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Ditch the guilt: What does every mom need to stop feeling “Mom Guilt”

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The image of what it means to be a good mom has consistently been a part of a prescribed performance of gender for women. According to this mother ideal, the mother must be the primary caregiver of children because men cannot be relied upon the duty. Child rearing logically requires extensive time, energy, and material resources, and the children are priceless and incompatible with paid labor (Hays, 996). Based on the latest U.S. Bureau of Census (2018) most mothers are employed. Around 60% of mothers with children under six are employed compared to 80% with teenagers. When it comes to mothering, guilt can emerge frequently because of the pressure to be perfect and the

perpetual feelings of inadequacy in attaining perfection. That is guilt and shame stem from the very discourse of motherhood that measures women against an unattainable and therefore problematic ideal of perfection. While the link between perfectionistic standards and negative outcomes has been established, less is known about how the dominant ideology of being a “perfect mother affects mothers’ psychological well-being. Research on working mothers has argued that they utilize cognitive acrobatics in order to manage the tension between employment and the dominant mother ideology (Johnston & Swansonn, 2007). A woman’s yearning for balance in the most desired and hardest to achieve factor (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006). The balance notion declares the need for balance across multiple areas of life. This means a woman may decline work until her children are in elementary school. Supple (2007) found in her qualitative research with

working mothers that women placed a high value on self, work, and motherhood, and relied on support systems to obtain a balanced life. However, the literature does not specify how the role of parenting and family affects the leadership expansion of working mothers.

Biography

Ashley Cosentino EdD, LCPC, NCC earned a Doctorate in Counselor Education and Supervision and a Master’s Degree in Marriage and Family Counseling from Governors State University. Currently, she is enrolled in a Ph.D. Organizational Leadership program at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Her experiences include being an Associate Director and Interim Director of training for the Office of Placement and Training where she oversees the practicum/internship training for Masters and Doctoral students. She is responsible for orienting the members of the learning community to the training site search, application, interviewing, and acceptance processes. She oversees the evaluation of student performance by site supervisors and faculty and is responsible for developing training sites and regularly evaluating the quality of training. Currently, she is also an Assistant Professor in the Counselor Education Department at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Overall, she considers herself a clinician, supervisor, researcher, leader, and educator.

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