

Finding the Right Work-Life Balance for You

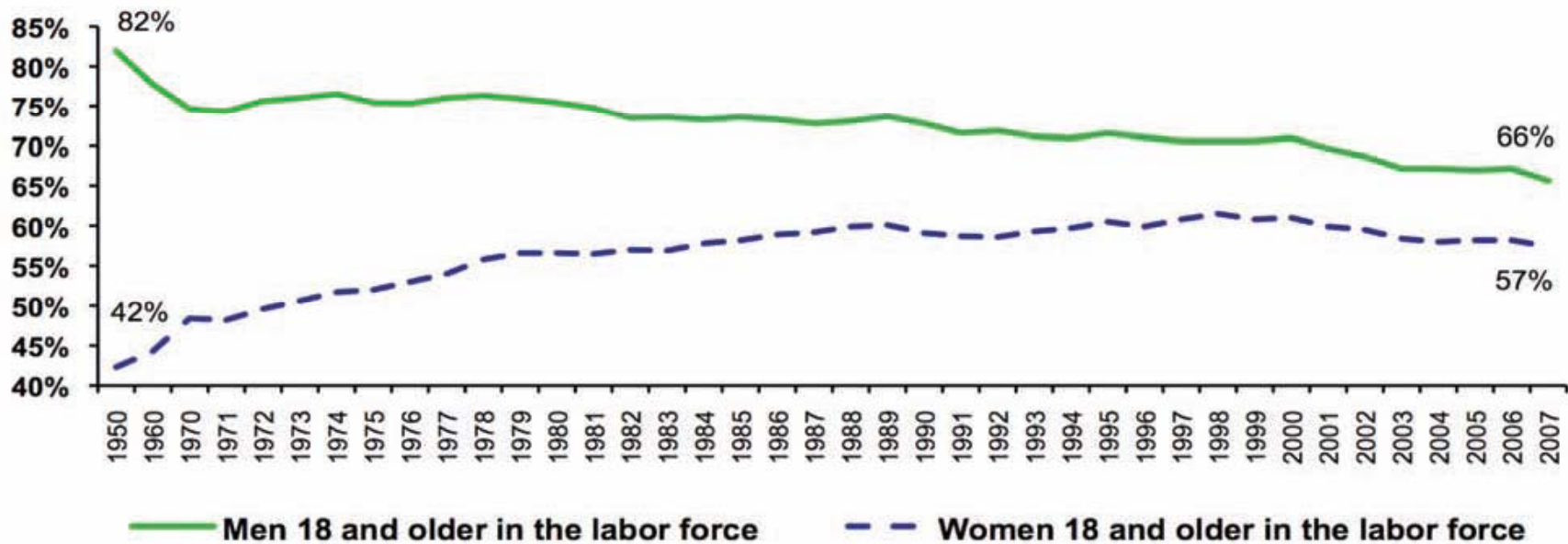
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and

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Change in the American Family Structure and Workforce Participation

Labor force participation by women and men 18 and older (1950-2007)

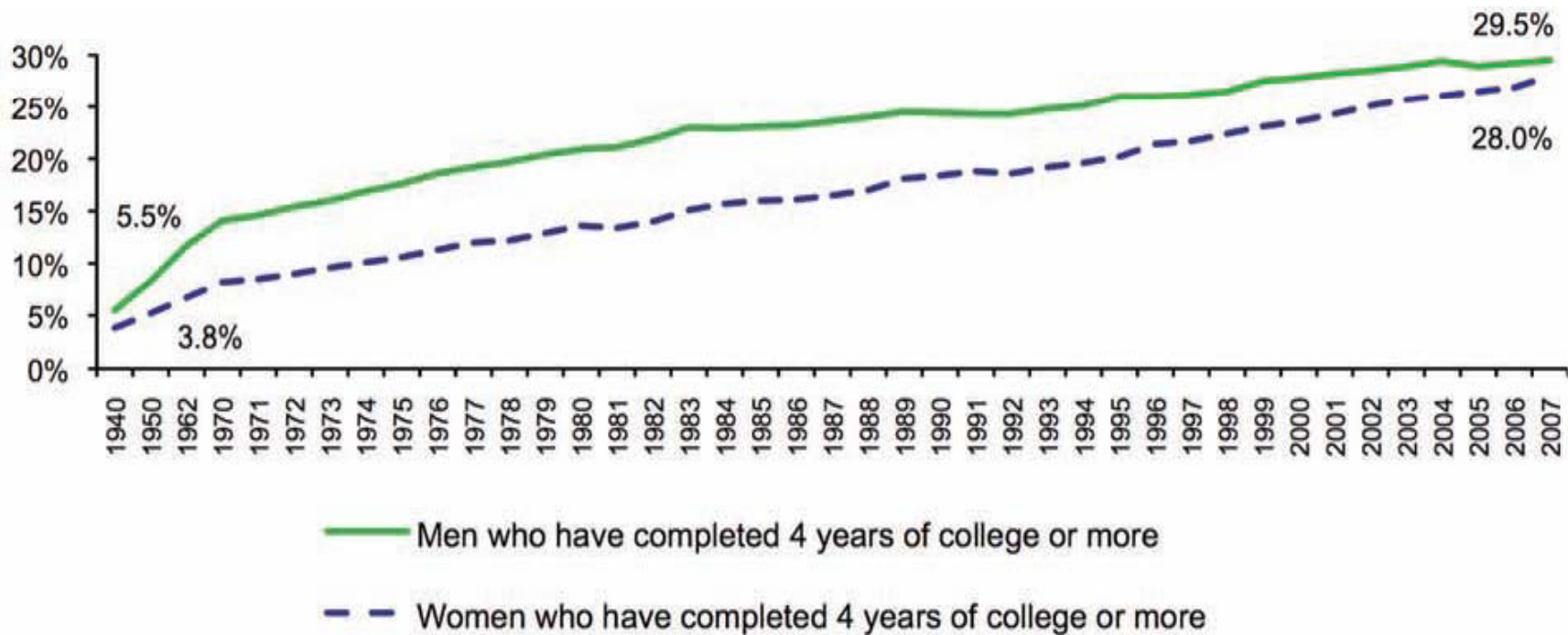




Change in Values and Practices

- In 1977, 70% of men in dual-earner couples thought it was better for men to earn the money and for women to care for the home and children.
- By 2008, only 37% of men in dual-earner couples felt this way, perhaps in part reflecting the fact that family income has become increasingly dependent on women's earnings

Completion of four years of college or more by men and women 25 years old and older (1940-2007)

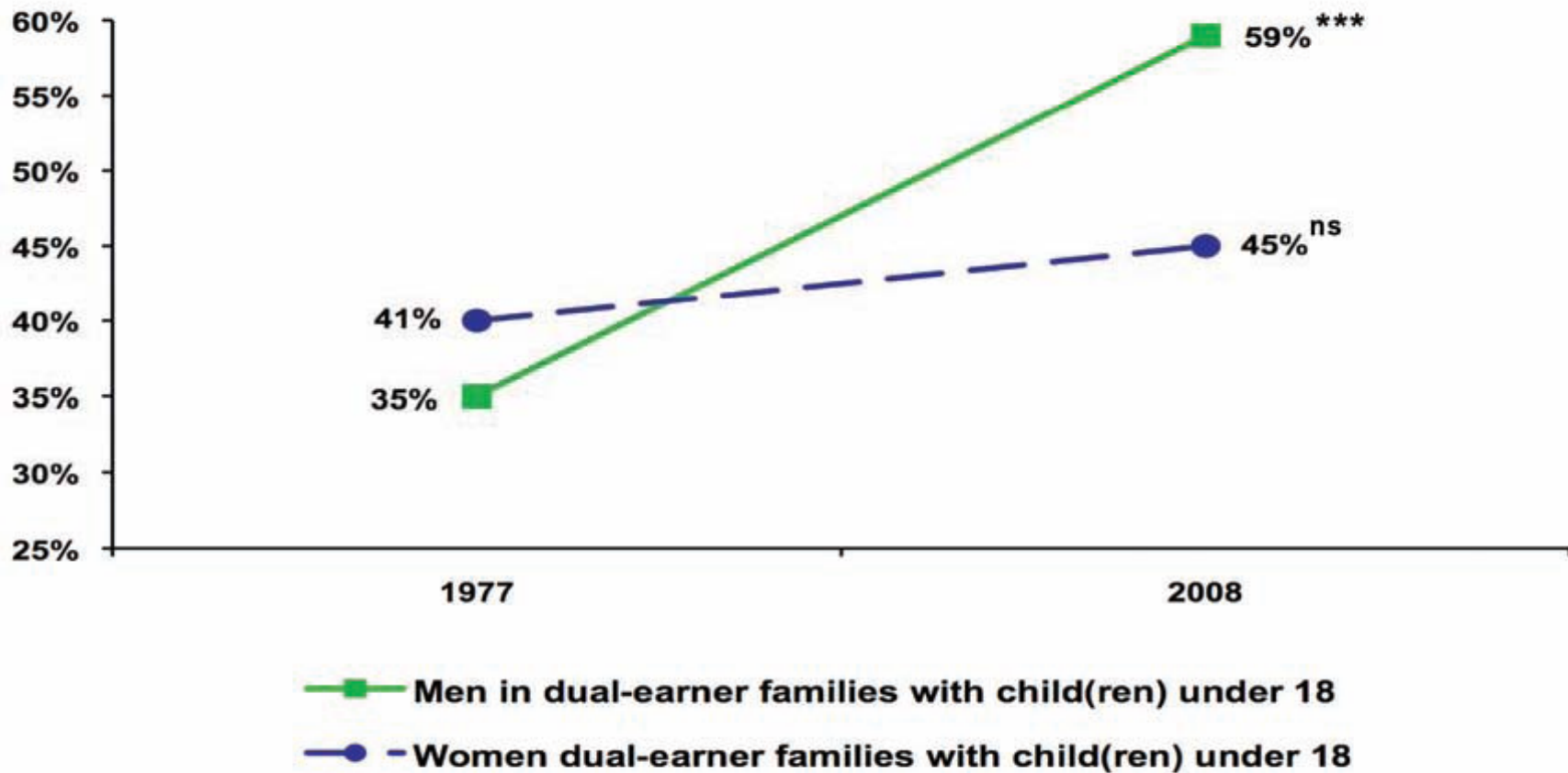




Male Work-Life Conflict

- **Changing gender roles appear to have increased the level of work-life conflict experienced by men.**
- Men's reported level of work-life conflict has risen significantly over the past three decades, while the level of conflict reported by women has not changed significantly
- In 2008, fathers in dual-earner couples experience more work-life conflict than fathers in single-earner families (59% versus 50%)

Percentage of fathers and mothers in dual-earner couples reporting work-life conflict (1977-2008)





Current Demographics

- Working Mothers:
 - 26 million in the workforce
 - 71% of mothers with children under 18 have jobs/careers
 - 57% of mothers with children under 3 are in workforce
- Nearly half of all working women are mothers
- Moms in the middle: 2 out of 5 moms aged 45-55 find themselves sandwiched between kids and aging parents who need care



Unfortunate Consequences:

- Only 13% of companies across the country offer paid maternity leave
- In every state, it costs more on average to send a 4 year old to child care than to send a student to public college
 - Working mothers spend an average of \$700/month on child care
 - Of a survey of more than 400 nationwide companies, only 4% offer on-site child care



Continue Consequences

- “A motherhood penalty” remains—specifically, that the length of the time that mothers take out of the workforce or work reduced hours to care for their children diminishes their lifetime earnings
- Study of Work Policies in 180 countries: U.S. compares well with others in protecting individual workers against discrimination, but ranks low in protecting workers' family lives
- U.S. employers lose \$29 billion in reduced productivity due to the amount of time employees take off to care for aging relatives

U.S. Policies

- The first and only federal parental leave legislation to be enacted in the United States was the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act
- Because the FMLA doesn't cover small firms, an estimated one-half of workers are left ineligible
- Many eligible employees do not take leave
 - According to the U.S. Commission on Leave, 64% of employees who need to but do not take FMLA leave give the reason that they can't afford the loss of pay

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- *List the most important, pressing Work-Life Balance issues for you*



Beth and Leah's List

- Wanting to be the best at both family and work
- Meeting all family obligations
- Making others aware of the need for Work-Life Balance
- Never enough time
- Knowing when to say no
- Recognize potential impending “burnout”
- Living with constant guilt

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- *What coping skills do you use to manage these Work-Life Balance issues?*

Coping Skills

- Individual Mental Practices that can help:
 - Know you are not alone
 - Forgive yourself and move on
 - Letting go/delegating/not micro-managing
 - Separate obligations and options
 - Knowing when and how to say no
 - Recognizing that no stage/phase lasts forever
 - Decide: do you want fusion or separation
 - E.g. do you want to bring work home so that you can leave work earlier, or do you want to stay longer at work so you do not need to do any work at home
 - Challenge your own gender stereotypes



Continue with Coping Skills

- Individual Practical Solutions:
 - Find a support network: this can work as simply a sounding board for complaints, or as a endless source of possible solutions to problems
 - Learn how to be efficient – making the most of your time, and a multitasker
 - Keep a calendar for all family members AND where all family members can see it
 - Create a “home team”: a group of people you can rely on for various family needs which may arise
 - Create a “work team”: those in your workplace you can rely on for filling in for emergencies

Continue with Coping Skills

- **Organizational and Group Strategies:**
 - **Work together to find alternative solutions**
 - This includes working with your family, your colleagues, your bosses, your children's schools, your caregivers, etc.
 - flex time or job sharing— may make sense in this economy?
 - Universal work-life balance policies for families, but also community and religious obligations
 - **Research your options**
 - Many times we are not even aware of what is available to us
 - Know your office policies
 - **Swap needs**
 - Find others in similar situations and trade for help
 - E.g. babysitting, school pick-ups, school drop-offs, etc.

Utilize what is out there:

- Listserv (Robert Drago, Penn State)
<http://lser.la.psu.edu/workfam/drago.htm>
- For elder care needs:
 - National elder-care locator www.eldercare.gov
 - Aging experts: National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers, www.caremanager.org
- For child care needs:
 - Afterschool Alliance, www.afterschoolalliance.org
 - Zero to Three, www.zerotothree.org
 - Child Care Aware, www.childcareaware.org



Conclusion

- Continue to re-evaluate what your, and your family's, needs are
- As long as solutions are working, keep them. If they stop working, make new choices.