



New study identifies why American women are more burned out than ever . . . and offers solutions.

*Mounting responsibilities and demands, “do it all” expectations, and false comparisons all fueling burnout.*

## The Problem

1. Over 40% of working women report burnout.
2. Women report significantly higher rates of burnout than men.
3. Over half of women say their stress levels are higher than they were a year ago.

“ I am a working professional with three children. I provide emotional support for my father, mother, kids and spouse. I do not see my friends enough. Who is looking out for me?? I bet you can guess the answer. **STUDY PARTICIPANT** ”

## What We Found

87% admitted they never had enough time to get everything done at home.

82% of moms believe they SHOULD be able to “do it all” – but **only** 7% felt that they actually COULD.

84% of participants said expectations of parents are higher today than they were for their parents.

*But we wanted to know why...*

## What We Studied

The Burnout Study in Women is the first large scale study to comprehensively look at the many roles and responsibilities women face, particularly since the onset of COVID, and their impact on burnout. We also sought to understand how parenting impacts burnout.

## Study Design

- This study was performed in academic collaboration with the University of Tennessee Department of Industrial Organizational Psychology,
- Participants filled out a secure internet-based survey, between October - December 2021.

## Participants

- **4,205 respondents**
- **Working:** 84% working (66% full-time, 18% part-time)
- **Education:** 83% had at least a college degree
- **Age:** Average age = 42 years
- **Caregiving:**
  - 61% had one or more dependents under age 5
  - 76% had at least one dependent under age 18.
  - 17% cared for an elder adult



I always have a feeling of anxiety of never being good enough or knowing if I am doing the right thing at either work or home.

**STUDY PARTICIPANT**

## KEY FINDING #1: Women carry more responsibilities than ever before.

More women work outside the home than prior generations, yet most still carry the majority of home and parenting responsibilities – at the same time that many of our families are more dispersed. Simultaneously, work expectations have increased to today's constant contact 24/7, and parenting expectations and complexity have also risen.

While burnout is traditionally defined as arising from work, it can come from any of the many demands on women: work, parenting, home management, health - and these all interact.

84% of participants said expectations of parents are higher today than they were for their parents.

70% never have enough time to get everything done at work.

Respondents felt fully present at home or work less than 54% of the time.



I feel guilty for not being able to do it all. I have a great job that I'm thankful for. I want to be the best mom possible but struggle with work and caring. **STUDY PARTICIPANT**

The Burnout Study in Women has been published in *Frontiers in Psychology*: [“Understudied social influences on general and parental burnout: Social media-related emotions, comparisons, and the do it all discrepancy”](#). Study Authors: Dr. Darria Long, Dr. Christopher J. L. Cunningham, and Dr. Kristen Jennings Black.

## KEY FINDING #2: Study Coins The Do It All Discrepancy

The *Do it All Discrepancy* is the difference between how much a woman feels she is expected to / should do versus what she actually can do.

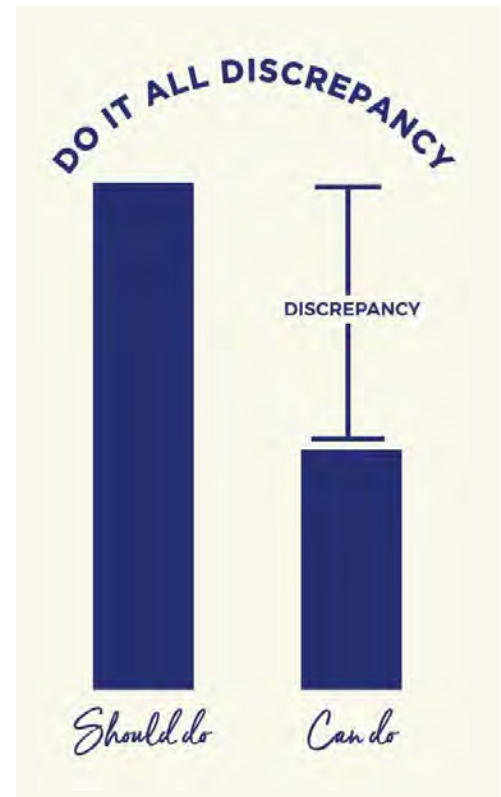
It incorporates the very real expansion of women's responsibilities, plus the idealized "do it all" expectations that have risen over the past generation. The Discrepancy also represents a new framework to visualize and discuss the specific drivers of burnout today.

“

I just feel like I'm digging my own grave most days and letting everyone down — most of all my kids.

**STUDY PARTICIPANT**

82% of moms believe they **SHOULD** be able to "do it all" – but **Only 7%** felt that they actually **COULD**.



“

The concept of the Do It All Discrepancy incorporates the real obligations women face: work, childcare, parenting, volunteering, home management... plus the idealized "do it all" expectations on top of that.

It gives us a way to illustrate and analyze how and why burnout is increasing on both an individual and macro level.

- *Dr. Parria* **FOUNDER TRUEVELAB AND STUDY CO-AUTHOR**

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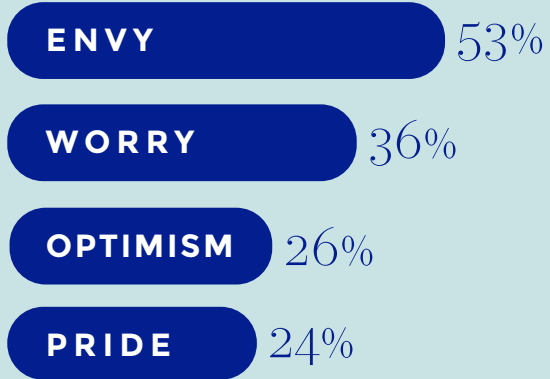
I still can't get everything done that I need or want to do. I'm feeling guilty for not being home with my kids and being the parent I want to be or that I think my kids should have.... I find value in what I do both at home and at work but feel I fall short in both those roles.” **STUDY PARTICIPANT**

### KEY FINDING #3: Study clarifies the interaction between social media and burnout

A) When using social media, women are more likely to feel negative self-comparison emotions about themselves related to others.

B) Contrary to prevailing beliefs, time spent on social media was NOT the biggest factor of burnout – women’s self-comparison emotions were stronger drivers of burnout than time spent on social media.

### The most common emotions following social media use



“The whole family is struggling to just be ‘in survival mode’ and I’m trying to hold it all together.”  
**STUDY PARTICIPANT**

# The Impact of Comparitonitis

“We have SO MANY more ways to compare ourselves to others than ever before – and much of what we see is curated or artificial. So not only are we more likely to invoke comparisons, we’re also measuring ourselves against some fictional ‘do it all’ avatar – triggering what I refer to as ‘Comparitonitis.’

*Dr. Darria*

Over 60% of women said they compare themselves against a woman who they perceive as “doing it all”.

**BUT IS ANYONE REALLY “DOING IT ALL” ANYWAY?**

“I have an overall feeling of guilt as a parent that I could be doing more or better or different, even though I don’t know exactly what else I should be doing. It’s just a general anxiety or unease of ‘am I doing enough?’” **STUDY PARTICIPANT**



## What to do about it

The Burnout Study in Women will continue to perform ongoing analytics and additional publications.

### START HERE:

- **Take the [What's Your Burnout Risk \(and what to do about it\) Quiz](#)**, with actionable and personalized guidance for you to reduce burnout now.
- **You do NOT need to “do it all”, in terms of doing “all” of someone else’s expectations.** If we react to the world by default, the world is HAPPY to let us give all the attention, focus, and energy that we can. Instead of “Doing it all”, #ChooseYourAll. YOU get to choose what is “ALL”. What is ALL to you, can be entirely different than ALL to someone else. Start by taking a moment to jot down the 3-5 things that are MOST important to you. On the flipside, what is one thing you’re doing out of a sense of obligation, but it’s not actually important to you? What steps can you take to let go of that obligation?
- **Next time you’re on social, check your emotions.** If you start to feel envy, worry, or other negative emotion, remind yourself that what you’re seeing is the “best” snippet of someone’s day. If a single ac-

count consistently makes you feel less than, realize that it’s NOT you – it’s intrinsic to social media, and unfollow accounts that bring up those emotions.

- **Wrangle the Tiny Hassles:** Many days, it’s the tiny hassles that trip us up. Get these under control ,(and out of the way of what’s important) by following the [Batch the Small S\\*\\*t \(or Small Stuff\)](#) practice.
- **At work:** Talk with your employer – two small starting steps can be to (1) limit meeting times and frequency and (2) to ask for disconnected time out of work. Research is clear that recovery requires time for employees to be engaged in activities unrelated to required work, at healthy intervals.
- **Key change for burnout also requires systematic change**, on the level of employers and policy. Authors also will be creating recommendations for employees to take.
- **Ban the #Fail meme.** It’s not a #momfail, not a #lifefail, or a #sh\*\*\*Mom moment if a woman doesn’t do something at some “ideal” level.

**Sign Up**

to receive support and recommendations based on ongoing findings of The Burnout Study.

It’s time to drop the #Fail meme. Stop using terms like #momfail, or #lifefail, or other terms that suggest that anything other than perfection is a fail.

## ABOUT THE BURNOUT STUDY IN WOMEN

The Burnout Study in Women was founded by [TrueveLab](#) in academic collaboration with the University of Tennessee Department of Industrial Organizational Psychology. Co-principal investigators were Dr. Darria Long, Dr. Christopher J. L. Cunningham, and Dr. Kristen Jennings Black. This study was funded by LUNA Bar and ComputersForKidz in an unrestricted grant, and in media partnership with Good Housekeeping. This ongoing study will release future publications, aimed at developing targeted solutions for burnout in women.

## ABOUT TRUEVE

Founded by Dr. Darria Long, Trueve is an evidence-based platform for women's and children's health, parenting, and stress. Trueve combines a scientist's mindset of seeking evidence, with an unbiased approach to look at ALL sources (from Western to Eastern medicine, holistic health, nutrition, psychology, and elsewhere). The result? True evidence-based guidance that you can understand, trust, and implement easily - so you stop surfing for health answers and get back to living - with confidence.

## ABOUT LUNA

Since 1999, LUNA ® has always stood for more than just nutritious food. With a strong heritage of supporting women, LUNA has supported important causes that women care about. LUNA Bar is a balanced, delicious, on-the-go plant-based snack for a feel-good break anytime, anywhere. Follow LUNA Bar on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

## ABOUT COMPUTERSFORKIDZ

[ComputersForKidz](#) is a non-profit organization providing students with well-loved and well-functioning computers and technology. ComputersForKidz receives technology donated by corporations and clears data, sterilizes, and makes it fully operational and available for tomorrow's student.

## ABOUT DARRIA LONG, MD MBA

[Dr. Darria](#) is a board-certified Harvard and Yale-trained emergency physician and Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Tennessee. She is a regular guest on national news networks, mom of two, author of national bestselling [Mom Hacks](#), and [TedX speaker of the widely popular, An End to "Crazy Busy"](#).

## ABOUT THE UTC RESEARCH TEAM

Dr. Christopher Cunningham and Dr. Kristen Black are faculty members at the University of Tennessee Department of Industrial Organizational Psychology. Combined, they have more than 30 years of experience in research, teaching, and practical intervention work related to the protection and promotion of worker health, safety, and well-being. They are authors of, [Essentials of Occupational Health Psychology](#), focused on practical guidance for worker health through targeting psychological stress at work, workplace safety, interpersonal stress, recovery from demands, and work-family dynamics.

