

# Parenting Through Conflict: Lived Experiences of Couples in High-Stress Family Systems

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### E d i t o r

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### R e v i e w e r s

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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the introduction, paragraph two states: “This dynamic is often exacerbated by work–family conflict, socioeconomic pressures, and divergent coping strategies...” While comprehensive, this claim would be strengthened by distinguishing between primary and secondary stressors.

In paragraph seven, the sentence “Remote work... introduces new stressors into the domestic sphere” makes a strong claim. Consider specifying what kinds of new stressors (e.g., blurred temporal boundaries, surveillance) have emerged from the shift to remote work.

In paragraph eight, the sentence “Yet even these strategies often occur in the absence of broader support systems...” would benefit from elaborating on what is meant by “broader support systems.” Are these state services, community-based programs, or mental health services?

The final paragraph of the introduction reads: “Understanding these lived experiences is essential...” This is a strong justification for the study but could be improved by referencing specific gaps in existing theoretical frameworks, not just empirical literature.

In the Relational Shifts and Communication section, the sentence “We yell more than we talk...” appears often in qualitative studies. Consider discussing how this breakdown compares with conflict resolution strategies described in relevant regional or religious norms.

In the Discussion, the sentence “This supports studies that differentiate between the romantic and parental subsystems...” should reference a family systems framework to strengthen theoretical grounding (e.g., Bowen or Minuchin).

The paragraph beginning “The use of external mediation...” would be strengthened by distinguishing between formal and informal mediators and how their roles are perceived by couples. Are religious clerics seen as more legitimate than counselors?

In the Limitations section, the statement “The self-reported nature of the interviews may be subject to social desirability bias...” is accurate but could be improved by noting any specific steps taken to mitigate this (e.g., building rapport, anonymization, triangulation).

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the introduction, the statement “These difficulties are further amplified in dual-earner families...” (paragraph three) should be supported with direct empirical evidence. Please consider integrating quantitative findings to solidify the argument.

The fourth paragraph of the introduction includes the sentence “For example, affective spillover...” This would benefit from a more detailed description of how this spillover mechanism operates within the parent-child dyad specifically, as it currently focuses on the marital relationship.

In paragraph five, the phrase “gendered scripts often manifest in divergent coping strategies...” should be followed by examples from non-Western contexts to support the generalizability of the argument across cultures.

In paragraph six, the sentence “Research shows that such contexts often amplify parental stress and reduce relationship satisfaction...” could benefit from clarification regarding whether both parents experience these effects equally or if there are gender-based differences.

In the Methods section, under Data Collection, the phrase “refined through preliminary interviews to ensure cultural sensitivity” would be more transparent if examples of adjustments made after pilot testing were provided.

Under Data Analysis, the authors mention using “constant comparison techniques.” Please clarify whether this was adapted from grounded theory or a more general interpretive approach. The analytic framework should be specified more precisely.

In the Findings section, under Emotional Strain and Coping, the quote “I lie awake every night...” is powerful. However, to ensure balance, a brief contextual note on how frequently such sentiments appeared across participants would enrich credibility.

Under the same section, the categorization of “maladaptive responses” includes “excessive screen time.” Please provide a rationale for classifying this as maladaptive, given that in some contexts it might be considered neutral or even adaptive (e.g., distraction as a coping strategy).

In the Findings, under Support Seeking, the sentence “Therapy was mentioned positively by a few...” would benefit from further elaboration on the barriers to access mentioned by participants (e.g., cost, stigma, lack of services).

In the Parenting Under Pressure section, the quote “One day he says yes, the next day I say no...” clearly illustrates inconsistency. Please clarify whether this pattern was linked to disagreement between partners or to fluctuating emotional states.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.

