

*Book Reviews*

blame herself for her mother's illness and to appreciate the ways in which she and her mother are both alike and different.

Painfully honest in its depiction of insidious symptoms such as hopelessness and self-punishment, Graham's memoir is an important addition to the literature of depression and an eloquent reminder of how rupture to early mother-daughter bonding has lifelong consequences.

## **From Work-Family Balance to Work-Family Interaction: *Changing the Metaphor***

Diane F. Halpern and Susan Elaine Murphy, eds.  
Mahweh, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005.

### **Book Reviewed by Justyna Sempruch**

In this collection of research studies, Diane Halpern and Susan Murphy are on a revolutionary mission to rewrite the work-life conflict into a dynamic vision of work-family interaction. Embracing research trends, potential challenges, and best practice models across employment strategies and family arrangements, they seek to foster change.

Working parents are often stressed and tired, but so are stay-at-home parents and working adults without children or other care responsibilities. In fact, current research does not support traditional assumptions about happy and relaxed stay-at-home mothers. Working women are less depressed and generally healthier and better integrated in social dimensions of life. Parents in low-paid jobs with high work demand and little control over their work patterns, however, often experience stress. Hence, Halpern and Murphy link the phenomenon of burnout to the social environment and encourage companies and organizations to invest in family friendly work policies.

Boundaries between paid work and family life have always intersected, but in light of the increasing precariousness and instability of employment, the organizational context and culture of the workplace are of crucial importance to working parents. The issues driving incompatibility between work and home make the most attractive employees less interested in professional advancement and, for the obvious reasons of security and comfort, more committed to their families.

As Halpern and Murphy show, to understand how employees respond to work-life demands we need a broad picture of the causes of work-life conflict. Such factors as cultural diversity, race, and individual differences in personality, as well as life style and resources, often determine how two individuals react to the same stressor or the same occurrences of conflict. Non-white employees

feel less safe than their white counterparts in discussing non-work issues in the workplace, and often report that their immediate supervisors are more critical of their efforts to balance work and non-work concerns.

Organizational values and sensitivity are needed in conjunction with family policies to bring about effectiveness in balancing the demands of work and home life. The foundational argument here, and perhaps the book's most valuable message, is that eliminating barriers to success implies an understanding that childcare is everyone's business. Another important issue is the lack of role models for women at the leadership level. There is also a need for quality part-time jobs, especially at the professional level, where often there is a stigma associated with part-time employment and remuneration is not proportional to the full-time rate. As paid employment is rarely optional, few families with children can afford to own a home with only one wage earner. The book's final premise is thus to redefine the research agenda: it is time to shift the negative focus (for example, the view that mothers who work full-time neglect their children) to the systematic investigation of conditions that facilitate the work-family balance. To that end, Halpern and Murphy suggest the introduction of cafeteria-style benefit programs that allow employees to craft their benefits package to meet specific family needs. Other methods are job sharing, alternative job arrangements, telecommuting, and on-site day care facilities.

## **Couples and Pregnancy: *Welcome, Unwelcome, and In-Between***

Barbara Jo Brothers, ed.  
Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 1999.

### **Reviewed by Gina Wong-Wylie**

*Couples and Pregnancy: Welcome, Unwelcome and In-Between*, published simultaneously as volume eight of the *Journal of Couples Therapy*, includes seven articles and one commentary on topics such as men's experience of grief after abortion, a therapist's awareness of a client's unwelcome pregnancy, dealing with the death of a baby, and Virginia Satir's perspective that "We are not creators of life; we are only activators" (1).

A major strength of this book is the inclusion of many case studies of couples and clients seen in therapy and clinical settings. Cultural diversity and divergent views of "family" are not included here, however. For the most part, the articles reinforce dominant perceptions and Schoenewolf's article, "Of Breasts and Men: Three Generations of Vampire Coupling," promulgates an