30 Balancing Career and Family

Paula J. Caplan

Even the most experienced psychologists have trouble balancing paid work and family, whether their work is in academia or in clinical practice, so undergraduates, graduate students, and interns have no reason to feel incompetent and inadequate if they have trouble doing the balancing act. We feel we are shortchanging our loved ones when we spend time on our studies or work, and we feel we are being insufficiently productive as students or workers because of spending time meeting family responsibilities – and even more when we notice that we are actually having fun with our partners, parents, or children. Spending any time meeting our other needs, such as going for a swim or reading a book of poetry or just sitting quietly and thinking, often makes us feel we are shirking both of our other sets of duties. This is the case for people regardless of sex, but is more common for women and for others who are not white, heterosexual, able-bodied, or doing what is considered to be "mainstream" work (Caplan, 1994).

It is even more pressing to be aware of the balancing difficulties and to find ways to deal with them when we consider the increasing proportions of women among students and faculty in psychology, as well as in the profession outside of academia (Enns, 1997; Snyder et al., 2000). According to an American Psychological Association report (Kohout & Wicherski, 2010) based on the association's 2008–2009 study of graduate departments of psychology, women represented 46 percent of full-time faculty in traditional academic settings and 45 percent of full-time faculty in professional schools for psychologists, whereas, according to Gehlmann et al. (1995), the percentage of women among full-time faculty in graduate departments of psychology in the United States had only been 22 percent in 1984.

In 2013, the ratio of women to men who were active psychologists in the workforce was 2.1:1, with an even wider gender gap for racialized groups (APA, 2015). In addition, according to Willyard (2011), women earning doctoral degrees in psychology outnumbered men 3:1. However, adding to the burden for women in the

Acknowledgments: Many thanks to Professors Kathryn Morgan and Sandra Pyke for getting me involved in writing about women in academia in the first place.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

field, women have continued to be paid less than men for the same work (Willyard, 2011). And in academia, the split for tenured positions was 61 percent men and 39 percent women (Willyard, 2011).

In 1984, racialized people and members of ethnic minority faculty accounted for about 6 percent of all full-time faculty, and that number had increased to 13 percent in 2008–2009 (Kohout & Wicherski, 2010; Gehlmann et al., 1995), but although Canadian staffing patterns were similar with respect to sex distribution, racialized people and members of ethnic minorities represented only 3 percent of their Canadian full-time faculty in graduate programs of psychology (Kohout & Wicherski, 2010). On their own, these percentages suggest the special pressures that come from being in the minority as a faculty member, or as a graduate student who is a woman or a member of a racialized group or ethnic minority, from seeing few people from one's own group assignments on the faculty. But what makes the pressures and membership in devalued groups even more clear is the following: women in the US currently represent 75 percent of students in doctoral programs in psychology and 77 percent of those enrolled in master's programs in psychology, and those numbers have been steadily increasing for many years (Hart et al., 2010). The 31 percent of first-year enrollees who are members of racialized or ethnic minority groups also represent a steady increase, and a similar pattern is seen in Canada (although racialized people and members of ethnic minority groups account for only 8 percent of first-year psychology graduate students there: Kohout & Wicherski, 2009). The fact that these increases have filled the pipeline with members of marginalized groups who are highly qualified to teach in graduate programs and yet all of these groups still account for a minority of psychology faculty in such programs testifies powerfully to the continued presence of intense bias and oppression in academia (and see Caplan, 1994). It is clear, therefore, that the workplace part of the double load includes the necessity of coping with this bias and oppression.

The Second Wave of the feminist movement beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s called attention to the difficulty of the balancing act, but social changes to make it easier both for women and for men have been exceedingly slow in coming. Women have been expected to be Superwomen, to balance career and family with ease and aplomb, not complaining, not asking for help and certainly not expecting it from any quarter, and feeling grateful for the opportunity to obtain university degrees and to work as psychologists (Caplan, 2000, 2001). Media stories about "Mr. Moms" or even about men shouldering more of the household and family responsibilities have given a false picture of reality, for recent research shows that women still do far more housework and childcare than do men (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010; Dush et al., 2018; Pleck, 1986, 1997; Sullivan & Coltrane, 2008). What has been difficult for men has been confronting the conflicting forces: a pull from their families and progressive elements of society to spend more time with them and do more of the caretaking, a push from traditional elements to consider themselves masculine for doing paid work, and less than manly when feeding babies or vacuuming carpets at home.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

Increasing the burden for parents has been the crazy-making pair of messages our society gives:

(A) One is that the welfare of children matters desperately and is overwhelmingly the responsibility of parents, especially mothers (Caplan, 2000).
(B) The other is that children's welfare is not important enough for our governments to spend much energy or money on it.

This leaves parents, especially but not exclusively mothers, working frantically and tirelessly to meet all of their children's needs while knowing that that work is shockingly undervalued (Caplan, 2000).

Despite some changed expectations about both sex roles, there has been no let-up in pressure, not the pressure on graduate students to do well in courses, the pressure on early- and mid-career faculty to publish and to take on committee work and advising duties, the pressure on clinicians to maintain heavy case loads (in private practice, in order to earn a living, and in hospitals and clinics, in order to be seen as a team player who does one's share of the work), or the pressure on parents to produce perfect children (Caplan, 2000). In fact, if anything, all of these pressures have increased and show little sign of abating. To do good work as a graduate student, a therapist, or a teacher requires focus, concentration, energy, and persistence. Furthermore, being a graduate student can be emotionally draining, because you have far less power than do the people who grade you and write (might refuse to write) letters of recommendation, as well as because it can be hard to find out when the work you've done on a thesis or dissertation is enough, so time and energy are spent in trying to divine the wishes of your supervisor (Caplan, 1994). Being a conscientious therapist is draining because of the demands placed on one's time, energy, and patience by suffering or difficult clients. Being a good, caring teacher is draining because of the energy and time that go into responding to students' learning, emotional, and mentoring needs and because of the worry about how much publishing will be enough to obtain tenure or promotions. Canadian feminist psychologist Cannie Stark has wisely pointed out that, in jobs in which one is supposed to think creatively, one doesn't just stop thinking – whether about teaching, research, or therapy patients – just because one arrives back at home, and these thoughts are likely to pop up or continue while one is changing diapers, cooking, or doing other household tasks (Stark-Adamec, 1995). Based on her own research about women in academia, Stark reports that women bring home an average of 71.6 hours of workplace work per month, partly because of their love for work but partly because of the enormous numbers of demands to which women have to respond while at work and partly because, unlike some 9-to-5 work, it is never clear when this work is done (Stark-Adamec, 1995). Stark also reports that at home, women spend more than 102 hours a month taking care of household activities assigned to women and, as a result of all of the above, women get an average of only 210 of the 240 hours of sleep per month they feel they need. And in 2003, Suzanne Bianchi found that three years before that, mothers with paid jobs were

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

actually doing an hour more per week of childcare than were stay-at-home mothers (Porter, 2006).

In the early 1970s, I had my first post-PhD job, a full-time position as a psychologist in a clinic. I spent 40 hours a week there and often took work home as well, and at home I had a husband, two biological children, and two stepchildren. I tried to work efficiently in order to make everyone happy. One day, a clinic administrator took me to task because I did not "seem available to the staff." I replied that I was bewildered, because I always attended every meeting, finished my work on time, and quickly carried out psychological assessments when they were requested by non-psychologists in the clinic. The reply was, "Well, but, um, you don't . . . hang around in the hallways or the coffee room." I didn't know whether to laugh or cry at that, but that was the moment I learned that every workplace has unwritten rules that employees and students are supposed to figure out and follow.

1. What Makes It So Difficult

Standards and expectations make finding the right balance impossible for people regardless of sex. For women, the standards are simply unmeetable. At home, you are supposed to do the lion's share of the work. As a student or employee, you are supposed to do as much as or even more work than the men; if you do not do more, you may well be perceived as doing *less* (this has happened to me). And as a student or employee, you will be expected to do not only what is defined as "work" but also the very real work of nurturing, such as listening to troubled people, maintaining a sunny, supportive demeanor. If you fail to do the latter, you risk being disliked because you are insufficiently womanly, but if you *do* the latter, you risk acquiring an image of "motherly person" rather than "good student or worker" (Caplan, 1994, 2000). Even today, the two are often considered mutually exclusive. A senior psychologist in a research institution who was married and had four children told me this: She worked diligently until 5:00 every day, and one day as she was leaving the office, a male colleague called out, "Could you help me? My grant application has to be postmarked before midnight tonight, and I need to pick your brain." Obligingly, she spent the next hour trying to help him, and near 6:00 he looked at his watch and said, seriously and judgmentally, "You should be home cooking dinner now!"

For men who are committed to doing their fair share of household work, the standards are somewhat different. In spite of the women's movement, our society has not yet decided either how much housework and childcare a man *should* do or how much he can do and still be considered a real man (whatever that is) who is presumably doing conscientious work as a student, instructor, researcher, or therapist.

Due to increases in the numbers of women, racialized people, and openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans people among graduate students, faculty, and practitioners in psychology, combined with the increasing preponderance of women on campuses and in the workplace, one might expect these sites to be welcoming for people who are not white, straight, cis-gender men doing mainstream work. However, women account for the majority of undergraduates, support staff, cleaning

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

and food service staff, and faculty in low-level and part-time positions, and members of other marginalized groups are more commonly found in those positions as well. Harvard University, for instance, continues to have a disturbingly low percentage of women in tenured positions (Lewin, 2010). The "academic funnel" is the term based on the findings of fewer women as status and salary increase (Caplan, 1994).The university campus was never intended to educate women or hire women faculty (Sheinin, 1987), and many of its organizational and procedural aspects still reflect this. For instance, junior faculty aiming to publish enough to get tenure typically need to do this during the very period in their lives when women are of childbearing age; and early attempts to allow for this, such as programs granting an extra year to apply for tenure because of having a new child, have been of limited use. Reasons they have not been more useful include: the fact that it takes far more than one year to care for a baby and young child; the irony that expectations about women's publishing productivity are often increased because "they've had a whole extra year to write," when during many years starting with the birth or adoption of a child, they spend a great deal of time meeting the child's needs, not hanging out in libraries and coffee shops, thinking and writing in an unconflicted state; the tendency of administrators and peers to look down on men who ask for that extra year so they can co-parent; and the criticism and marginalization of people of any sex who use flextime, do workplace tasks at home, or work part-time.

Other reasons the balancing act is so difficult include:

- The rarity with which those at the top in academic and clinical settings have altered values and norms to reflect the extensive documentation from our own field that the "double load" (e.g., Greenglass, 1985, but even more than a decade into the twenty-first century, stories about the absence of such alterations and improvements remain common) occasions enormous stress, even desperation.
- The difficulty of finding women mentors to help show the way, because mentors for anyone remain too rare, but women mentors because they are overburdened by their own balancing attempts within the workplace (e.g., meeting expectations that women will carry the lion's share of advising about personal problems, and serving on many committees because without them, they will be all-white and all-male).
- The difficulty of finding male mentors who have made sustained attempts to share equally with women the household and childcare tasks.
- The scarcity of affordable, high-quality daycare.
- The socialization of people to feel that, for somewhat different reasons depending on their sex, they should hesitate to ask for help.
- The tendency for part-time students to receive reduced financial aid, even proportional to the percentage of time for which they are enrolled to study.

In addition, many factors make the balancing act more difficult for women, including:

- The tendency for increasing percentages of part-time employees to be women, who are sometimes working part-time by choice because of their family responsibilities,

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

although they virtually never receive benefits such as health insurance. This is a dramatically increasing concern, because in the mid-1970s part-timers accounted for 22 percent of undergraduate teachers but in 2005 and a decade ago, 48 percent (American Federation of Teachers, 2010; Monks, 2009).

- The tendency of students and employees to evaluate female faculty and supervisors more harshly than they do males (Caplan, 1994, 2000); thus, for instance, women are expected to do more household work but are then criticized for not publishing enough.

Together, the many impediments to finding ways to balance career and family benefit a status quo in which the most powerful people keep the less powerful scrambling, overworking to try to meet the impossible standards for mothers to do virtually all the childrearing on their own (the philosophy in Hilary Clinton's *It Takes a Village to Raise a Child* remains outside the mainstream) and to keep paid workers striving to produce nonstop (Caplan, 2000).

2. What Can Help (Can, not Will)

2.1 In Your Head and With Others

Start by realizing this: It is almost certain that you will never feel that you are successfully balancing family and work (Caplan, 2000). So what can you do (see Table 30.1)? You can assume community, or at least commonality. Know that, no matter how calm and secure other people may appear, anyone doing that balancing act is struggling. Long ago, I presented at a conference a paper about what I considered bizarre, unique problems at work that I figured must somehow be my fault. I was so ashamed that I introduced each example by saying, "One psychologist had the following experience" or "Another psychologist told this story." I was so astounded to see people sitting up in their chairs and nodding vigorously that by the time I got to the third example, I felt more courageous, took a deep breath, and said, "Here is what happened to me." As a teenager, I had the typical adolescent's belief that my feelings and experiences were weird and probably proof that I was abnormal. Later, I came to consider that any feelings and thoughts I had were invariably shared by at least a few, perhaps carefully chosen people. Then finally, I realized that I come closest to guessing the truth if I assume that my feelings are virtually universal. My taking the plunge and being the first one to express confusion, fear, or a particular perspective has nearly always elicited sighs of relief from others who had considered themselves strange, stupid, or both. Simply acknowledging feelings of puzzlement and vulnerability can create a community as you speak about them.

Try to find work that you love, an aim whose importance cannot be overestimated:

- Graduate students can choose paper and dissertation topics they find compelling rather than routine, and if they fear that their committees will regard their

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

Table 30.1 *Strategies that can help balancing career and family*

- Assume community, or at least commonality.
- Try to find work that you love, an aim whose importance cannot be overestimated.
- Assume, and help create, community with people from various levels and in various realms.
- Talk and talk and talk about the obstacles to finding balance between career and family.
- Guard against blaming or pathologizing yourself.
- Ask senior people for "clarity" about what is expected of you on the job.
- Try to clarify with other adults, as well as older children, in your household the way you will distribute household responsibilities, time for work, and leisure time with each other and alone.
- Keep in mind this apparent paradox: *Give yourself permission* to take more time to do things in any realm, so that you don't feel so pressured, *but* aim to do them more quickly than you can imagine doing them once you get started.
- Never forget that, in an ideal world, changes that make balancing between family and career a task of human scale would come from the top down, through policies *initiated, implemented, and evaluated* at the highest levels of administration. So maintain the perspective that the people with the greatest power should be doing this work by keeping in mind that no less a body than the American Psychological Association has said that "administrators, especially department chairs and deans, must be held accountable for gender equality and climate in their units. Those who fail to make the corrections necessary for gender equity should be given feedback, and their effectiveness in correcting these problems should be reflected in compensation. If necessary, ineffective administrators should be replaced" (APA, 2000, p. 1).
- Create initiatives for change if you want, or can afford, to take the risks that such initiatives would involve; but if you do this, try to maintain low expectations about the speed and magnitude of change.
- Begin initiatives for change by choosing strategically which ones are most important to you or seem most doable, first making or finding a list of policies and practices that have been helpful at other universities or workplaces for psychologists.
- Remember that the best, time-tested antidotes for burnout are ongoing contact with people who share your dilemmas and aims; an ability to remember that every step in a long struggle is important; and a whopping appreciation for irony and sense of humor.

preferred topics as unacceptable, they can brainstorm with other students or trusted faculty members about ways to design research that is likely to be approved by committee members while retaining their fascination for the students.

- Faculty members can design or modify courses in ways that suit students' needs but are interesting and enjoyable to teach (e.g., if you're told your department needs you to teach the introductory developmental psychology course and you find the textbook to be rather dry, you can teach it from a critical thinking perspective).
- After reaching a more secure employment level, such as a tenured position, you can design new courses based on what you most love to read, think, and talk about, then see if they can be added to the list of your department's course offerings.
- If you are a clinician and have any say over what patients you see, try to refer to other people any prospective patients with whom you are unlikely to make

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

a good, human connection, to be a solid, working "fit." This is both good practice as a therapist and a way to maximize the interest factor in your work life.

Assume, and help create, community with people from various levels and in various realms – for instance, graduate students connecting with secretaries, faculty with cleaning or food service staff, psychology faculty with any of the above as well as with faculty from other departments or with psychology professors in other institutions. Breaking through these kinds of class and other barriers increases opportunities for everyone to present their different perspectives, offer different kinds of useful information about how the department or workplace is really run, and provide support for each other. It also brings members of different groups down or up to human scale, making distance and stereotyping of group members harder to maintain and humanizing campuses and other workplaces.

Related to the above, talk and talk and talk about the obstacles to finding balance between career and family. Know that by bringing up dilemmas and fears in conversation, you will help free others to do so, but you will also make some people exceedingly uncomfortable, even belligerent. The latter is all the more reason you need to reach out to others, give and receive support (see Caplan, 1994, for specific suggestions).

Guard against blaming or pathologizing yourself if you are not balancing work and family with grace and aplomb. Make a mental note that you'd be unlikely to blame or pathologize others who are having that trouble. Keep coming back to the current systemic ills (see previous section) that make balancing so hard. This, too, becomes easier, the more you discuss it with other people.

Ask senior people for "clarity" about what is expected of you as a student or employee, a crucial practice in light of the power and number of unwritten rules, as mentioned earlier. The relevance of this point to the balancing dilemma is that, in the face of unclear expectations, many of us strive mightily to do far more than is acceptable. Because asking for clarity can make one feel extremely vulnerable, this is another instance in which it can be terrifically helpful to brainstorm with other people, whether in your field or outside of it, about how to word requests or suggestions in ways that reduce that feeling of vulnerability and help you maintain your dignity. It's often good to include script-writing in the brainstorming because, when one is very worried and/or angry, one can get mental blocks, either making one feel paralyzed and completely silenced or making it impossible to think of anything to express other than in the forms of demands, threats, complaints, or intense anger.

Try to clarify with other adults, as well as older children, in your household the way you will distribute household responsibilities; time to do paid work, coursework, or dissertation work; time for fun together; and leisure time on one's own or with others. Be aware, however, that these advance plans are often jettisoned, due to several factors:

- Most people have been subjected to intense social pressures to divide family responsibilities along traditional sex-typed lines.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

- The continuing disparity in women's and men's salaries helps shape the decision in heterosexual families that, if only one adult will maintain full-time paid work while the children are young or when any family member is chronically ill or disabled, it's the man who will keep his job, because his income will probably be higher than hers would be, so it makes economic sense for the woman to stay home and do the caretaking there.
- Men's intelligence and achievements are often still likely to be assumed to be greater than those of women.

Keep in mind this apparent paradox: (A) *Give yourself permission* to take more time to do things in any realm, so that you don't feel so pressured, *but* (B) aim to do them as quickly as possible. These two suggestions may seem to work at cross-purposes, but in fact they don't, because both are ways to minimize pressure that comes from the impossible standards imposed on us from all around. This is reflected, for instance, in the raising of the bar in recent years: Workers spend significantly increasing amounts of time at work, hence the constantly heard complaint, "I am *so* busy, never have a moment to myself or to relax with my partner." To explain part (B) a bit, in more than 20 years of teaching, I found that students and colleagues tended to overestimate the amount of time many tasks would take . . . and even assumed they were *supposed to* spend unduly extensive periods of time doing such things as writing dissertations or grant proposals. When I suggest to anyone that they try to do such projects in a single day or even one hour, they initially tell me that that is absurd and impossible. I then explain that of course they cannot finish the project in that time, but that they will undoubtedly be amazed by how much they can accomplish if they take seriously the suggestion to finish in a day or an hour. They invariably report back to me that this experiment showed them that they can work much more efficiently than they had realized. I also point out that they will have plenty of time to go over their work and fill in gaps, make alterations, or reorganize the material, but that all of that is easier once the most important material and the bulk of the structure are written or sketched out in that short period of time. The other function served by this advice is to remove some of the heavy emotional load that "Writing A Dissertation" or "Writing A Grant Application" tends to carry, a load that significantly impedes the process of completing the task. Once you discover that you *can* do some parts of your work in less time than before without losing its quality, you will know that you don't have to work constantly under intense time pressure (see A above).

2.2 Change from the Top Down . . . Or from You

Never forget that, in an ideal world, changes that make balancing between family and career a task of human scale would come from the top down, through policies *initiated, implemented, and evaluated* at the highest levels of administration. *You* should not have to make this happen. Top administrators should set a tone of respect for all and warn that reprisals against those who take parental leave or use flextime or

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

job-sharing will not be tolerated. Administrators should sponsor seminars for managers, other employees, and students about difficulties of the balancing act, and they should set a tone of compassion and support for those who are attempting it. Top administrators should initiate and fund studies of steps their universities or clinics could take to decrease these difficulties, such as pushing for adequate maternity and paternity leave for all. In fact, the authors of an American Psychological Association report hold that "administrators, especially department chairs and deans, must be held accountable for gender equality and climate in their units. Those who fail to make the corrections necessary for gender equity should be given feedback, and their effectiveness in correcting these problems should be reflected in compensation. If necessary, ineffective administrators should be replaced" (APA, 2000, p. 1). Despite this strong statement, however, few colleges and universities have yet taken steps to make this kind of thing happen. And of course, outside of academic settings, those same changes should also come from the highest levels.

Although change should come from the top, so that those who are already disproportionately burdened and oppressed need not take on the additional, onerous tasks of initiating and campaigning for change, some of you will feel you want, perhaps can afford, to take risks by creating initiatives for change. Ideally, you would take such action working with your peers and possibly more senior, supportive people. Trying to make change happen can be empowering precisely because it involves taking action rather than waiting passively, hoping needed changes will take place but feeling powerless. One example of such an initiative would be for graduate students who are becoming increasingly anxious about forthcoming comprehensive examinations to form a group and ask the faculty to make available examples of questions from past comprehensives. They may refuse you, but they may not, and making the request as a group will minimize the risk to each student insofar as that is possible.

If you choose to work for change, expect powerful resistance from those at the top or in middle management, and know that you may suddenly feel even more powerless than before. I cannot emphasize enough how much it helps to be prepared for resistance, setbacks, and even reprisals; it is crucial to consider what risks you may be taking. Similarly, assume that change for the better may come slowly. Of course, if you ask for change, you may be accused of being belligerent, demanding, or – an increased danger in arenas increasingly populated by women – needy, immature, or oppositional. As Canadian Flora McGrath said decades ago to her daughter, Maude Barlow, when Maude became a political activist and was first criticized, "Serious people have serious enemies." Maude went on to become a prominent social and environmental justice advocate and never forgot those words, telling them to me at a time when I was being roundly criticized for my activism.

It is important to try to gauge the risk-versus-benefit situation and to make sure you document everything you have done, as well as the responses, so that there will be an accurate record in case you are accused of wrongdoing. Furthermore, be aware that change for the worse may come abruptly and unexpectedly, perhaps due to the visibility of your activism, such as a sudden reduction in the number of hours for which an assistant is signed to you or the announcement that a promised salary

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

increase will not be forthcoming. Investigate whatever legal or other protection you might have in your setting against retaliation. Awareness of the risks can not only minimize the disappointment you may feel if change comes slowly but also keep you from setting a standard for change that is so high that you don't notice small steps toward your goal along the way.

If you choose to push for changes, begin by choosing strategically which changes are most important to you or seem most doable, first making or finding a list of policies and practices that have been helpful at other universities or workplaces for psychologists (Caplan, 1994, includes such a list, pp. 161–172). Actions can range from being on the lookout for discouragement of cooperative work and encouragement of malicious competitiveness, to establishing study groups for students and support groups at work for people struggling with the double load of family and workplace or student responsibilities, to systematic gathering of questionnaire data in order to identify and document the struggles and wishes of those who are juggling family and career. Other examples of specific actions include advocating for benefits for part-time workers such as health insurance, reasonable workloads, and clearly specified expectations would be helpful, as would fair and proportional financial aid for part-time students. If there is an existing union with which to join forces, that is of course helpful. If there is not, you may want to help organize one.

Above all, remember that for the major institutions of universities and mental health settings, it is simply not a priority to help ease the double load for anyone, and because the struggle for change will be long and exhausting, it will be tempting to give up. As the insightful, caring Dr. Patch Adams has written, the best, time-tested antidotes to burnout are ongoing contact with people who share your dilemmas and aims; an ability to remember that every step in a long struggle is important; and a whopping appreciation for irony and sense of humor. For the humor and humanity, read every word Patch Adams (1998) writes.

Additional Resources[1]

Adams, P. (1998). *Gesundheit*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press.

Bell-Scott, P., & Sheftall, B. G. (1987). *Black women in higher education: Struggling to gain visibility*. New York: Garland.

Chrisler, J. (1998). Teacher vs. scholar: Role conflict for women? In L. Collins, J. Chrisler, & K. Quina (Eds.), *Career strategies for women academics: Arming Athena* (pp. 107–127). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Committee on the Status of Women. (1991). *Non-regular instructional personnel in Ontario universities*. Toronto: Council of Ontario Universities.

Committee on Women in Psychology, American Psychological Association. (1992). *Survival guide to academe for women and ethnic minorities*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

[1] Many of these references were published in the 1970s, 1980s, or early 1990s; they are included here because, unfortunately, the issues to which they are addressed and the patterns of data reported therein still apply. Also, please see references in Section A of the Bibliography in Caplan (1994).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

Haley, E. (1989). Support systems for women in graduate school. In C. Filteau (Ed.), *Proceedings of a conference on women in graduate studies in Ontario* (pp. 32–41). Toronto: Ontario Council on Graduate Studies.

Hensel, N. (1991). *Realizing gender equality in higher education: The need to integrate work/family issues* (Report No. 2). Washington: George Washington School of Education and Human Development (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education).

Kitzinger, C. (1990). Heterosexism in psychology. *The Psychologist*, *3*(9), 391–392.

Levstik, L. S. (1982). The impossible dream: The Ph.D., marriage, and family. In S. Vartuli (Ed.), *The Ph.D. experience: A woman's point of view* (pp. 93–104). New York: Praeger.

Pyke, S. (1990). *A message to council*. Council of Ontario universities, annual report 1989–90. Committee on the Status of Women. Toronto: Council of Ontario Universities.

Roby, P. (1973). Institutional barriers to women students in higher education. In A. S. Rossi & A. Calderwood (Eds.), *Academic women on the move* (pp. 37–56). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Rose, S. (Ed.). (1986). *Career guide for women scholars*. New York: Springer.

Sullivan, O., & Coltrane, S. (2008). Men's contribution to housework and childcare. *Council on Contemporary Families*. April 25. https://contemporaryfamilies.org/mens-changing-contribution-to-housework-and-childcare-brief-report/

Task Force on Women in Academe. (2000). *Women in academe: Two steps forward, one step back. Report of the Task Force on Women in Academe*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Trofimenkoff, S. M. (1989). A woman administrator looks at life and love in the graduate school. In C. Filteau (Ed.), *Proceedings of a conference on women in graduate studies in Ontario* (pp. 114–118). Toronto: Ontario Council on Graduate Studies.

Williams, R. (1982). In and out of relationships: A serious game for the woman doctoral student. In S. Vartuli (Ed.), *The Ph.D. experience: A woman's point of view* (pp. 79–82). New York: Praeger.

Willyard, C. (2011). Men: A growing minority? *gradPSYCH Magazine*. January. www.apa.org/gradpsych/2011/01/cover-men

REFERENCES

American Federation of Teachers/Higher Education. (2010). A national survey of part-time adjunct faculty. *American Academic 2*. https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/aa_partimefaculty0310.pdf

American Psychological Association. (2000). Women in academe: Two steps forward, one step back. Report of the Task Force on Women in Academe. Retrieved July 18, 2002, from www.apa.org/pi/wpo/academe

American Psychological Association, Center for Workforce Studies. (2015). 2005–13 Demographics of the U.S. Psychology Workforce. www.apa.org/workforce/publications/13-demographics

Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2010). American time use survey summary. www.bls.gov/news.release/atus.nr0.htm

Caplan, P. J. (1994). *Lifting a ton of feathers: A woman's guide to surviving in the academic world*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031

Caplan, P. J. (2000). *THE NEW Don't blame mother: Mending the mother–daughter relationship*. New York: Routledge.
Caplan, P. J. (2001). Motherhood: Its changing face. In: *Encyclopedia of women and gender* (Vol. 2, pp. 783–794). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
Dush, C. M. K., Yavorsky, J. E., & Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J. (2018). What are men doing while women perform extra unpaid labor? Leisure and specialization at the transitions to parenthood. *Sex Roles 78*, 715–730.
Enns, C. Z. (1997). *Feminist theories and feminist psychotherapies: Origins, themes, and variations*. New York: The Haworth Press.
Gehlmann, S., Wicherski, M., & Kohout, J. (1995). *Characteristics of graduate departments in psychology: 1993–94*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
Greenglass, E. (1985). A social–psychological view of marriage for women. *International Journal of Women's Studies*, *8*, 24–31.
Hart, B. M., Wicherski, M., & Kohout, J. L. (2010). Graduate Study in Psychology 2008–2009. American Psychological Association Center for Workforce Studies. www.apa.org/workforce/publications/10-grad-study/students.aspx
Kohout, J., & Wicherski, M. (2009). 2009 Graduate Study in Psychology. American Psychological Association Center for Workforce Studies. www.apa.org/workforce/publications/09-grad-study/index.aspx
Kohout, J., & Wicherski, M. (2010). 2010 Graduate Study in Psychology: Faculty in U.S. and Canadian Graduate Departments of Psychology 2008–2009. American Psychological Association Center for Workforce Studies. www.apa.org/workforce/publications/10-grad-study/index.aspx?tab=2
Lewin, T. (2010). Women making gains on faculty at Harvard. *New York Times*, March 12. www.nytimes.com/2010/03/13/education/13harvard.html
Monks, J. (2009). Who are the part-time faculty? *Academe Online*. www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2009/JA/Feat/monk.htm
Pleck, J. (1986). Employment and fatherhood: Issues and innovative policies. In M. Lamb (Ed.), *The father's role: Applied perspectives* (pp. 385–412). New York: John Wiley and Sons.
Pleck, J. (1997). Paternal involvement: Levels, sources, and consequences. In M. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (pp. 66–103). New York: Wiley.
Porter, E. (2006). Stretched to limit, women stall march to work. *New York Times*, March 2. www.nytimes.com/2006/03/02/business/02work.html
Sheinin, R. (1987, June). The monastic origins of the university. Presented to Canadian Association of University Teachers' Status of Women workshop, Fredericton, NB.
Snyder, C. R., McDermott, D. S., Leibowitz, R. Q., & Cheavens, J. (2000). The roles of female clinical psychologists in changing the field of psychotherapy. In C. R. Snyder & R. E. Ingram (Eds.), *Handbook of psychological change: Psychotherapy processes and practices for the 21st century* (pp. 640–659). Toronto: John Wiley & Sons.
Stark-Adamec, C. (1995). Women's ways of working: Rocking the boat and the cradle in academia. Research-based policy recommendations. Women, work, and stress: Developing mechanisms for change by bridging the gap between research and policy [Special Issue]. *The WINning edge*, December, 1–29.
Sullivan, O., & Coltrane, S. (2008). USA: Men's changing contribution to housework and child care. Paper prepared for 11th Annual Conference of Council on Contemporary Families. Chicago: University of Illinois, April 25–26.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 06:55:12, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108903264.031