

Chapter 21

Exploring Healthcare Technologies and Their Role in Alleviating Parental Burnout

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ABSTRACT

The rise of teleworking, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has brought forth a multitude of challenges for employees, particularly single parents. This has resulted in parental burnout, intensified stress, and heightened workplace pressure. Balancing remote work and parenting within the home has caused a concerning surge in stress levels. However, healthcare technology tools have emerged as vital resources for aiding single parents in managing teleworking stress. Healthcare technology tools, like smartphone apps, texting apps, and tele-mental health services, are instrumental in assisting single parents in managing teleworking stress. As organizations adapt to the evolving work landscape, these technology tools continue to be vital for supporting employees, particularly single parents, in navigating the challenges of remote work. This chapter offers a comprehensive exploration of existing literature, shedding light on proactive support for single parents through healthcare technology tools, with full employer support.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations experience many shifts in personnel based on factors that take place in the employee's lives. Whether the shift is because one acquired a new job, started a family, or had discontent in their current position, employee turnover rates for some organizations are higher than others. Women in the workforce have increased over the past few decades, especially women with children. There is an average of over 2 million single mothers in the United States in the workforce this is an increase since 2015 (Phillips, 2020). The workforce is currently majority women, dominating the retail and healthcare fields as of 2020 (Law, 2020). Women encounter many obstacles when navigating the workplace; from

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issues such as unequal pay, discrimination, unequal representation in executive positions, harassment, and work life imbalance to name a few (Theodorou, 2022). However, mothers particularly cannot take on the workforce without challenges of balancing work and home life.

Parenthood is a fulfilling experience that can result in various outcomes, including adding more meaning to one's life, happiness, and wellness for some parents (Griffith 2020). However, raising children is not easy and sometimes becomes overwhelming when tending to the needs of children. Becoming a parent brings significant transition to the lives of the parents. Changing routines, not hanging out as much, and considering another person with every decision they make are just a few challenges (Alfasi, 2020). Mothers take on the daunting task of wanting to be independent and work or being forced to work because there is no other option to provide for their children besides managing the home and needs of the kids (Law, 2020). The job of parenting sometimes requires more energy than the parent can give, which affects their self-care and self-reflection to heal and re-energize to continue parenting. Parents sometimes reach a point where they experience burnout and lack the will or energy to do anything, including caring for their children. Employees that are burned out are 2 times more likely to quit their jobs (Liu, 2021). In fact, in 2019 23 percent of workers admitted to being burned out from their jobs quite often, and the issues that caused the burnout are internal to the business (Robinson, 2019).

In late 2019 early 2020, the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic plagued the world and was affirmed a global health crisis (Cennimo, 2021). This pandemic was caused by a virus that caused illness in the people that contracted it. The mental health of communities was impacted negatively due to the social distancing tactics implemented to slow the virus. These methods included mandatory lockdowns, isolation periods, fear of getting sick, closing businesses, and loss of income (Usher, Durkin & Bhullar 2020).

The COVID-19 virus has caused a significant disturbance in the lives of the American people when the decision to have non-essential organizations to close to protect the public's health and slow the virus (Ross, 2020). The parental role and environment changed when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, affecting parents and the work environment across the world. The first concern for all employees and employers was to prevent the spread of the virus; therefore, to reduce anxiety, almost every nation placed lockdown and quarantine measures. As schools and businesses close, parents could monitor their children's education at home while concurrently managing their employment remotely (Griffith 2020). There were also the mothers who lost employment or struggled with the stress of finding suitable childcare so that they could continue working (Ross, 2020). The pandemic has increased employee disengagements because of the concern for their health and working conditions over the completion of assigned tasks (Moyo, 2020). Kahn's Theory states that the definition of disengagement is the direct linkage of the commitment to execute work and focus on the activities that are required of a job (Moyo, 2020). As a result, stress can be a distraction that leads to disengagement.

The impact of this virus was enormous and created mental health issues for people who did not adjust well to the changes. Issues involving finances, isolation, health concerns and increased responsibility have overwhelmed parents during this pandemic (Cuffari, 2021).

The challenges of parenthood and the profound impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the critical need for employee assistance programs (EAPs) that harness healthcare technologies to address these complex issues (Law, 2020). Parenthood, while rewarding, often leads to exhaustion and burnout, contributing to employees' struggles with self-care and recharging for their demanding caregiving roles (Liu, 2021). It is worth noting that burnout is a significant risk factor for employee attrition (Robinson, 2019).

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