMPORARY TWO-PARENT FAMILIES

Navigating Work and Family Challenges

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Two-parent families in the 21st century face myriad challenges. As they negotiate developmental issues and transitions in raising children in a more hazardous world, they must address common sources of interspousal, parent-child, sibling, and multigenerational conflicts that arise in family life. Many families cope with additional strains of illness, disability, death and loss; many struggle with unemployment and economic hardship. Those who are oppressed or marginalized on the basis of race, class, ethnicity, immigration status, gender identity, or sexual orientation must overcome societal barriers to thrive. All contemporary families must contend with the impact of the phenomenal growth in communication and information technologies. In this chapter, we focus on the key issues for most contemporary two-parent families; namely, the stressful challenges facing families with both parents in the workforce, so-called "dual-earner" families.

PREVALENCE AND ECONOMIC STATUS OF DUAL-EARNER FAMILIES

Since the 1970s, dual-earner families have become the norm, and most two-parent families in the coming decades will continue this pattern. The steady rise in the rates of dual-earner families largely reflects the increasing representation of women in the workforce and the necessity of two incomes for

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most families to maintain a moderate standard of living and to send children to college. Concomitant with women's rising level of education and changing workplace policies, the gap between women's and men's salaries has been narrowing. Yet women still, on average, only make 80–85% of male earnings for comparable work and time (Galinsky, Aumann, & Bond, 2009; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2010).

Of course, social and economic trends are rarely linear, and the rates of dual-earner families fluctuate with changing economic and social circumstances. For instance, a 2010 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report found that 58.9% of married couple families with children under 18 are currently dual earners, a decline from 64.2% nearly a decade earlier, reflecting higher rates of unemployment across most demographics due to the current severe economic downturn. However, despite fluctuations, the majority of couples in the future will continue to be dual earners.

The percentages of dual-earner families are similar across racial/ethnic groups, with lower rates for Latino families, in which the traditional roles of men working and women homemaking continue to prevail for more couples than in other groups. However, similar rates of dual earners across most racial/ethnic groups do not translate into equal employment opportunities. In the current economic crisis, rates of unemployment have been significantly higher in black families (17.4%) and Latino families (16.9%), than in white families (11.1%) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010).

CHALLENGES AT THE BOUNDARY OF WORK AND FAMILY

Many benefits accrue in a dual-earner family. Foremost are the economic benefits and greater security of income flow. If one partner loses a job and must seek new work, the other's income can sustain the family temporarily, albeit likely with many compromises and constraints (Halpern & Murphy, 2005). Psychologically and relationally, multiple and shared roles for both partners (as parent, partner, and worker), rather than traditional role divisions (men as breadwinners, and women as mothers and homemakers), buffer the impact of negative events in one or the other sphere and increase opportunities for experiencing personal satisfaction and success, as well as increasing positive emotions each partner brings to couple and family relationships. When both partners can avail themselves of social support beyond the dyad, it decreases pressure on the partner to be the sole source of emotional soothing and stress relief. Expanding roles can also enlarge the number of independently accrued experiences and new perspectives on partners' lives and bring new topics to their conversations.

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& Hyde, 2001). For instance, couples benefit from the sense of sharing the opportunity and responsibility for earning, potentially reducing gendered power dynamics based on men being the sole source of income. For the increasing number of couples embracing a model of peer marriage in which both partners work and contribute to child care and domestic chores, being a dual-earner couple aligns with core relational values of equality and fairness (Galinsky et al., 2009; Gerson, 2010).

Children are also happier when both parents work. Ellen Galinsky's (1999, 2005) landmark survey of children's perspectives on their parents' work found that children overwhelmingly endorse having both fathers and mothers working. Their main concern is that when the parents are home, they be less stressed and tired and more emotionally available to them.

Despite these many benefits, many, if not most, dual-earner couples struggle to attain a more optimal sense of work-family "balance," "integration," "navigation," or "interaction." Galinsky (1999), a pioneer in this area of research, argues that the term "balancing" work and family posits a zero-sum game in which an increase in time and energy devoted to one domain is viewed as automatically depleting the other domain. She suggests that the notions of work-life "integration" and of "navigating work and family life" better capture the need for flexibility in moving between domains, and emphasizes the goal of maximizing positive—and minimizing negative—mutual influence (positive vs. negative spillover). Halpern and Murphy (2005) argue that the relationship between work and family is better understood by applying the statistical notion of "interaction," examining the effects of two variables in combination for a more accurate (and, in this case, more positive) picture.

Although these points are well taken, we still use the term "balance," because it is endemic to the cultural vernacular and comes up constantly in clinical work with couples and families. However, we view balance not as an ultimately unattainable state of perfect, static equilibrium but as characterized by a dynamic, flexible, and productive tension among one's multiple life involvements—work, couple, family, and community, among others (Fraenkel, 2011). To clarify, we also use the term "work" to mean paid employment, albeit with recognition that those on unpaid home-front duty are also working, and that responsibilities in both spheres are essential family work.

Several recent studies show that most dual-earner couples report significant work-family conflict (Galinsky et al., 2009; Schneider & Waite, 2005). Research has not found racial or ethnic differences in degree of work-nonwork interference, suggesting that this is an issue facing most dual-earner couples (Schieman, Milkie, & Glavin, 2009), although strains are greater for low-income families with fewer resources. Increasingly, attainment of work-life balance and managing conflict between work and family roles has truly become a couple's issue, more equally shared by women and men, rather than a problem shouldered almost entirely by working women (Galinsky et al.,

2009). A study by Williams and 95% of fathers report workplace policy must reframe this: both parents and for their child.

To a great extent, the increase in child care is due to the time shifts in working full time and women's social well-being of the family. More time spent on child care and housework by employed women do significant work at home full-time (Kroska, 2004), more than their husbands. Yet there are differences across the generations have shifted—both in terms of no longer maternal relationships to child care themselves desiring and actualizing fathers (Galinsky et al., 2009; Levine & Pittinsky, 1997). That men's self-concept is who men judge themselves and their role in personal domains, a shift (Levine & Pittinsky, 1997). T though women continue to bear the burdens of balancing work and family, there is a shift more toward a shared gender equity in work and family culture of work and the culture from more fully acting on desire not taking paid parental leave is addressed if greater work-family balance for women (Williams, 2010). Women, heterosexual men, because even women, distribute responsibilities differently than typically occurs in heterosexual families (Padrón, 2010; Solomon, Rotundo, 2009).

Despite varied work-life balance across couples' lives, for most if not all countries, from workplace policies to family work-family balance. That is, the experience of white, middle-class

Work Hours and Schedules

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2009). A study by Williams and Boushey (2010) revealed that 90% of mothers and 95% of fathers report work-family conflict. Social discourse and work- place policy must reframe this from a "woman's problem" to a family issue for both parents and for their children.

To a great extent, the increase in working fathers' involvement in child care is due to the time shifts incurred by dual earnership: As more women are working full time and women's salaries become more essential to the finan- cial well-being of the family (Galinsky et al., 2009), men must contribute more to child care and housework (Wang & Bianchi, 2009). Studies find that employed women do significantly less housework than women who are at home full-time (Kroska, 2004); however, they still do disproportionately more than their husbands. Yet there is evidence that many contemporary fathers across the generations have shifted their beliefs about gender roles in fami- lies—both in terms of no longer believing that working compromises women's maternal relationships to children or the children's well-being, and in terms of themselves desiring and actually spending more time as parents than did their fathers (Galinsky et al., 2009; Parke, 2002). And in contrast to the stereotype that men's self-concept is wholly centered on their career success, increasingly men judge themselves and their happiness as much or more by how they func- tion in personal domains, a trend that has been building for over a decade (Levine & Pittinsky, 1997). Thus, for reasons to be described in this chapter, although women continue to shoulder more of the concrete and emotional burdens of balancing work and family life, especially domestic chores, there is a shift more toward a shared desire among heterosexual couples to achieve gender equity in work and family roles (Gerson, 2010). Clearly, aspects of the culture of work and the culture of heterosexual masculinity that keep men from more fully acting on desires to fulfill more equitable roles—for instance, not taking paid parental leave when it is available (Belkin, 2010)—must be addressed if greater work-family balance is to be achieved for both men and women (Williams, 2010). We highlight that the challenge is particularly for *heterosexual* men, because evidence suggests that gay men, as well as lesbian women, distribute responsibility for child care and housework more equita- bly than typically occurs in heterosexual couples (Bergman, Rubio, Green, & Padrón, 2010; Solomon, Rothblum, & Balsam, 2005).

Despite varied work-life issues that intersect with other aspects of cou- ples' lives, for most if not all couples and families, numerous common fac- tors, from workplace policies to personality styles, may interfere with optimal work-family balance. That said, most research to date has examined the expe- rience of white, middle-class, heterosexual couples.

Work Hours and Schedules

Surveys over the past two decades have consistently found the United States among the countries with the longest hours per day and most weeks worked

per year (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2010), Overwork generates a time bind, producing individual and family stress (Bellavia & Frone, 2005; Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005; Galinsky et al., 2005). Work hours have increased for certain occupations, particularly managerial, professional, or technological jobs (Galinsky et al., 2005; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004), but the main reason for the overall greater work hours per family is the increased employment of women (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). And when working mothers are still expected to handle most of the housework, child care, and care of older adults, as well as coordination of family schedules and activities, conflict commonly occurs between partners about these tacit assumptions and the disproportionate burden of a "second shift" (Hochschild, 1997). It is crucial for couples to rebalance the skew.

Long hours create stress for some families, but for others, stress results from being unable to *increase* work hours or sustain employment needed for the family's well-being (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). And, certainly, job loss can have a wide range of negative effects on couples and families (Howe, Levy, & Caplan, 2004). Financial insecurity from too little paid work negatively impacts health and family relationships (Ehrenreich, 2001; Probst, 2005). Even at higher socioeconomic levels, reducing work hours can result in challenging trade-offs and may be more predictive of distress than long hours (Barnett & Gareis, 2000a). In their review of studies on men's family involvement, Bianchi and Milkie (2010) reported that insufficient earnings may erode family connections, impairing a husband/father's motivation and ability to interact positively with partners, children, and kin. Thus, for some workers, it is the experienced meaning of reduced work hours, as well as income reductions, that influence overall quality of life (Barnett & Gareis, 2000b). Clearly, both ends of the work-hours spectrum can create difficulties for workers and their families. Although the majority of employees wish for less work hours (Galinsky et al., 2005), job insecurity makes most reluctant to utilize existing work-family balance policies that might provide more time for family.

Indeed, numerous scholars have argued that inadequate American work-family policies cause much of the sense of time crunch and difficulties for dual-earner couples (Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Williams & Boushey, 2010). Additionally, workplace cultures often discourage employees from utilizing existing benefits that would provide more time for family life, such as flextime and compressed workweeks, allowing choice in work schedules (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005). The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) mandates 12 weeks of unpaid leave for childbirth, adoption, or caring for ill family members (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008). However, these policies often do not translate into real options for most workers. For instance, the FMLA is available for less than half of workers, because it does not apply to small businesses (50 or fewer employees) and is not available for fathers (Ray, 2008), part-time, seasonal, or temporary workers, or for families headed by same-sex partners. Because it is *unpaid* leave, most parents cannot afford to utilize this benefit (Han & Waldfogel, 2003). Additionally, many workers are

reluctant to do so because of commitment (Eaton, 2003).

Another problematic policy in many countries among the industrialized nations is the employees' entitlement to a vacation. In the United States, few employees have access to paid vacation (a little more than 2 weeks to Europeans), few employees have time to attend to family matters while on vacation (Galinsky et al., 2005), and few employees have a once-yearly opportunity to take weeks of work-free time.

Problematic policies and practices contribute to the negative emotional well-being of the worker. Employees (and their partners) often experience the term "workaholic" connoted in the term "workaholic" rather than an understandable employment culture. This misperception from the employment culture can lead to couple conflict. A vicious cycle then withdraws further from the worker, who becomes more intensely into work, either to complete work demands, or to escape relationship problems further couple or family conflict.

Long hours spent on the job and vacations are not the only time and family stress. Over 1 in 4 workers, such as a night shift. It is a common option but one adopted by many partners leave less time for the worker, leading to greater marital distress, including disagreements, and child care (Hunter, & Small, 2001; Perry, 2001). Other studies have documented that for relationships with children, mothers work evening hours for each parent with the children.

Temporal dyssynchrony is an extreme as shift work to create differences of a few hours in parent work, when combined with c

eration and Development, 2010), individual and family stress (Bel-Schaufeli, 2005; Galinsky et al., 2005), occupations, particularly manufacturing (Galinsky et al., 2005; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). And, to handle most of the housework, coordination of family schedules between partners about these tacit aspects of a "second shift" (Hochschild, 1991) may skew.

For some, stress results in job loss, but for others, stress results in job loss to sustain employment needed for family (Gerson, 2004). And, certainly, job loss can have negative effects on couples and families (Howe, Levy, & Gerson, 2004). And, too little paid work negatively affects family (Hrenreich, 2001; Probst, 2005). Long work hours can result in a sense of distress that is more negative than long hours. Studies on men's family involvement show that insufficient earnings may erode a partner's motivation and ability to contribute to the family and kin. Thus, for some workers, long hours, as well as income reduction (Barnett & Gareis, 2000b). Clearly, long hours create difficulties for workers and families. Employees wish for less work hours and are most reluctant to utilize existing policies to provide more time for family.

That inadequate American work-time crunch and difficulties for families (Gerson, 2003; Williams & Boushey, 2010). Long hours discourage employees from utilizing policies for family life, such as flextime in work schedules (Bond, Galinsky, & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) after birth, adoption, or caring for ill family members (2008). However, these policies are not used by most workers. For instance, the FMLA is not available for fathers (Ray, 2008), workers, or for families headed by women. Most parents cannot afford to take time off. Additionally, many workers are

reluctant to do so because of concerns that it will be perceived as lack of job commitment (Eaton, 2003).

Another problematic policy issue is that the United States is the only country among the industrialized nations that has no laws protecting workers' entitlement to a vacation (Gornick & Meyers, 2003). Although 79% of employees have access to paid vacation, the average number of days allotted is a little more than 2 weeks (half of the minimum yearly vacation provided to Europeans), few employees take their full vacation days, 19% use vacation time to attend to family matters or as sick time to make up for lack of sick days or personal leave days provided by the workplace, and almost 25% work while on vacation (Galinsky et al., 2005). Thus, many families cannot count on a once-yearly opportunity to reconnect and immerse together in a few weeks of work-free time.

Problematic policies and workplace cultures place the sense of responsibility for the negative emotional and family effects of overwork on the worker. Employees (and their families) view their overwork as the result of their own (or their partner's) inability to set limits or work efficiently—or, as connoted in the term "workaholic," as the result of an "addiction" to work—rather than an understandable attempt to survive in an unstable, demanding employment culture. This misattribution of blame of the source of overwork from the employment culture to the individual worker can result in increased couple conflict. A vicious cycle may ensue in which the overworked partner then withdraws further from couple and family time and immerses even more intensively into work, either to make more money, get more work completed (with the usually misguided hope of thereby reducing work demands), or to escape relationship conflict. This withdrawal into work creates further couple or family distress.

Long hours spent on the job and lack of access to flextime, leave, or vacations are not the only temporal risk factors in the equation linking work and family stress. Over 1 in 4 dual-earner couples has one partner doing shift work, such as a night shift. It is more common in families at lower socioeconomic levels (Presser, 2003), suggesting that it is not a sought-after schedule option but one adopted by economic necessity. Shift differences between partners leave less time for the couple relationship and are associated with greater marital distress, including higher depression levels, negative interactions, disagreements, and child-related problems (Ehrenberg, Gearing-Small, Hunter, & Small, 2001; Perry-Jenkins, Goldberg, Pierce, & Sayer, 2007). Yet other studies have documented positive effects of working nonstandard hours for relationships with children, such as increased paternal involvement when mothers work evening hours (Barnett & Gareis, 2007) and more overall time for each parent with the children (Wight, Raley, & Bianchi, 2008).

Temporal dyssynchronies in parents' work schedules need not be as extreme as shift work to create some of the associated challenges. Differences of a few hours in parents' schedules of leaving for and returning from work, when combined with children's wake, bedtime, school, homework, and

transportation schedules, can result in significantly less opportunity for partners to have time together (Chenu & Robinson, 2002; Fraenkel, 2011; Fraenkel & Wilson, 2000). On the other hand, depending on their exact timing, partners with differing work schedules can rely on one another to cover different aspects of the children's daily routines, coordinating efforts as a "tag team." For instance, one partner might be able to handle the morning routine and get kids off to school, while the other is there to receive them after school and handle the evening routine. The complexity of synchronizing parents' work schedules with one another, and with children's schedules, and how couples negotiate this process, may be more critical to understanding the experience of work-life imbalance in dual-earner families than long work hours of one or the other parent alone (Gareis, Barnett, & Brennan, 2003).

Technology and the Work-Family Boundary

Whereas some parents struggle with dyssynchronous work shifts, other problems emerge when one or both parents find themselves on one long, endless shift due to virtually unlimited connectivity to the workplace provided by the proliferation of communication and information technologies. Laptops, cell phones, and other devices mean work can take place anywhere, erasing the physical boundary between home and work (Fraenkel, 2001a, 2001b, 2011; Jackson, 2005; Schieman et al., 2009). Certainly, executives and professionals have long taken work home, but contemporary availability of multiple means of highly portable electronic linkages to work has increased this trend dramatically for working parents and has spread it somewhat across classes and occupations.

As a function of this technology, a growing number of workers telecommute, working from home on a regular basis. This increased connectivity to work can bring benefits as well as problems. On the upside, it can save commuting time (and is better for the environment). Depending on the demands and structures of the job, telecommuting can allow some people to work part-time and coordinate work flexibly with child and home care (Fraenkel, 2001b). When a crisis at work might otherwise have resulted in canceling or delaying a vacation or family event, now a few calls or e-mails allow the work problem to be managed from afar.

On the other hand, technology and telecommuting present serious challenges to limiting the encroachment of work on family life (Fraenkel, 2001a, 2001b). An increasing number of families find work invading activities that might otherwise be "work-free zones," such as family dinners, time with kids at the playground, and vacations, as well as time for couple intimacy and for each parent to replenish energies and spirits. Although advertisements for products related to home offices always depict smiling parents working with relaxed concentration while their kids happily look on, many parents working at home report more work-family conflict, increased spillover from work to family, and depression (Chesley, Moen, & Shore, 2003).

Work Stress and Family S

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Work Stress and Family Stress: A Complex Relationship

With increased hours, little leave or vacation time, more frequent requirements by employers for overtime, more contact with the workplace after hours, the need to assume the responsibilities of colleagues who have been "downsized," and a workplace culture that expects constant multitasking, it is not surprising that one-third of workers report they are chronically overworked and almost 90% experience high levels of job pressure (Galinsky et al., 2005). Employees who feel overworked believe they make more mistakes, feel angrier at employers, harbor more resentment toward colleagues perceived to be slacking off, and are more likely to look for another job; believe they do not take good care of themselves; and report more work-related sleep disruption, poorer health, and higher levels of stress (Galinsky et al., 2005).

Increased job-related stress results in higher likelihood of negative work spillover into personal relationships (Neff & Karney, 2007), especially couple and family relationships. Work stress affects couples by eliciting more negative and less positive couple communication styles; by increasing the likelihood of psychological and physical problems such as sleep disorders, sexual difficulties, and depressed or anxious moods; and by eliciting individual's insecurities, rigidities, and defensiveness (Bodenmann, Ledermann, & Bradbury, 2007).

However, the relationship between the temporal characteristics of work life and stress, and between work stress and family difficulties, is not simple or direct. Studies suggest that it is the *perception* of overwork, not simply the number of hours per se, and the *experience* of stress, rather than number or intensity of job-related stressors, that affect the degree of linkage between work stress and family distress (see Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000, for review). Put differently, "work role quality" (the degree to which a person experiences fulfillment in work) appears to be more related to overall life satisfaction or stress than hours per se (Brett & Stroh, 2003), although at upper limits, long hours appear to induce anxiety and distress for most workers (Galinsky et al., 2005).

A number of variables moderate the relationship between work stressors and family life. In recent studies, variables earlier thought to *reduce* likelihood of job-related stress (e.g., higher status, greater autonomy and decision-making power, and schedule flexibility) have been found to be associated with greater pressure, longer hours, higher expectations of dedication to the company, more interpersonal conflict at work, greater emotional demands, and increased permeability of the border between work and nonwork life (Schieman et al., 2009). In turn, this may increase stress and spillover of work stress to home and conflict with partners and children (Schieman & Reid, 2009). Adding further complexity, personality style has been found to be a mediating variable: For instance, whereas some workers do better with greater job autonomy, others do worse. In one study, control over job responsibilities was associated with better health for persons with high "self-efficacy" (defined as those who felt competent to meet the demands of greater control

and autonomy, and did not blame themselves for negative work outcomes), but with *increased* likelihood of poor health for those with low self-efficacy (Schaubroeck, Jones, & Xie, 2001).

Bianchi and Milkie (2010) also emphasize the importance of a life course perspective when evaluating the impact of work stressors on individual and family functioning. There are periods in life when increased work-family conflict is expected, such as having young children in a dual-earner household or caring for a disabled spouse or parent. If couples can increase their threshold for hectic schedules during these life periods, they may do better than those who continue to bemoan lack of a more relaxed and simple life. Many older persons who had expected to retire or at least decrease work pressures now need to stay employed or find a new job to meet costs of living, children's college education, and adequate health care.

Some variables, such as marital quality, are both an outcome of work stress and a moderator between work stress and other outcomes, such as parent-child conflict. Likewise, work-family conflict is both a mediator (in the relationship between time pressure and psychosomatic complaints) and an outcome variable whose relationship to work-related time pressure is affected by other mediating variables (the employee's work-related cognitive and emotional irritation; Höge, 2008).

Table 4.1 presents a list of major moderator variables, along with frequently studied job stressors and family outcomes, summarized from two decades of reviews in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Perry-Jenkins et al., 2000).

Although most studies emphasize the impact of work stress on relationships, and find greater negative spillover from work into family than from family to work (Bellavia & Frone, 2005; Roehling, Moen, & Batt, 2003), the link between work and family stress is recursive or bidirectional, and the quality of family relationships and leisure time can affect the quality and productivity of work (Barnett, Gareis, & Brennan, 2009). For instance, a husband's stressful job may decrease his availability or energy to his partner and children, increasing the wife's overburden and sense of resentment. Both partners may then bring that marital distress back to the workplace, decreasing job effectiveness, which in turn contributes to a sense of being overwhelmed with the job, leading to further negative spillover into family relationships.

A number of studies demonstrate relationships between work pressure and increased experience of conflict among multiple family roles (Ransford, Crouter, & McHale, 2008), as well as emotional distress resulting from conflict between work and family (Gonzalez-Morales, Peiro, & Greenglass, 2006). Linkages have been found between work stress and likelihood of parent-child conflict, and poorer child behavioral and emotional outcomes (see review by Perry-Jenkins et al., 2000); between lack of family time and increased risky behaviors for adolescents (Crouter, Head, McHale, & Tucker, 2004); between work stress and decreased parental monitoring and knowledge of children's lives, at least when fathers (but not mothers) had demanding jobs and there

TABLE 4.1. Variables Influencing

Work variables	Medi
Work hours	Perce
Degree of flexibility of hours	Prefer
Number of roles/responsibilities/demands	cu
Interestingness of job	Perce
Too much or too little control	Perce
Quality of social climate/support at work	Work
Level of occupational prestige	Comu
Hour-to-salary ratio	Perso
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Nonstandard hours	Depr
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was poor marital quality (mothers feeling deprived of time than desired and a sense of emotional distress (Galinsky and lack of support in the workplace or other social locations couples (Mor Barak, Findler,

Both high and low marital workplace stress and family stress and strain from one parent (2005), may be more likely between those roles and workers who value the likelihood that work stress i

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TABLE 4.1. Variables Influencing Work-Related Family Stress

Work variables	Mediators and moderators	Family impact
Work hours	Perception of work-family conflict	Marital distress
Degree of flexibility of hours	Preference for more or less than currently working	Conflict with children and adolescents
Number of roles/responsibilities/demands	Perceived role overload/multiple commitments	Child behavior problems
Interestingness of job	Incompatibility of work and children's school schedules	Spouse's depression/sense of overload
Too much or too little control	Perception of job resources	Decreased shared family time
Quality of social climate/support at work	Worker emotional distress	
Level of occupational prestige	Worker fatigue	
Hour-to-salary ratio	Commitment to work/career	
Degree of job security	Personality style (negative affectivity, neuroticism, Type A)	
Nonstandard hours	Depression and anxiety in stressed or other spouse	
	Self-efficacy and self-esteem	
	Social support	
	Life stage of family/ages of children	
	Child behavior problems	
	Parenting style	
	Number of children	
	Positive or negative marital quality	
	Perceived fairness of housework and child care distribution	
	Gendered beliefs about emotional expression and partner soothing	
	Gender ideology/partners' beliefs about value and acceptability of mother working	
	Race and class	

was poor marital quality (Bumpus, Crouter, & McHale, 1999); between mothers feeling deprived of time with their children and decreased well-being (Nomaguchi, Milkie, & Bianchi, 2005); and between working more hours than desired and a sense of overwork, reduced sense of coping ability, and emotional distress (Galinsky et al., 2005; Moen & Yu, 2000). Discrimination and lack of support in the work environment based on partners' sexual orientations or other social locations add yet another layer of stress for dual-earner couples (Mor Barak, Findler, & Wind, 2003).

Both high and low marital satisfaction may increase the link between workplace stress and family life. "Crossover," defined as the transmission of stress and strain from one member of a dyad to another (Demerouti et al., 2005), may be more likely between close partners (Lavee & Ben-Ari, 2007), and workers who value their family roles may experience greater conflict between those roles and work. Low marital satisfaction may increase the likelihood that work stress interferes with parenting, possibly by decreasing

/es

g income levels and work hours, but work and the family (See Knudson-ued popular media portrayals of the rents (read "when mothers") work used discomfort with the reality the workforce in the years ahead. ynamical, and sociobiological theo-adwinner and women's supportive at. The discomfort with women in search documenting that maternal s development (Gottfried, 2005), as al health benefits and positive rela-ork (Baltes, Clark, & Chakrabarti, ion is often greater when both par-and children demonstrate multiple involved in their lives (e.g., Parke,

that quality child care provided by deleterious effects on healthy child Valdfogel, 2002). Social and work-ability of child care across social decreasing working parents' anxi-tick & Meyers, 2003; Williams &

singly participate in child care and dies have documented that women paid work, housework, and child e, 2000; Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). Everyday Lives of Families (CELF), ver 800 hours of video footage of ers found that mothers spent 27% 18% for fathers. Moreover, moth-riods of leisure compared fathers' t mothers' leisure time tends to be hers, compromised by unrelenting gly & Bianchi, 2003).

he home, women carry more of especially the older generations, l, 2003). Increasing pressures for

"intensive parenting" (Walla, 2010)—a contemporary childrearing trend emphasizing greater involvement in supporting the child's emotional and cognitive development—coupled with greater demands for caring for older adult relatives make employed women the "sandwiched" generation, weighted with heavy caretaking demands both in early/middle and later adulthood (Lockwood, 2003). Just as mothers are taking on responsibility to contribute to household income, fathers should now be expected to be full partners in coparenting (Harrington, van Deusen, & Ladge, 2010).

Although there are still few studies of racial and ethnic differences in male-female distribution of housework and child care, a recent study found that employed black men do more housework than do employed white men—yet employed black women do at least double the amount of housework their male partners do (Coltrane & Shih, 2010). The findings are mixed with regard to sharing of housework between Latino partners compared to white couples, although division of labor in Latino households is related to practical factors that also influence division of housework in other families, such as time constraints and patterns of employment (Pinto & Coltrane, 2009). Latino partners tend to evaluate distribution of housework less in terms of fairness than do white couples. This difference may be attributable to the tendency of Latino women to consider marriage and family as a source of safety and a buffer against racism and classism in the broader society; to traditional Latino cultural definitions of womanhood that include expectations of suffering, sacrifice, and deference to men (Falicov, 1998); as well as to Latino women, like many other women from ethnic and racial minority groups, regarding household tasks as a highly valued aspect of motherhood (Collins, 2002; Gerstel & Sarkisian, 2006).

A number of studies document the strong relationship between the degree to which women perceive housework as fairly divided with their partners and marital quality, as well as women's rates of depression (Frisco & Williams, 2003; see review by Coltrane, 2000). Despite notable changes in time allocated to housework for men and women over the past decade (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010), normative gender expectations likely contribute to continued disparities. Traditional definitions of masculinity still limit many men's involvement in housekeeping, childrearing, and other tasks perceived as "feminine" (Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, & Matheson, 2003). In some cases, a wife's reluctance to forfeit control over the home and childrearing may inhibit greater paternal contribution (Gaunt, 2008). In other cases, women's reluctance to cede control over these tasks results from men ignoring the well-tuned child care and homecare routines and procedures women have crafted through months or years of experience, with men insisting on doing it "their way" (Fraenkel, 2011). Couple therapists can assist men intent on sharing these responsibilities to recognize the importance of adopting and refining, rather than replacing, women's hard-wrought domestic routines.

In couple therapy, men often argue that because of their long work hours, they should not be expected to do more housework. Therapists may find it

useful to point out the distinction between the experienced value and rewards of paid work versus housework and child care, as a prelude to suggesting that in the interest of fairness to their female partners (and improving wives' marital satisfaction), men may need to share more household responsibilities. A therapist might cite Coltrane (2000, p. 1225), who writes, "The single most important predictor of a wife's fairness evaluation is what portion of the housework her husband contributes," and that "marital satisfaction increases in relation to the amount of routine housework that is shared by spouses." (Coltrane, 2000, p. 1225). Likewise, studies have found men's housework to be significantly related to future marital satisfaction and lower likelihood of divorce (Sigle-Rushton, 2010).

If one parent leaves the workforce at least temporarily in a work-life balancing strategy called "scaling back" (Becker & Moen, 1999), it is usually the mother (Gornick & Meyers, 2003), who most often does so to care for infants, small children, and older adult family members. Biologically influenced aspects of attachment, still-powerful cultural scripts about proper gender roles, husbands' higher income, and workplace biases influence these decisions (Galinsky, 2005; Gottfried, 2005). Even when the partners initially ascribe to a more equitable sharing of household and child care responsibilities, once women leave their jobs to be home full-time, the couple tends to slide into the traditional male breadwinner-female homemaker roles (Walsh, 1989). Gender construction theory suggests that many women continue to be the primary caretakers, despite their increasing presence in the workforce, because the affective meanings they ascribe to caring for children and the home are associated with gendered norms of accountability for these responsibilities (Kroska, 2003). Of course, men's and women's beliefs about their proper roles derive from the larger set of patriarchal cultural and religious values and mores, especially when reinforced by spouses, extended families, and the media.

A number of studies suggest that dual-earner families do best when adult partners hold flexible gender role assumptions (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Gerson, 2010; Zimmerman, Haddock, Current, & Ziemba, 2003). Marital quality tends to be negatively affected by wives earning more than their husbands when the men attach great self-definitional value to their earnings and role as breadwinner, as many men still do (Brennan, Barnett, & Gareis, 2001).

By choosing one frequently adopted strategy of avoiding work-family conflicts—delaying pregnancy until well into their 30s or even 40s (Lockwood, 2003)—women potentially incur health problems, and couples commonly experience emotional distress if they encounter fertility difficulties (Peterson, Newton, Rosen, & Schulman, 2006). Given the higher rates of multiple births linked to fertility-enhancing medical procedures, couples who delay having a child may end up with a larger child care load all at once. Accordingly, some couples choose to limit family size or not to have children at all (Altucher & Williams, 2003).

In summary, at many levels, despite evidence of important shifts toward gender equity in work and family roles, this is still a work in progress, and

both partners' beliefs about and feel about navigating the as Gerson (2010) and Williams tices regarding men's and w family roles are situated and policies and mores make it d to share more of the respon Yet many couples have found and fairness are at the heart

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It is important to examine individual and family well perspective (Walsh, 2006). families cope fairly successf Halpern & Tan, 2009). We to navigate work and family members. Accordingly, the t ingly moved from a perspe family roles) or "scarcity" (i another) to one that better c tal health, and relational b multiple roles (Barnett & H the positive spillover and m lives and share that enjoym

Increasingly, studies of ining more ethnically and gay and lesbian couples (Be & Banks, 2006; Solomon & Zimmerman, Haddock, an Current, 2001; Zimmerma well-educated, middle-clas benefiting from a dual-ear achieving a successful blen found across couples diffe importance of equity, mutu need to maintain firm ten time. Specifically, philosop

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dence of important shifts toward s is still a work in progress, and

both partners' beliefs about gender are deeply embedded in how they approach and feel about navigating the challenges of blending work and family life. But as Gerson (2010) and Williams (2010) emphasize, gendered beliefs and practices regarding men's and women's appropriate and required workplace and family roles are situated and promulgated in the larger culture, and workplace policies and mores make it difficult for men to step back from job expectations to share more of the responsibilities and joys of childrearing and family life. Yet many couples have found ways to attain better balance, and gender equity and fairness are at the heart of their strategies.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES IN DUAL-EARNER FAMILIES

It is important to examine the recursive pathways linking work stress with individual and family well-being from a positive-coping, family resilience perspective (Walsh, 2006). Recent studies indicate that many dual-earner families cope fairly successfully and even thrive (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Halpern & Tan, 2009). We need to identify the variables that enable couples to navigate work and family life, and contribute to the well-being of all family members. Accordingly, the theoretical framework for dual earners has increasingly moved from a perspective of "conflict" (i.e., incompatibility of work-family roles) or "scarcity" (i.e., resources given to one role lead to depletion in another) to one that better captures emerging data showing the physical, mental health, and relational benefits that accrue when men and women inhabit multiple roles (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), as well as the positive spillover and modeling for children when parents enjoy their work lives and share that enjoyment with their children (Galinsky, 1999).

Increasingly, studies of successful coping with dual earnership are examining more ethnically and racially diverse couples (Gerson, 2010), as well as gay and lesbian couples (Bergman et al., 2010; Gartrell, Rodas, Deck, Peyser, & Banks, 2006; Solomon et al., 2005). All echo the main earlier findings of Zimmerman, Haddock, and colleagues (Haddock, Zimmerman, Ziemba, & Current, 2001; Zimmerman et al., 2003), who interviewed 47 mostly white, well-educated, middle-class heterosexual couples that viewed themselves as benefiting from a dual-earner lifestyle, and as having developed means of achieving a successful blend between work and family. The similar strategies found across couples differing in social class demonstrate the fundamental importance of equity, mutual respect, and fairness between partners, and the need to maintain firm temporal boundaries between work time and family time. Specifically, philosophies and practices included the following:

- Prioritizing family time and well-being
- Emphasizing overall equality and partnership, including joint decision making, equal influence over finances, and joint responsibility for housework

- Partners' equal valuing of each other's work and life goals
- Sharing the child care and "emotion work" of family life
- Maximizing play and fun at home
- Concentrating on work while at the workplace
- Taking pride in family and in balancing multiple roles, and believing the family benefits from both parents working (rather than absorbing the dominant cultural narrative of harm)
- Living simply, which includes limiting activities that impede active family engagement
- Adopting high but realistic expectations about household management; employing planning strategies that save time
- Being proactive in decision making and remaining conscious of time's value

One of the most robust predictors of individual wellbeing and lower family-work conflict is a boundary management strategy involving a more fixed work schedule and less permeability between work and family domains (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006).

Drawing on her survey of parents and children, Galinsky (1999) outlined a number of approaches to navigating sometimes the stressful transition from home to work and from work to home. Her suggestions include the following:

- Getting organized the night before
- Setting wake-up times that decrease rushing
- Creating rituals for saying good-bye to children and for reengaging after work
- Expecting such reconnection to include children expressing their daily problems
- Finding trustworthy child care and education; creating backup child care plans
- Creating transitional rituals into and out of work
- Maintaining focused, uninterrupted time with kids just to "hang out"
- Taking some time to decompress after particularly stressful work days

Galinsky (1999) also emphasizes the need for parents to talk "intentionally," not apologetically, about their work, giving them a sense of their enjoyment and excitement.

The vital importance of building in shared, pleasurable leisure time should be underscored. The impact of diminished leisure time for dual-earner families (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004) is compounded by the availability of only small "chunks" of leisure time in the context of a highly regimented schedule, and the feeling that free time is "decompression" time after stressful work experiences rather than time for activities that induce positive feelings (Zvonkovic, Notter, & Peters, 2006).

The changing rhythm in fa & Milkie, 2006). Today, child in school and outside activities shuttle their children from pla events in which they are invol time to and from work. Wor for leisure when both parents (Doherty, 2002) to engage in active leisure rather than unsc ovic et al., 2006), this created for reconnection *and* revitaliz strengthen relationships amon a critical buffer against the st

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The changing rhythm in family life must be addressed (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006). Today, children as well as their parents, are overscheduled in school and outside activities, and parents must juggle complex schedules to shuttle their children from place to place and attend sports, music, and other events in which they are involved. Many parents also have long commuting time to and from work. Work and household tasks sometimes trump time for leisure when both parents work. But when families act more intentionally (Doherty, 2002) to engage in rituals of connection, as well as in sustained, active leisure rather than unscheduled "dribbles" in front of the TV (Zvonkovic et al., 2006), this created and protected free time can be an opportunity for reconnection and revitalization. Family leisure time is an opportunity to strengthen relationships among members, allowing the family unit to serve as a critical buffer against the stress of a fast-paced work life.

Over the past two decades of working clinically with dual-earner families, Fraenkel has developed a number of attitude shifts and practices that decrease stress and maintain positive connection between partners, thus benefiting interactions with children (Fraenkel, 1994, 1998a, 1998b, 2001a, 2001b, 2011; Fraenkel & Wilson, 2000). In terms of attitudes, he identifies five myths that interfere with realistic coping with time constraints and creation of couple and family time: (1) the myth of "spontaneity," which holds that couple sex and other forms of intimacy, as well as family fun, must occur spontaneously to feel authentic, and so should not be scheduled; (2) the myth of "infinite perfectibility," which holds that the family time crunch is wholly resolvable through better time management, and that no compromises need be made in the number of activities in which families attempt to engage; (3) the myth of "total control," which is the belief that families hold complete autonomy over their time and are to blame if they fail to achieve optimal work-life balance 4) the myth of "quality time," which holds that as long as family members are fully focused on one another during the little "chunks" of leisure time they have, there is no need for longer periods of "quantity time"; and (5) the myth that housework and chores must be sequestered from family fun and couple intimacy.

These myths about how to attain adequate couple and family time translate into two unrealistic beliefs about work-family balance, strongly supported by corporate culture, self-help books, and other popular media. One notion is that by working even harder, multitasking, and implementing more effective time management skills, couples will be able to "find" or "free up" more time for their relationships. Another faulty belief is that attaining optimal work-family balance means arriving at a state of perfect, tensionless equanimity. Rather, the reality of a dynamic balance involves negotiating inevitable tensions and adjustments between time dedicated to career and work, and time dedicated to couple and family time, as well as to other life demands, activities, and relationships. If approached proactively, these tensions among various relationships and endeavors can help to affirm in an ongoing way the

couple's fundamental values and choices, lending those choices more meaning and sense of purpose (Fraenkel, 2011).

If families can deconstruct and evade the influence of these myths about couple and family time, and these unattainable standards for work-life balance, they can discover new pathways to work-family balance. Useful work-family balance practices include the following:

1. Creating regular "rhythms" of pleasurable couple and family time together, rather than hoping eventually to "find time."
2. Accepting the need to prioritize certain activities and let others go for the time being.
3. Recognizing the influence on family time of work, school, older family members, health care, and other contexts and relationships, and being less blaming of oneself and one another when the "schedule" does not quite work out.
4. Creating regular periods for quality time that is not necessarily pre-structured, allowing opportunities for spontaneity and serendipity, boredom that leads to creativity, and just for hanging out.
5. Utilizing the natural rhythms of housework and chores as opportunities for connection and fun.

To decrease the transmission of negative affect from work into family interactions, Fraenkel recommends a practice called the decompression chamber (Fraenkel, 1998a, 2011). Each partner makes a list of afterwork activities (solo or conjoint) he or she finds best to relax and to transition into the rest of the evening (e.g., taking a shower, reading the paper, watching a bit of television, exercise, yoga and meditation, playing with the children, talking about the events of the day). The partners then compare their lists and develop a "decompression sequence" that accommodates one another's needs as much as possible and also recognizes the need to accomplish various home and child care tasks. This practice helps resolve the frequent tug-of-war over each partner's needs. It also provides an opening for partners to talk about their longings for soothing and care from one another—an aspect of interaction found highly predictive of relationship satisfaction and stability (Gottman, Coan, Carrère, & Swanson, 1998)—and to reveal their needs for "alone time." In many cases, it is also a useful entree into conversations about each partner's beliefs and expectations, borne from both past experience and family and culture of origin, about how to handle difficult emotions emerging from work.

To increase the sense of connection between partners with long hours apart, Fraenkel (1998b, 2011) recommends a practice called the "60-second pleasure point." Partners engage in fun, pleasurable, and sensual activities they can do together that each last 60 seconds or less, such as short massages, a hug or kiss, leaving notes in each other's wallets, sending loving messages, and planning what to do when they have more time. Couples who utilize this technique typically report an enhanced sense of connection across the day,

which in turn decreases their pressure off this transition. this technique, it is support the positive, long-term effect of partners' initiating and responding with attention.

More important than a adult partners to maintain as they face. This includes recognizing personal finances, a pile-up of gender roles, and the good little lies of origin. Recognizing time and family experience can allow that engenders mutual support in the struggle to balance work within workplaces, community widespread, family-friendly in the mores of the work culture for employees to avail themselves work and family life should rather should interact in a d member's well-being.

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which in turn decreases their anxiety about reconnecting at day's end, taking pressure off this transition. Although research has yet to be conducted on this technique, it is supported by the Gottman et al. (1998) findings about the positive, long-term effects on marital satisfaction and stability of partners' initiating and responding to each other's bids for often-short periods of attention.

More important than any specific technique or practice, it is critical for adult partners to maintain an open and ongoing dialogue about the challenges they face. This includes recognition of the influences on their experience of personal finances, a pile-up of stress events, and cultural beliefs about work, gender roles, and the good life, some of which they may bring from their families of origin. Recognizing the power of these conditions to shape individual and family experience can allow partners to sustain a nonjudgmental attitude that engenders mutual support. Finally, recognizing that they are not alone in the struggle to balance work and home may lead to new dialogues and action within workplaces, communities, and political arenas that promote more widespread, family-friendly policies. For healthy family functioning, changes in the mores of the work culture and broader culture are essential in order for employees to avail themselves of these policies. Ultimately, the domains of work and family life should not be set in competition with one another, but rather should interact in a dynamic balance that contributes to every family member's well-being.

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