

DIVERSITY PROJECT – Ask Me Anything Panel discussion - Working Families

Panellists: **Helena Morrissey**, Chair of the Diversity Project; **Tim Stumpff**, CEO - Principal Global Investors; **Dinesha Mendis**, Diversity Project Ambassador; **Clair Hodgson**, Director - How Do You Do It; **Sascha Calisan** – SVP, Northern Trust & Co-chair, DP Working Families (Facilitator)

CONTEXT

- Responsibilities on all sides – you, your partner (if you have one) and your employer
- Everyone is learning as they go along – focus on the things that you can control
- This isn't 'working from home' this is 'being at home in a crisis trying to work'

TOPIC AREA - Challenges

Notes and discussion points

YOUR ROLE AS AN EMPLOYEE

Challenge

“Trying to do a full-time job whilst juggling childcare is really taking its toll. As an employee, what can I do to make this situation easier for all of us?”

- Clear communication with your manager, make suggestions about what is possible – share vulnerability in a confident way.
- Don't assume that people know what your situation is.
- Agree the priorities - focus on the most important tasks. Discuss these with your line manager.
- Lower your internal standards, sometimes 80% is good enough. Pressure to be a great parent, co-worker etc. Give yourself some slack as it is important for mental health.
- Important to highlight lone parents or those whose partner is a key worker (and therefore absent) are experiencing double the burden at home – so important to be candid about this and what is physically possible.
- Think about suggesting times for colleagues to avoid meetings, e.g. between 12-2pm.

YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT/CARER

Challenge

“What can I do as a parent to give my children the attention and direction they need, whilst maintaining focus on my working day.”

- Be kind and empathetic to yourself – don't feel guilty or beat yourself up and don't measure yourself against unrealistic standards. It is an enormously difficult situation, with children of all ages.
- Every situation is unique – don't judge against what others are doing.
- Set boundaries – make conscious choices of what's important at home, and where to devote your time and energy, and some shared choices – exercises together and times together during the day – lunch.
- Set a routine and timetable that works for your family with designated spaces for work / school etc.
- Decide what rules to relax i.e. increasing screen time or giving your child more responsibilities.
- Good enough is good enough - now is not the time to create masterpieces with your children or at work!
- Try to keep in mind how you will want to look back on this time in the future. Will you want to remember the time you spent perfecting a presentation, or the interactions/guidance etc. that you had with your children during what will be an extraordinary period in their lives?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try a check-in at the end of each day with the family, ‘On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being very easy and 1 being very hard, how easy or hard has today been?’ Share reasons about what has made it that score and then talk about what is happening and support each other. For younger children perhaps a thumbs up, sideways or thumbs down system, or coloured cards – green, amber, red.
<p>SHARING CARE AND CAREER</p> <p>Challenge</p> <p>“How do I find the right balance in sharing responsibilities at home (childcare, home-schooling, domestic jobs) with my partner?”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find the balance in sharing the unpaid domestics. A critical element that is often forgotten. Think very consciously about what has to get done and how to split it. • Be conscious about your decisions as a family – don’t just slip into gender stereotyped roles. Evidence suggests childcare and managing the household is falling to the women. • How do you have the conversation? Sit down and write out all the tasks that are really important to get done (even if they are important to one of you and not both). • Project plan like you would at work. Divide the list between you and your children (there is a lot they can get involved in too). Divide it based on skill and interest. If neither of you want it, then reassess if it really needs to be done. If it does then just agree a fair split. • Once this is done, then each person takes responsibility and can do it their way. If you think your way of doing it is better, then your choice is to accept the other person does it differently or take it back on. • Consideration of each other’s employers’ approach – where possible though, have brave conversations at work about home responsibilities especially in relation to home schooling so you can get help from the team as required. Where holding these conversations, focus first on what can be done and what is possible, then follow with what can’t. Starting on the positive can impact how a conversation continues.
<p>SUPPORTING ELDERLY RELATIVES</p> <p>Challenge</p> <p>“How can I best support my high-risk parents when I can’t physically be with them?”</p>	<p>For employers - A tremendous opportunity for employers to learn about how to support employees who are looking after elderly parents. No awareness around what this entails currently.</p> <p>For employees/carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What systems and processes can I set up to help them? • What practical support to provide and where to find it. • Think about supporting their mental health.

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	<p>COVID 19 – Shielding Check List</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Food supply - Supermarket slots; identify, contact and arrange regular deliveries with local businesses; register on NextDoor App and find volunteers on HelpMap. Technology - TV, radio, SMART phone/iPad, Facebook Portal, Ring doorbell app. Medical logistics - Inform GP; set up profile on Babylon for video consultation; call pharmacy and arrange deliveries or collections. Household security - Fire alarm testing; quarantine equipment for emergency tradesmen – hazmat suits, facemasks, overshoe covers, gloves, fire hazards, lightbulbs, drain unclogger; is bathroom slip proof; key telephone numbers list (utility companies); rubbish removal; write procedures for key tasks – remote control. Mental health - Social interaction, daily check ins, window visits; entertainment - help with getting good programmes, curate content; surprise luxuries – flowers, chocolates, croissants; reading material (newspapers); outside space – help arrange sunny spot; connecting their friends on technology via their children.
<p>YOUR ROLE AS AN EMPLOYER</p> <p>Challenge</p> <p>“How should employers be supporting working families in the current environment, and what can they practically do?”</p> <p>The DP is collating examples of high standards that are being put in place by employers and sharing the human side of this crisis. Guidance for employees/employers. Keen to hear examples of good new stories.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important that organisations are leading with strong messaging from the top that sets the tone. • Be patient, flexible, adaptable, tolerant and kind. Most important leadership quality right now is empathy – if there’s ever a time when the servant leadership concept is needed, now’s the time. • Re-defining flexible working - flexibility within flexibility - no longer ‘1 day a week WFH arrangement’– it’s day to day – hour to hour change, flexibility, and adaptability – it’s ok for employees to work for a couple of hours early in the morning, log off for a few hours, log back on for a few hours, log back off, etc. • Emphasize communication and connectivity – strongly encourage everyone to join work-driven WhatsApp groups – social connectivity as well as regular team meetings and one to one calls. • Line Management responsibilities – as line managers we need to talk about what we need to achieve as a team and how do we achieve the required output. • No one-size-fits-all approach - a clear line of communication to line managers about what they can/can’t do to help their team – importance of realising that everyone is dealing with a unique set of family circumstances so blanket approaches are unlikely to work. • Be very mindful of what parents are juggling and consider temporary redistribution of workload #AllInThisTogether • Be mindful of creating barriers between those who do / don’t have child / caring responsibilities. • Consider additional ‘working family’ leave

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<p>POTENTIAL LONG-TERM CHANGES</p> <p>“How might the learnings we gain during this time change working practices (for the better) in the future?”</p> <p>The DP will aim to emphasise these points as we go forward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver lining through a human tragedy – acceptance and adoption of remote / flexible working has been accelerated by 5-10 years in the space of a month – an irreversible change for the good. The conversation has changed at the senior level of management. • Learning to trust employees. Presenteeism is going to die a much quicker death, changing the mind-set of hours worked to output which will help to equalise men and women’s roles. • Greater acceptance of men’s roles in the childcare equation. • Greater appreciation of situations/conditions that are different from ‘the stereotyped norm’ / ‘from my own’ with more of a human side of ourselves at work. • Look back and rebalance our lives. We need to be more human, open and honest and more connected with everyone we serve as well as our co-workers. Spend time with family, watch movies, play games and work differently. <p>From a practical perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in office space. • Understanding of what easily works in relation to remote work, what is trickier. • How technology acts as an enabler and what its limitations might be.
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