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## How COVID-19 has Impacted Mothers: The Decisions they Make & their Overall Wellbeing

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## **Abstract**

Women and mothers are a vital component of the modern-day workforce. However, the emergence of COVID-19 in early 2020 drastically affected the way women and more specifically mothers can participate in the workforce. The lack of adequate options regarding childcare, work flexibility, and support became apparent when trying to make decisions regarding home and work. For example, decisions involving money became do or die as mothers were forced to make decisions to pause or stop their careers so that they could take care of their children in dual households. In contrast, single mothers were met with almost no alternatives as they must work to survive and provide for their children. In addition, women of color and other minority women were negatively impacted by COVID-19 at a disproportionately higher rate. These findings are borne out of an analysis of 150 newspaper articles collected between March 13, 2020 and March 9, 2021 regarding mothers in the formal workforce and the impact the unfolding pandemic had on them during 2020. The thematic analysis reveals that women's wellbeing during this period exponentially increased the incidences of burnout, stress, and sleep deprivation, which had already become "normalized" for many working mothers. It has become increasingly important for working women and mothers to invest in different forms of selfcare as an act of self-preservation. Consequently, during this session, highlights of better and best practices will be shared from those that have emerged over the course of the first full year of the pandemic.

*Keywords: women, mothers, COVID-19, home- and work-life decisions, workforce, childcare, wellbeing, stress*