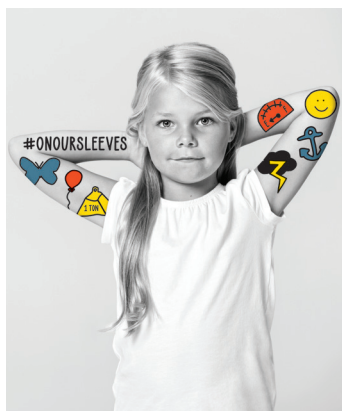


The Impact of Children's Mental Health on the Workplace

Inaugural Study with Working Parents, Research Abstract, *On Our Sleeves*, 2021

New Research Connects Children's Mental Well-being to Workplace Success



Children's mental health concerns have been hiding in plain sight for many years. It took a pandemic for them to rise to the forefront.

During the past year and a half, more children than usual have experienced stress or mental health concerns—and many children with pre-existing mental health conditions have languished, instead of improving—because

of pandemic-related social isolation, difficulties related to remote learning, fears about a new virus, racial injustice and other concerns.

Parents have quietly managed their children's mental health since before the pandemic or once it began, often without the knowledge or support of bosses or colleagues.

When company culture isn't accepting of mental health matters, working parents may feel pulled in two directions, trying to focus on their children's needs while managing their work responsibilities.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2021, *On Our Sleeves*, the movement for children's mental health, with generous funding from the Nationwide Foundation, conducted a survey of up to 1,700 working parents across the country to find out how children's mental health may affect employees' work performance and companies' success.

We learned that employers can impact employees and their families by shifting their culture and work environment to be more accepting of mental health concerns. Additionally, employers can make themselves more appealing to perspective and current employees, which survey results indicated would lead to increased productivity, higher job satisfaction and greater retention.



Working Parents Are Concerned

- **86%** believe that children struggle with their mental health.
- **86%** think that children need ways to help support their mental health.
- **78%** believe that children's mental health challenges have risen in recent years.
- **61%** became very, or extremely, concerned about children's mental health during the past two years.
- **88%** would value access to a course about children's mental health through their workplaces.



Parents Need Children's Mental Health Resources

Parents are skilled at caring for children who have a fever or upset stomach, but they don't always recognize, or seek care for, children's mental health concerns.

- **Many working parents lack the ability to recognize their own mental health concerns;** yet 72% of them believe that they would know if their children were having problems.
- **56% of working parents assume that their children would tell them** about any mental health challenges.



A Need for Openness About Mental Health At Work

There has been a longstanding disconnect between employees' perceptions of company attitudes toward mental health and real-world situations. Often, working parents whose children have mental health concerns have suffered in silence, unwilling to risk job security to help their children in need, or they've chosen to sacrifice their reputation at work to help children who needed their mental health addressed.



Many working parents have trouble fully focusing on their responsibilities when they're concerned about their children's mental health. Worrying may detract from workers' focus, attention to detail and productivity.

- **53% of working parents have missed work at least once per month** to deal with a child's mental health.
- **53% of working parents interrupted their work to help children cope with mental health concerns during business hours** while working from home during the pandemic. That's almost as many working parents who said they were interrupted to help their children with remote schooling during the pandemic (57%).
- **85% of working parents think that it's a good idea to talk about children's mental health**, but few talked to bosses (20%), the human resources department employees (23%) or colleagues (21%).
- **54% of employees aren't comfortable discussing their own mental health concerns at work**, and Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) workers may be less inclined to share their mental health concerns with colleagues or supervisors.



Methodology

A sample of 40 working parents participated in a 4-day, moderated, online discussion group in February of 2021. Participants completed online question prompts, open-ended questions, group discussions, responses to stimuli, and photo selection exercises to uncover their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors related to child mental health and being working parents.



A nationally representative sample of 1,680 working parents participated in a 25-minute online quantitative survey between March 15 – 26, 2021. Participants completed a purpose-built survey comprised of both closed- and open-ended questions asking about demographics and perceptions, attitudes and behaviors related to child mental health, workplace performance and the idea of an employer-sponsored curriculum providing support to working parents around child mental health.

Detailed findings of the study, *The Impact of Child Mental Health on the Workplace*, will be available for download at [OnOurSleeves.org](https://www.onoursleeves.org).

About On Our Sleeves

On Our Sleeves, a movement designed to break the stigma around children's mental health, was created by Nationwide Children's Hospital, home to the country's largest network of pediatric behavioral health treatment providers and researchers. *On Our Sleeves* helps to break mental health stigmas by providing free educational resources to every community in America.



To receive a copy of the detailed findings of the study, sign up at [OnOurSleeves.org](https://www.onoursleeves.org).

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The Movement for Children's Mental Health



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