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Burning the Candle at Both Ends How and Why Academic Librarians Who Are Parents Experience and Combat Burnout at Work

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CHAPTER 8

Burning the Candle at Both Ends

How and Why Academic Librarians Who Are Parents Experience and Combat Burnout at Work

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ABSTRACT

Academic librarians already wear many hats, juggling a multitude of skills and duties in order to meet the needs of their patrons. When one of those hats is parenthood, however, balancing work and home life can sometimes seem like an insurmountable task. In this chapter we explore how and why academic librarians who are also parents experience burnout, as well as methods used to

combat burnout by examining the results of a nationally distributed mixed-methods survey. The survey also addresses practices to combat and prevent burnout, both on a personal and institutional level, and the perceptions of their effectiveness.

Keywords: library workers, librarians, burnout, academic libraries, postsecondary institutions, parents, children, work–life balance, working parents, job stress

Introduction

At the time that the email indicating the acceptance of this chapter's proposal came through, one of the authors was anxiously awaiting confirmation of another kind. A message had come in through her daycare's app. Her daughter was constipated and had been trying to "go" for 20 minutes. A flurry of texts between the parents resulted in Dad being tasked with taking a pouch of pear puree to help things along. And aside from the relief at word of her daughter's relief, what else did Mom feel? A nagging sense of guilt due to the knowledge that on that day she chose the mounting ILL (interlibrary loan) requests, the reference desk shift, the committee meeting—that is, her work, her patrons—over being the help for her child. And what about the next time work and family collided? As that author snuggled a feverish toddler while watching Daniel Tiger espouse the merits of sharing, thoughts drifted to e-mails and mending citations for patrons before sending their requests into the ether. And there was the guilt again. It cried out against her leaving patrons' requests untouched for another day when they surely needed the materials for their research.

Three months after giving birth, another of the authors returned to work after blowing through all her saved vacation and sick leave and found herself pumping breast milk during virtual meetings. At the time, she was the vice chair of a statewide committee and her scheduled meetings coincided with her pumping times. She hoped that none of her colleagues could hear the hiss and thump of her breast pump as she spoke about consortial issues. And prayed the 18-by-24-inch sign on her door that shouted "do not enter" would stop people from knocking or entering her office when she just needed to relax to produce more milk. The need to pump was constant as missing a session can cause lack of supply and intense pain—not to mention the awkwardness of asking for a safe place to pump while attending conferences: random offices and break rooms and hoping that no one barges in. All of this combined with the lack of sleep all new parents deal with was enough to feel like she was at a breaking point.

And so it goes for so many parents who are academic librarians. Or academic librarians who are parents. The identities are interchangeably and inexorably linked. We note that for the purposes of this study, we define *academic librarian* as anyone who engages or has engaged in library-related work at a postsecondary educational institution. Library assistants, clerks, pages, and part-timers were welcome and encouraged to take part in this study. With constant tugs on their time and attention, these working parents feel

symptoms of burnout begin to creep in. Exhaustion, stress, and a sense of being over-whelmed, those feelings come, wholly unwelcome and achingly familiar. Wood et al. (2020) noted the importance of the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) for its international focus and reliability in measuring workplace burnout. The CBI defines burnout as "prolonged physical and psychological exhaustion" and breaks burnout into three separate areas: personal, work-related, and client-related (Borritz & Kristensen, 2004, p. 2). With the understanding that Wood et al.'s (2020) results using the CBI show a high percentage of burnout among academic librarians, the authors created a mixed-methods survey to explore various aspects of how academic librarians who are parents perceive their burn-out, to what extent they experience burnout, and what they believe contributes to that burnout. The study also hopes to show which mitigating strategies burned-out parents found the most helpful.

Literature Review

Studies recognizing librarian burnout did not begin in earnest until the 2000s. These studies revealed both that librarians occupied positions that were highly stressful and prone to burnout (Wood et al., 2020; Baird & Baird, 2005; Petek, 2018). Despite this acknowledgment, few studies since looked to probe the extent or causes of burnout among librarians. Of those that did, Wood et al. (2020) used the CBI to examine predictors of burnout and found that women between the ages of 25 to 44 were significantly more likely to experience burnout despite the overall prevalence of burnout throughout the profession. An earlier study by Adebayo et al. (2018) did not find that similar demographic differences contributed to librarian burnout, and other studies reached the same conclusion. However, none of these studies used the CBI to determine the level of burnout experienced by librarians, making comparison difficult. One study (Colón-Aguirre & Webb, 2020), in addition to administering the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to academic librarians, included a question regarding the number of children per household in its demographic section. The results showed fewer burnout-related traits among parents than among the respondents without children. Additionally, unlike most studies surveying librarians using the MBI and other burnout assessment tests, Colón-Aguirre & Webb (2020) did not find that academic librarians generally experience burnout. This directly contradicts other recent studies showing a significant level of burnout among academic librarians, including Wood et al.'s (2020) study, which showed "almost 50% of academic librarians are experiencing work-related burnout" (pp. 520–521).

Several studies noted a perceived disparity in work–life balance as a cause of burn-out in the workplace (Wood et al., 2020; Blunch et al., 2020; Mulvaney et al., 2011). In a study on female academic librarians' career progression, Rutledge (2020) discovered that participants found the demands of caring for a family to be a major reason for career stagnation. Other commonly indicated causes of occupational burnout among librarians include scheduling concerns such as unpredictable schedules or inflexible scheduling options (Adebayo et al., 2018; Henly et al., 2006; Kendrick, 2017) and the increasing expectations for librarians to wear many hats and do more with less in the

face of shrinking budgets and staffing shortfalls (Campbell, 2008; Ford, 2019). Ford (2019) interviewed Fobazi Ettarh, originator of "vocational awe" (Ettarh, 2018), who stated:

> Mission creep is definitely a major problem in librarianship. You start off with a certain set of duties, and then "other duties as assigned" become a bigger and bigger part of your job. Since your colleagues are doing this extra work, if you do only what's in your job description, you're seen as doing "less than," even though that's what you were technically hired for. (p. 46)

Related to mission creep, Becker (1993) pointed out additional sources of stress for bibliographic or "front of house" librarians whose jobs are characterized by "repetitiveness" and "work overload, lack of control, poor peer relations, poor communication with supervisors, and distressing institutional plans, policies, and procedures" (p. 351). Most, if not all, of the literature cited above rarely focused on how the organization could contribute to or alleviate burnout. If the topic was mentioned, it was in passing. The literature did list mitigation strategies but focused on how the burned-out person could find ways to better the situation themselves.

There is significant literature regarding working parents' relationship to occupational burnout despite the lack of literature actively dedicated to the intersection of burnout felt by librarians who are also parents. The few mentions of parental burnout suffered by academic librarians appear as assumptions related to the gender of respondents—that is, that women experience a higher rate of burnout in part because traditionally a higher level of child rearing duties fall on women (Wood et al., 2020)—or note that burnout among academic librarians who are parents needs to be explored in further research (Galbraith et al., 2016). Harwell (2008), writing from personal experience, explained that the pressures of "ongoing family care needs coupled with the struggle for tenure and constant upheaval associated with library renovations left me exhausted over a long period of time" (p. 386). Sinno and Killen (2011) called this phenomenon second shift parenting in their study. They defined second shift parenting as "a phenomenon in which working mothers are expected to function as the primary caretaker in the home regardless of employment status" (p. 314). Wood et al. (2020) also suggested "there is a correlation between a 'second shift' family caretaking role and academic librarian burnout" (p. 526).

Many studies on burnout and its adjacent topics of morale or workplace stress and strain among working parents found that adequate childcare opportunities aided significantly in lessening strain (Scharlach, 2001; Robinson et al., 2016). Furthermore, age of children played a role in the level of burnout (Mikolajczak et al., 2018; Scharlach, 2001). Even in workplaces with elevated levels of support for working parents, Scharlach (2001) noted that parents of children under 6 (requiring significantly more hands-on care than their older counterparts) still experienced strain at higher levels than of parents with older children. If parental duties are contributing in a significant way to burnout among

librarians, then the three distinct areas of the CBI might have more overlap than previously explored.

We would be remiss if we did not address that our data were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of this writing, a great deal of literature regarding the intersection of childcare and work responsibilities throughout the pandemic has been produced. In March 2020, suddenly parents were expected to be childcare and teachers and work their full-time jobs at the same time. This sparked much new literature on parental burnout. Tamo (2020) described what normal life looks like for parents in the pandemic, stating:

> The family became the central place for children to study and be taken care of from home requiring parental involvement in the virtual school environment, communication, use of time, frustration, satisfaction, information needs for a good quality academic and socioemotional development between the parent and the child. (pp. 1349–1350)

Caregivers are expected to juggle a myriad of tasks on top of work-related responsibilities. Another contributing factor to parental burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic was the "increased inability to separate work and private life, the closure of schools and child-care services has increased parental demands for employees, further blurring the lines between work and family spheres" (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020, p. 183). The inability to separate work from home life is causing more stress to working parents.

Methodology

As little literature has examined the relationship between academic library workers who are parents and their burnout experience, this study examines this demographic to determine the level to which they are experiencing personal and career burnout and to what extent they feel their parental burnout contributes to workplace burnout. In addition, the study examines the level of parental support available at academic institutions to determine whether institutional efforts have any effect on parental burnout, career burnout, or both. By studying the level of overlap and the efficacy of institutional solutions for academic librarians who are also parents, important revelations about burnout among academic librarians and how to combat it can be discovered and researched further.

The authors designed a mixed-methods survey instrument for academic librarians who are parents following similar previous survey instruments (Adebayo et al., 2018; Galbraith et al., 2016; House, 2018; Kendrick, 2017) and used the CBI definitions to define both parental and academic burnout. The instrument began with a series of three qualifying questions (Figure 8.1) designed to eliminate participants who did not work in an academic library environment while caring for minor children.
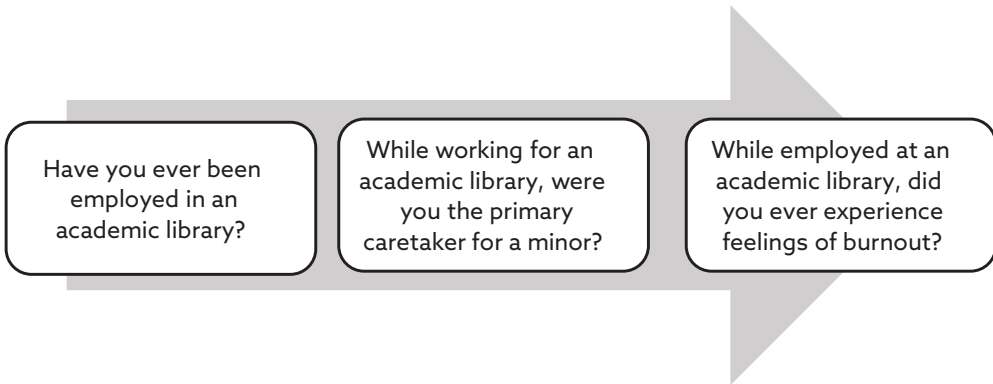
Figure 8.1
Survey Instrument: Qualifying Questions

Remaining participants divided themselves into two separate categories: those who indicated they had suffered burnout and those who had not suffered burnout (Figure 8.2). From there, the two groups answered a series of similar questions from three separate sections referred to as "work strategies," "on parenting," and "demographics." See the Appendix for the details of each section.
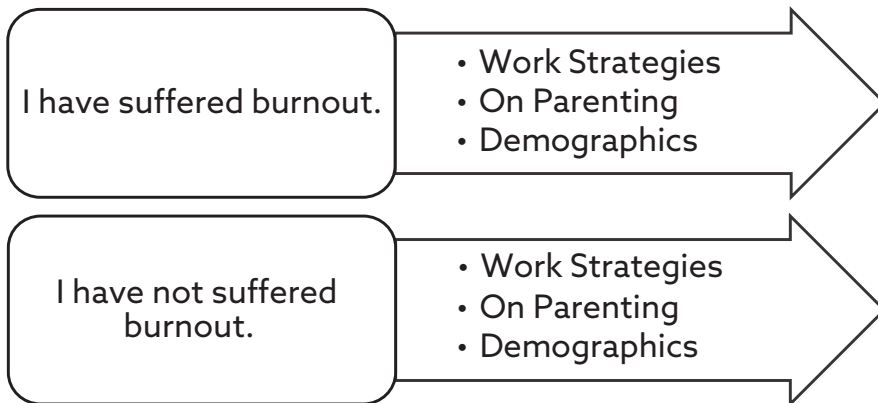
Figure 8.2
Survey Instrument: Survey Flow

The survey was distributed to several nationwide and regional e-mail distribution groups and online social media groups during February and March of 2021 so that it would receive responses from a wide variety of academic librarians. The regional e-mail distribution groups that were contacted were the Georgia Library Association List, Tennessee Library Association List and the Southeastern Librarian Association List. The national e-mail distribution groups were the Electronic Resources and Libraries list, LIBLicense, the ACQ list, OLAC, AutoCat, ALA General, ACRL general, ALA University Libraries, ALA Instruction, and the ILL list. Online groups contacted included Facebook groups

such as ALA Think Tank, The Professor Is In, and the Library Parents Group, as well as the Reddit communities r/libraries and r/librarians. Each group received regular reminders throughout the survey period. As a result, the survey received 684 complete responses (and an additional 253 incomplete responses), though calculating a specific response rate for the survey is nearly impossible, given the fluid membership of all the e-mail distribution lists and groups.

Because the study is an initial examination of the possibility that a connection between being a parent and career burnout among librarians exists, the study used descriptive statistical analyses including top choices and percentage to examine the results for the quantitative survey data. For the qualitative short-answer components, the replies were searched to find replies that addressed any trends from the qualitative data, either in support or against them. All the analyses seek to determine the extent to which parental burnout and career burnout affect each other. In addition, analyses will also be done to see the extent to which personal coping strategies and institutional support help alleviate or eliminate either aspect of burnout among academic librarians who are also parents.

Results and Discussion

Our survey results found that nearly 90% of all respondents ($n = 747$, Figure 8.3) experienced some form of burnout during their time working in academic libraries, though 10% ($n = 85$) had not. Despite the findings in Galbraith et al. (2016), which suggested that academic librarian parents were not experiencing burnout, our survey indicates this group experiences burnout at an exceptionally high rate.

Respondents who indicated that they had experienced burnout tended to reflect traditional ideas about the demographics of the academic library profession (Table 8.1). Though the survey was open to all levels of library workers, most respondents who experienced work burnout had a master's in library science or its equivalent (84%, $n = 523$), and less than 1% ($n = 5$) had less than a bachelor's degree. This mapped to 81% ($n = 496$) responding that their positions require an MLIS.
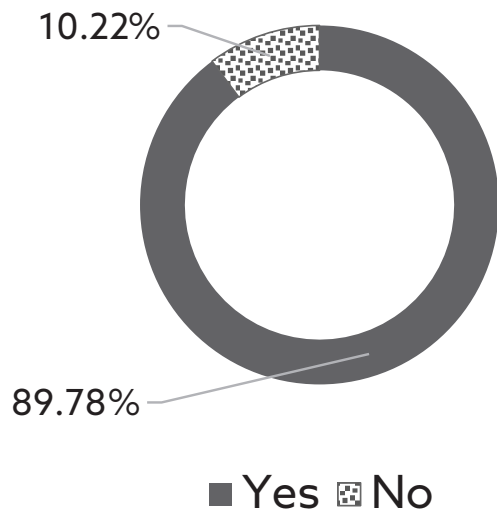

Figure 8.3

While Employed in an Academic Library, Did You Ever Experience Feelings of Burnout at Work?

TABLE 8.1

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents Experiencing Burnout

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
	n	%
Race	*N* = 636	
American Indian or Alaska Native	7	1.1
Asian	29	4.6
Black or African American	35	5.5
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4	0.6
White	549	86.3
Other	12	1.9
Gender	*N* = 536	
Cis female or female	451	84.1
Cis male or male	72	13.4
Other gender identities	13	2.4
Education level	*N* = 619	
Doctoral degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)	34	5.5
Master's degree (MLIS, etc.)	523	84.5
Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S.)	57	9.2
Associate's degree (A.A., A.S.)	3	0.5
No higher education degree	2	0.3

Note: This table demonstrates the demographic characteristics of survey respondents who indicated experiencing burnout.

Those who indicated they had not experienced burnout were demographically similar to the previous group. They were 83% White (*n* = 57), 6% Black (*n* = 4), and 4% Asian (*n* = 3). They also identified as cisgender women or women slightly less than the burnt-out respondents (68%, *n* = 39) with 25% (*n* = 14) identifying as cisgender men or men and 5% (*n* = 3) including other gender identities. Slightly less of the group who had not experienced burnout held a master's in library science degree or higher (78%, *n* = 54, Table 8.1) while 22% (*n* = 15) had a bachelor's degree or lower.

Among respondents who said they had experienced some form of burnout during their time in academic libraries, 87% (*n* = 547, Table 8.2) said that being a parent definitely or probably contributed to burnout at work. Only 5% (*n* = 33) said that it probably did not or definitely did not contribute to their burnout at work. These results show that the stressors of burnout among academic librarians who are parents might mirror the "second shift" mentality noted by Wood et al. (2020) and Sinno and Killen (2011). Interestingly though,

among the respondents who said they had not experienced burnout at work, nearly 70% indicated they definitely or probably had experienced some form of parental burnout.

TABLE 8.2

Do You Believe Being a Parent Contributed to Feelings of Burnout at Work? (Yes to Work Burnout)

Answer	Number	Percentage
	n	%
Definitely yes	300	48.08
Probably yes	247	39.58
Neutral	44	7.05
Probably not	26	4.17
Definitely not	7	1.12

Note: *N* = 624

Yet despite those high numbers, only 35% (Table 8.3) suggested that work contributed to their parental burnout. This aligns with Mikolajczak et al.'s (2020) results showing that "parental burnout actually increases job satisfaction" (p. 686) and could also indicate that stressors of one's career are less likely to spill over into one's home life if one is not experiencing burnout there as well. Conversely, respondents who said they had experienced burnout at work indicated that their work was contributing to their parental burnout, with nearly 86% (*n* = 533) reporting that it definitely or probably contributed and only 4% suggesting that it probably did not or definitely did not contribute to their burnout.

TABLE 8.3

Do You Feel That Work Contributed to Your Parental Burnout in Any Way? (No to Work Burnout)

Answer	Number	Percentage
	n	%
Definitely yes	7	10.29
Probably yes	17	25.00
Neutral	21	30.88
Probably not	15	22.06
Definitely not	8	11.76

Note: *N* = 68

The qualitative comments supported the quantitative findings, with several commenters identifying the "second shift" outlook toward working as a parent. One commenter noted:

> I feel that it is hard to give my children the parental attention they deserve because by the time I get home from a typical 7–5 work week I barely see them, weekends I get off but that is playing catch up on chores that get overpassed because of lack of time. I am unable to attend school events because I cannot miss work. I spread appts for my kids out as long as possible because I cannot miss work and thus skip my own whenever possible to give them the little time I can.

Several other commenters noted how often they had to choose between either work or school and parenting and how much guilt and extra exhaustion their choices have brought upon them.

Regarding strategies to combat burnout (Figures 8.4 & 8.5), among the respondents who said they had experienced burnout in the past, the clear favorite personal strategy for reducing burnout was exercise at 16% ($n = 97$), though other popular choices included making sure to take accrued personal leave (13%, $n = 79$) and communicating or commiserating with other working parents (10%, $n = 69$). For many parents the "second shift" that Sinno and Killen (2011) researched was another prominent point in our survey responses. There is no break for parents when they go home to their "other job." One respondent said:

> I just feel like I never get a break. I'm at work all day, and then I go home to my second job—being mommy. And add in the pandemic, I can't even go anywhere to escape. I'm always either in my office, in my car, or in my house with the kids. Most days I want to cry.

Another respondent said that the pandemic made the "second shift" aspect of the work–life balance even worse. Trying to fit in schooling for children and get work done on top of normal household duties was "mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausting."
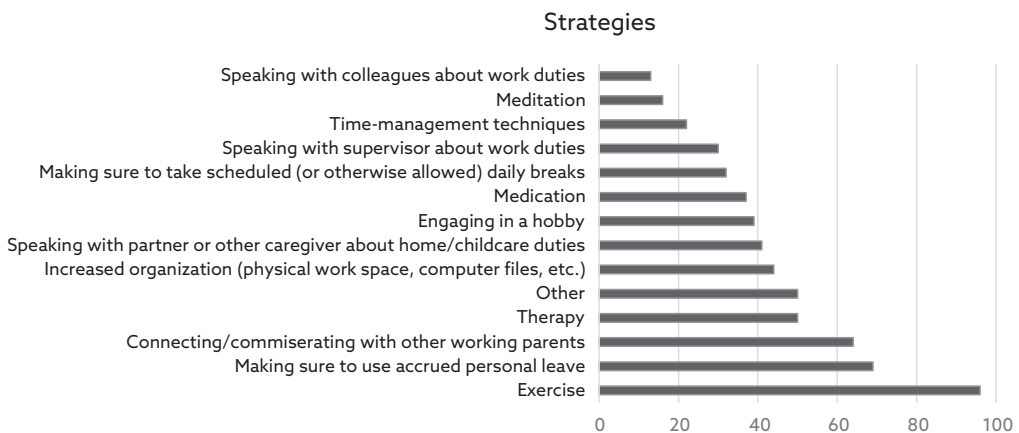

Figure 8.4
Most Successful Strategies to Mitigate Burnout
(Yes to Experiencing Burnout)

Strategies

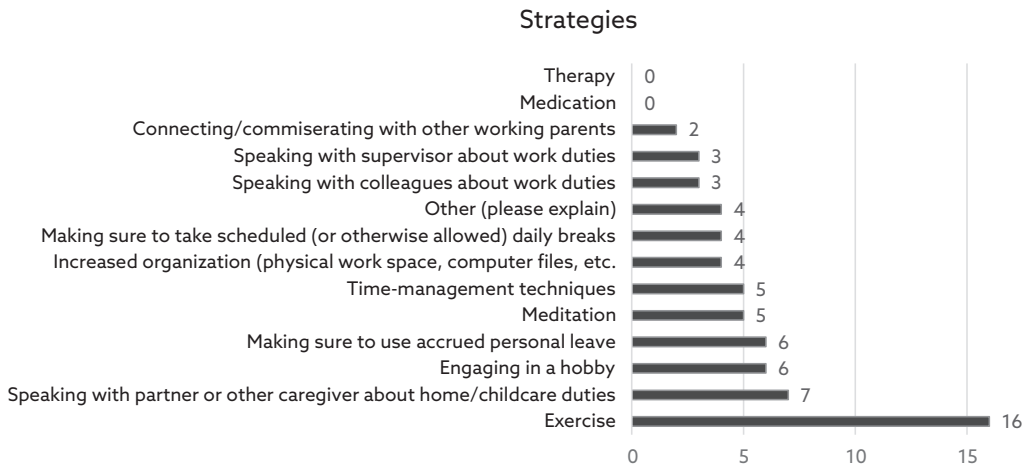| Strategy	Value
Therapy	0
Medication	0
Connecting/commiserating with other working parents	2
Speaking with supervisor about work duties	3
Speaking with colleagues about work duties	3
Other (please explain)	4
Making sure to take scheduled (or otherwise allowed) daily breaks	4
Increased organization (physical work space, computer files, etc.	4
Time-management techniques	5
Meditation	5
Making sure to use accrued personal leave	6
Engaging in a hobby	6
Speaking with partner or other caregiver about home/childcare duties	7
Exercise	16

Figure 8.5

Most Successful Strategies to Mitigate Burnout
(No to Experiencing Burnout)

The qualitative responses to what strategies were most helpful in mitigating burnout supplied interesting results. Though it was not an option to select in the quantitative responses, nearly one in five respondents who supplied a comment ($n = 20$) noted that nothing was working to reduce their level of burnout at work. Among respondents who suggested that they were experiencing burnout and that their work burnout was affected by being a parent ($n = 544$, Table 8.4), feelings about the level of institutional support were evenly split, with 38% ($n = 207$) rating it above average, 31% ($n = 168$) rating it as average, and 32% ($n = 169$) rating it below average. With burnout rising among academic librarians, along with the increased bleed over into their personal lives, finding strategies to prevent burnout is important. It is also important to note that some commenters brought up the idea that personal efforts will do little to end burnout if larger systemic and administrative problems are not addressed first. As one commenter noted: "You can personally do all the items listed, but when departmental or institutional policies don't help working parents, nothing will help." Though burnout can sometimes be mitigated through coping strategies, respondents noted how much more important quality institutional support being available was for mitigating their burnout both at work and at home. Institutions and administration can do more to alleviate burnout, such as allowing for flexible schedules, work-from-home time, on-site childcare, paid sick leave, and paid parental leave, to name a few options that would benefit all parents.

TABLE 8.4

Feelings About Institutional Support Among Those Experiencing Burnout Who Said Work Burnout Was Affected by Being a Parent

Answer	Number	Percentage
	n	*%*
Excellent, goes above and beyond	25	4.60
Good, better than most	182	33.46
Average	168	30.88
Could be better, more support options are needed	119	21.88
Poor, I do not feel supported as a parent/caregiver	50	9.19
Note: *N* = 544		

Among those who rated support as below average, most available programs tended to be legally mandated by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), such as unpaid time off, as opposed to other programs such as flexible scheduling options or paid time off for the birth of a child (Table 8.5).

TABLE 8.5

Most Commonly Available Programs to Those Who Rated Institutional Support as Below Average

Answer	Number	Percentage
	n	*%*
Accrued paid sick leave can be used for medical care of child.	133	18.73
Employee Assistance Program (EAP) includes resources for parents.	54	7.61
Flexible scheduling opportunities.	63	8.87
Gender Neutral/Family/All Gender Bathrooms in the library.	46	6.48
Option for additional unpaid leave (beyond FMLA) due to the birth or adoption of a child.	43	6.06
Option for paid parental leave due to the birth or adoption of a child.	43	6.06
Standard unpaid FMLA leave allowance for birth or adoption of a child.	102	14.37
Work-from-home opportunities.	43	6.06
Note: *N* = 710.		

The support programs provided by the institutions varied widely, with similar responses from those who said they had burnout and those who said they did not. Among the respondents who said they had not experienced work or parental burnout ($n = 66$, Table 8.6), the three most common options available to them from their institutions were that accrued paid sick leave could be used to care for a child (18%, $n = 12$), flexible scheduling opportunities (12%, $n = 8$), and the option for paid parental support leave for the birth of a child (10%, $n = 7$). Interestingly, two of the three options are the same when looking at individuals that were burnt out and felt that their work burnout was contributing to their parental burnout. Both accrued paid sick leave and flexible scheduling opportunities were the most common options available to this group, but the availability of paid sick leave for the birth of a child was far less common in those experiencing burnout at work (6%, $n = 43$, compared to 10%, $n = 7$) than in the group experiencing no burnout. However, when examining those who say their level of institutional support for parents could be better or is poor, the available options drop off sharply, leaving only the ability to use sick leave on the care of a child (18%, $n = 133$) and the FMLA (14%, $n = 102$) as the most available options at their institutions.

TABLE 8.6

Most Commonly Available Programs to Those Not Experiencing Work or Parental Burnout

Answer	Number	Percentage
	n	%
Accrued paid sick leave can be used for medical care of child.	12	18.18
Flexible scheduling opportunities.	8	12.12
Option for paid parental leave due to the birth of a child.	7	10.61
Standard unpaid FMLA leave allowance for birth or adoption of a child.	2	3.03
Work-from-home opportunities.	6	9.09
Note: N = 66		

Respondents who commented on the institutional support options available to them confirmed the helpfulness of flexible scheduling, especially when it includes trust from your supervisor. One reply noted that their "flexibility has been accompanied by a level of trust and respect which I have not had the privilege of experiencing in other workplaces," while another bemoaned the lack of trust at a previous position, where they "had to report my time in 15 min increments and couldn't schedule work from home days in advance." Another important aspect of the institutional support options that respondents spoke about was the level to which these support options had appeared during the pandemic and how much the librarians hoped they would remain after the pandemic has ended. One commenter summed up this feeling succinctly, saying "Prior to the pandemic there

was very little room for flexible scheduling and work from home opportunities that would assist with childcare." As noted, most respondents who did not experience burnout rated this as important. They went on to say, "Hopefully, this will change in the future."

We cannot ignore the fact that this survey on parental burnout was sent out during the first global pandemic in 100 years. As we did not ask specific questions regarding the pandemic, it is hard to establish whether people were experiencing parental burnout more now that many were expected to be school teachers or caretakers while also completing their job duties or if the pandemic just exacerbated the burnout that was brewing beneath the surface.

Conclusions

Burnout among academic librarians who are parents does not limit itself to just one of three areas of the CBI. As shown by our survey, burnout can affect work life and personal life and be worsened by both at the same time. Many of the studies referenced focus on personal mitigation strategies for combating burnout. However, there are larger systemic issues that add to stressors that result in burnout. Systemic issues that contribute to burnout are lack of flexible scheduling, paid time off, and parental leave. Out of library staff, non-tenure-track librarians, and tenure-track librarians, the tenure-track librarians were slightly more burnt out than the other groups. In general, mitigation strategies such as taking time off and finding ways to relieve stressors can help alleviate burnout. However, there needs to be focus on systemic issues to ultimately eliminate burnout.

Parents are at a unique disadvantage compared to those who are nonparents. "Work" does not stop once you get home from your job. The "second shift" reality also contributes extensively to the burden of juggling two jobs simultaneously. The implications for the library profession if systemic issues resulting in burnout are not addressed could cause a brain drain and push individuals to leave the profession or at the minimum result in employees who are frustrated and not performing their best. Administrators and institutions need to work together in an effort to curb burnout by putting into place programs and schedules that allow parents to handle both jobs successfully. Without administration support, burnout will continue to plague academic library workers.

Further Research

As responses rolled in to our survey, we realized we had only scratched the surface of research opportunities into burnout among librarians who are parents. While we limited our survey to parents of children under the age of 18, expanding the definition of what constitutes a caregiver to include people who provide that type of "second shift" care to all household members—especially those who are aging, ill, or disabled—warrants additional research. Indeed, while soliciting survey responses we had multiple people reach out to us who were disappointed that, due to our limitations, they were not able to tell their own story. Additionally, while we largely focused on how the demands of parenting

can contribute to occupational burnout, further research focusing on the reverse (that is, how the demands of librarianship affect caregivers) would be useful and informative.

Another avenue for research would be to explore in greater detail the part demographics play, particularly regarding minorities in gender, race, and sexual preferences. Also, because we distinctly noted a higher percentage of parents in tenure-track positions indicated occupational burnout (95% of tenure-track indicated burnout, vs. 88% and 87% of nontenured faculty and nonfaculty staff, respectively), a further exploration in balancing the demands of tenure with caregiving is needed.

Finally, as indicated, the results we received were obtained during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may well have worsened the level of burnout indicated by respondents. Many commenters expressed that it was almost impossible to view their current state of burnout without using a COVID-19 lens. As one respondent stated:

> My responses to this survey are coming after a year of the covid-19 pandemic. I haven't felt parent-related burnout like this since my two children were infants. They are elementary aged now and doing virtual school at home, and these unique circumstances are resulting in a unique pandemic-related burnout. I don't see how you can discuss burnout now without factoring in the pandemic.

Though this was the case for some, others replied that they had not thought as much about the effect of the pandemic on their level of burnout at home, with one even reporting that the survey was the first time they thought about connecting the two. Even so, a comparison of these results to a duplicated (or expanded) study in perhaps a few years' time could potentially yield useful information regarding the effects of the pandemic and what burnout is like for caregivers in relatively normal times.

APPENDIX

Work Strategies

1. Aside from your primary work duties, what other work-related activities do you or are you expected to participate in? Check all that apply.

2. Have you ever attempted any of these methods to help prevent the onset of burn-out at work? Check all that apply.

   a. If "none of the above" is NOT selected: Which of the following strategies did you find most helpful?

   b. What comments do you have on the effectiveness on strategies to prevent burnout that you have taken?

3. What options are provided for parental support from your institution? Check all that apply.

4. What comments do you have on the options for parental support from your institution?

5. Do you feel that you are appropriately compensated for the work you do?

Burnout Group Only

6. Please provide 1–3 words to describe symptoms of your burnout

7. Which of the following have contributed to feelings of burnout at work? Check all that apply.

On Parenting

8. Have you ever had to say "no" to something at work because of obligations to your child(ren)?

9. Have you ever had to decline or miss something for your child(ren) because of work obligations?

10. Have you ever experienced parental burnout?

11. Do you feel that work contributed to your parental burnout in any way?

12. What comments do you have about your duties as a parent or primary caregiver and their relationship to your feelings of burnout?

Burnout Group Only

13. Do you believe being a parent contributed to feelings of burnout at work?

Demographics

14. What is your racial background?

15. Are you a person of Hispanic or Latinx origin?

16. What is your age range?

17. Please fill in your sexual orientation.

18. Please fill in your gender identity.

19. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

20. What state do you work in?

21. If you selected N/A please fill in your location.

22. What type of institution do you work for?

23. Are you full or part time?

24. How is your position classified?

25. Does your position require an MLS or equivalent?

26. What is your pay range?

27. What type of position do you hold (patron facing, tech services, combo)?

28. How many years have you been employed in higher education?

29. Are you a supervisor?

30. How many employees do you supervise?

31. What type of employee(s) do you supervise?

32. Please identify the number of parental figures in your household.

33. How many children do you have?

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