



Helping parents thrive at home and work

A look at the mental health struggle of American moms and dads – and how employers can help

Are you working from home? Or living at work? For many working parents, who have been hit particularly hard during the pandemic, the line between personal and professional lives has never been more blurred.

Navigating and adapting to increasing demands from work while balancing homeschooling and childcare make it even harder for many working parents to prioritize self-care. New research from Humantel¹ suggests that working moms and working dads² recognize the importance of self-care and mental health but often struggle to prioritize it, citing lack of capacity and resources. For American businesses, this is a growing focus area, as mental self-care can evoke associations with happiness, love, hope and strength – positive emotions that impact health, job satisfaction, productivity and overall optimism about the future. To help working parents thrive both at work and at home, employers can do more to better understand the unique barriers these employees face and take action to deepen engagement with mental health support and resources.

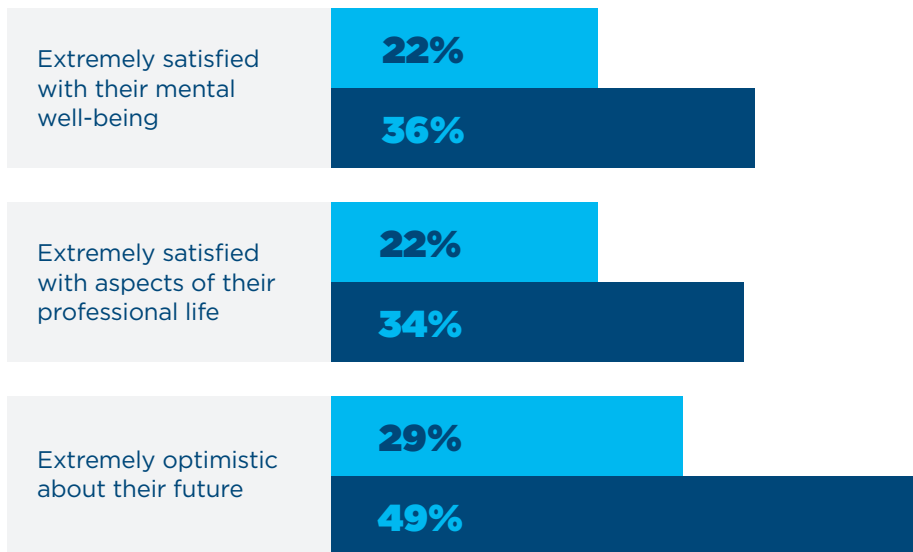
The mental health toll on working parents

Working parents' ability to invest in their own mental well-being has become more critical, and yet more difficult during the pandemic. Only one-fifth of working moms are satisfied with their mental well-being compared to more than one-third of working dads, according to the Humantel study.¹ A similar proportion of working moms and working dads report satisfaction with their professional life.¹ In addition, many mothers are significantly less optimistic about their future, which can limit their opportunity to achieve their full potential and live their best life. In short, the impact of neglecting mental health is powerful and far-reaching, as it not only affects people's current lives but also colors their vision of the future.



Offered by Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company or their affiliates.

How Satisfied Are Working Parents with Their Mental Well-Being?¹
 Answered “strongly agree”.



■ Working moms
 ■ Working dads

Resilience of working moms and working dads

A separate Cigna study found that full-time working moms are significantly less likely to be resilient compared to full-time working dads.

38% resiliency rate for moms
48% resiliency rate for dads

Their mental health, physical health and quality of relationships are likely to be lower than that of full-time working dads.³

Barriers to mental self-care

Despite recognizing its value, the data shows working parents struggle to make mental well-being a priority. Working moms are less likely than working dads to feel they have the resources and support they need to address their mental well-being easily and confidently over the next three months (32% of surveyed moms versus 40% of dads¹). In addition to financial constraints, the ongoing pull between professional and personal responsibilities leaves working parents with little time or energy to focus on themselves. As a result, only 52% of working moms report they intend to focus on mental self-care over the next few months, and far fewer have a plan in place to do so.¹ The intention and planning for mental self-care is more present in working dads, with 59% reporting they intend to take care of their mental well-being in the next three months and more than one-third (38%) reporting it will be easy to do so.¹

Significant Barriers to Self-Care Affecting Working Parents.¹ Identified by respondents as a “significant barrier”.

	WORKING MOMS	WORKING DADS
Work responsibilities	36%	39%
Limited money	35%	39%
Limited time	34%	41%
Family/Friend responsibilities	34%	39%

How Working Parents Feel About Mental Self-Care.¹ Answered “strongly agree” in regard to the next three months.

	WORKING MOMS	WORKING DADS
I intend to take care of my mental well-being in the next three months	52%	59%
I have a plan in place to take care of my mental well-being	39%	47%
I am confident I will be able to take care of my mental well-being	34%	44%
I have the resources I need to be able to take care of my mental well-being	32%	40%
It will be easy for me to take care of my mental well-being	28%	38%



The power of music

Both working moms and working dads report “listening to music” as the top self-care activity.¹ Research has shown that music can affect the autonomic nervous system in a way that helps people reduce and manage stress.⁴



Resources to support mental health

Employers and employees alike believe that mental, emotional and behavioral health benefits are critical to supporting business success.⁵ Utilizing meaningful mental health resources can help strengthen resiliency, bolster health and improve overall well-being.

- Cigna customers with employer-sponsored or individual and family health benefits plans have access to these secure wellness apps:
 - **Ginger** gives Cigna customers access to immediate behavioral health coaching, therapy and psychiatry services (available at ginger.com/cigna).
 - **Talkspace** connects customers to dedicated licensed therapists whom they can engage daily by private messaging (text, voice and video). Customers can also schedule live video sessions based on personal preference (available at talkspace.com/cigna).
 - **Happify** supports emotional health needs with personalized bite-size activities designed to fit into an individual's busy life. With programs based on the best practices of gaming science and behavioral therapeutic disciplines, Happify can help people manage stress, overcome negative thinking and build skills to deal with life's challenges (available at cigna.happify.com).
 - **iPrevail** provides on-demand support with trained peers and wellness coaches using a private chat platform for people experiencing stress and other related challenges. The digital platform also offers personalized mental health care guidance for people with depression, substance use disorder and other issues (available at iprevail.com/cigna).
- For employers who have purchased Cigna's **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**, employees and eligible family members have access to no-cost phone consultations and short-term counseling sessions with licensed clinicians for help in managing personal and work-related issues. Customers can visit Cigna.com/realsupport to access services, as well as home life referral assistance, educational webcasts, and other information and resources.
- Online wellness, mental health and behavioral resources are available to anyone at Cigna's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource Center. Simply visit Cigna.com/coronavirus/mental-health-wellness.
- Workforce resiliency information and tools are available to employers and the general public at CignaResilience.com.



Wellness app services are available through Cigna's outpatient behavioral health coverage, subject to benefit plan cost-share. Product availability may vary by plan type and is subject to change. All group health insurance policies and health benefit plans contain exclusions and limitations. Program services are provided by independent companies/entities and not by Cigna. Programs and services are subject to all applicable program terms and conditions.

1. Data for this study was collected as part of Humantel's October 2020 to February 2021 core survey on the drivers of wellness actions. Data was collected through an online survey of ~16,000 people in the United States, aged 15–74 (census balanced) throughout this period. 2. *Working parents* is a self-reported term, referring to people in the United States, aged 18–55, who are working full-time or part-time with at least one child under 18. 3. Findings from the Cigna Resilience Index 2020 U.S. Report: Workforce, a study of approximately 5,000 working-aged U.S. adults from the continental United States, Alaska and Hawaii. The study was conducted online, in English, by Dynata on behalf of Cigna in August 2020. It has an overall margin of error of ± 1.7 percentage points among full-time workers. The data in this article is based on n=628 male and n=413 female full-time working parents (of children under the age of 18). Resiliency was determined by the Resilience Research Centre Adult Resilience Measure (ARM), where High (H), Moderate (M) and Low (L) resiliency scores were measured as follows (based on a total possible score of 85 for Adults): Adults (H:85–75; M: 74–50; L: 49–17). 4. Thoma MV, La Marca R, Brönnimann R, et. al. The effect of music on the human stress response. *PLoS ONE*. 2013;8(8):e70156. doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0070156. 5. The Employer Imperative: Driving US Economic Vitality through a Healthy, Productive Workforce, survey conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), commissioned by Cigna, in January and February 2021 among 1,200 consumers and 600 executives. Thirty-eight percent of respondents reported fatigue/burnout/stress and 33% indicated lack of positive work attitude as significant barriers to business growth.

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