

# PSYCHOLOGY TODAY Column by “Our (In)visible Work” Authors Cites Growing Recognition of Burden & Pressure of Parenting

*Dr. Janelle E. Wells & Dr. Doreen MacAulay write that the invisible work of parenting is increasingly recognized in popular culture and public health warnings*



TAMPA, FL, UNITED STATES, October 14, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new Psychology Today column by authors,

academics, and workplace experts Janelle E. Wells, Ph.D., and Doreen MacAulay, Ph.D., reveals that our society is slowly recognizing the silent health crisis created by the stress associated with the invisible work that parents, usually mothers, confront when caring for their children. This

'invisible work' refers to the countless tasks and responsibilities undertaken without recognition or compensation.

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*Dr. Wells and Dr. MacAulay*

The authors write that the rise of dual-income and single-parent households places “additional strain on parents, who juggle work responsibilities with the demands of raising children. Additionally, the advent of social media has intensified the pressure to present a picture-perfect image of parenthood, further fueling the invisible workload.”

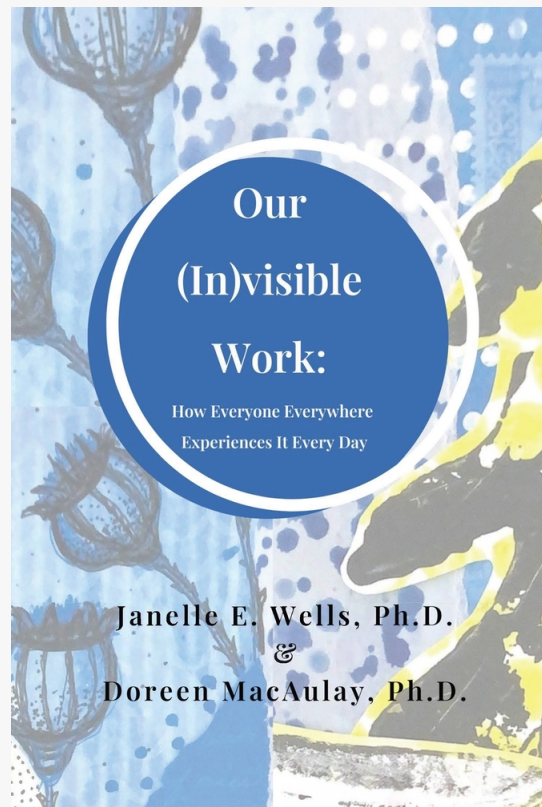
In August, Dr. Wells and Dr. MacAulay published a new book, *Our (In)visible Work*, which examines the causes and dangers of invisible work in our society. Their extensive research and expertise explain how unseen labor often forces people to undertake chores, duties, and responsibilities without recognition or compensation and cite the consequences of doing so. The consequential new book, *Our (In)visible Work*, is available [HERE](#).

In the Psychology Today column, available at <https://wellsquest.com/ourinvisiblework/>, the authors assert that the “ghost hours of parenting” are a silent health epidemic. They note a survey (<https://www.skylightframe.com/mental-load-report/>) by Harris Poll and Skylight found that if U.S. parents were compensated for the “parental mental load” of managing their households, they would collectively earn \$3.8 trillion annually, or about \$60,000 for the average of 30.4 hours per week that parents spend coordinating family schedules and household tasks.

In July, singer Katy Perry released a [music video](#), “Women’s World,” showing a mother – still in her pearls and soft pink work jacket – washing dishes at the kitchen sink as Perry marches behind her, muscles flexed, and the music rolls as Perry sings optimistically: “It’s a woman’s world, and you’re lucky to be living in it.” In August, during the Olympics, Downy aired a commercial showing a father, likely a remote worker, stepping through a threshold in his home to help his wife with laundry and childcare, as a male narrator opined: “Sometimes your work shift needs to be for more than just work.”

The New Yorker magazine published an [evocative, multi-layered cover](#) for its September issue by artist R. Kikuo Johnson. It showed a mother of color on a park bench, presumably taking care of a White mother’s child, as she showed a photo of her own child in cap-and-gown to another nanny of color, who held a red-haired girl’s scooter. It spoke to the dynamics of a working mother outsourcing the caring of her child to another working mother so she could do her job, as the nanny worked to support her child.

U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released a public health advisory, “Parents Under Pressure,” (<https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/parents/index.html>) disclosing that 48% of parents say that most days “their stress is completely overwhelming,” managing their homes, caring for children and juggling countless responsibilities. “Parents are at their wits’ end,” Murthy says. Some 33% of parents report “high levels of stress” compared to 20% of other



Dr. Janelle Wells and Dr. Doreen MacAulay

adults.

Dr. Wells and Dr. MacAulay write that American society must recognize and value the invisible labor of parenting by acknowledging the time, effort, and emotional investment that parents pour into their families. It means appreciating the countless tasks that often go unnoticed and uncompensated. This recognition would be a crucial step towards creating a healthier family environment. They also write that parents need a more supportive environment, including policies like paid parental leave, affordable childcare, flexible work arrangements, and established work-life boundaries. Further, they assert, "We must challenge the societal expectations that perpetuate the myth of the 'supermom.'"

In conclusion, Dr. Wells and Dr. MacAulay maintain that society needs to support initiatives that aim to quantify and compensate for the invisible labor of parenting, like financial compensation to stay-at-home parents or tax breaks for childcare expenses.

"The ghost hours of parenting are a silent health epidemic, but they don't have to be, as the recognition by singer Katy Perry and the U.S. Surgeon General reveal," the authors write in Psychology Today. "By shining a light on this invisible labor, we can create a healthier environment for families."

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The authors have created a groundbreaking interactive web space (<https://wellsquest.com/ourinvisiblework/>) as a platform designed with empathy to foster a sense of community and understanding among those who endure invisible work.

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For broadcast or print interviews with Dr. Wells and Dr. MacAulay regarding their new book, Our (In)visible Work, please contact Michael Frisby at [Mike@frisbyassociates.com](mailto:Mike@frisbyassociates.com) or 202-625-4328. Digital copies are available now for reviews.

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