Family and Medical Leave Act (2003)

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Basic Concepts and Definitions

The Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") of 1993 (29 U.S.C. section 2601 et. seq.) guarantees eligible employees who work for covered employers, 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period: (1) for the birth of a child or the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care; (2) if the employee is needed to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition; (3) if the employee's own serious health condition renders the employee unable to do his/her job. During the mandatory 12 week period, the employer must maintain the employee's group health coverage. If requested in the case of the illness of an employee or a family member of an employee, the employer must grant eligible employees leave on an intermittent or part-time basis. Intermittent leave may be taken in the smallest interval of time an employer uses in its payroll system to track absences or leaves. Upon the employee's timely return, the employer must reinstate the employee to his or her former position or an equivalent. Employers who interfere with the exercise of an eligible employee's rights under the FMLA are liable for monetary damages and equitable relief.

Regulations implementing the FMLA are found at 29 CFR 825 et. seq. The federal statute is enforced by the U.S. Department of Labor. Many states have leave laws that provide more generous benefits than those afforded under the federal FMLA and/or cover employees who are not covered under the federal FMLA. In such instances, the employee is entitled to the more generous rights afforded under the respective statute.

Covered employers are local, state and federal agencies, local education agencies such as schools, and private employers who: (1) employ 50 or more employees in the United States or its territories, (2) at a single worksite or within a 75-mile radius (3) for each working day in 20 or more calendar weeks of the current or preceding calendar year. The 20 calendar weeks do not have to be successive. The week must be counted if the employee's name appears on the payroll. Weeks are not carried over from year to year, but are counted anew with the beginning of the calendar year. While the statute is construed as covering state employees, there had been a challenge from Nevada state officials claiming the federal FMLA was a form of economic regulation passed by Congress, somewhat analogous to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. Under this argument, the statute would not be enforceable against states through individual suits for damages. In May 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling in the matter of William Hibbs, a Nevada state employee who sued the state of Nevada for damages, alleging he was fired after staying
home to care for his seriously ill wife. Hibbs contended his firing was in violation of the federal FMLA. He was joined in his suit for FMLA protection by the Bush administration, in advancing the argument that the FMLA is an anti-discrimination law, aimed at erasing gender stereotypes. As such, the statute is enforceable against states by individual employees. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed with this position, in ruling that the FMLA is enforceable against states.

**Eligible employees** are those who have worked for a covered employer for a total of 12 months, have worked at least 1,250 hours (which excludes other paid or unpaid leave, such as sick leave or vacation), during the previous 12 months.

In the event of (1) the birth of a child, (2) placement of a child with an employee for adoption or foster care or (3) care for that child after placement, or to (4) care for an employee's parent with a serious health condition, if a husband and wife who are eligible for FMLA, both work for the same covered employer, the employer may limit the employees to a combined total of 12 weeks of leave during a 12 month period (29 CFR 825.202). However, where both husband and wife each use a part of the 12 week FMLA leave for one of the above purposes, each employee would be entitled to the difference between the amount that specific employee has taken and the balance remaining of the 12 weeks FMLA leave. As explained in 29 CFR 825.202(c), if each spouse took 6 weeks of leave to care for a newborn, each employee could use an additional 6 weeks to care for their own serious health condition or a child's serious health condition. As in all cases, involving the FMLA, state statutes should be consulted, as some states do provide for paid disability leave before and after the birth of the child.

Entitlement for the 12 week leave expires 12 months after the birth of the child. The 12 week leave may be taken intermittently only with the permission of the employer.

**Serious health condition** can mean a physical or mental condition that involves incapacity requiring inpatient care, or involves an absence from work of more than three days, incapacity due to pregnancy or prenatal care, incapacity due to a chronic illness such as diabetes, incapacity that is permanent or long-term for which treatment may not be effective, such as Alzheimer's and any absences to receive multiple treatments (and the subsequent recovery time) from a health care provider that likely would result in incapacity of more than three consecutive days if left untreated, such as physical therapy.

Leave may be taken for a few hours, such as to take a parent for medical treatment, or in any event when medically necessary, in the smallest increment that the employer's payroll system allows (29 CFR 825.203).

**Medical certification** may be requested of an employee only in the following circumstances: when the employee seeks leave for their own serious health condition or the serious health condition of an immediate family member. The employer may require and the employee must provide a second medical
opinion from a doctor selected and paid for by the employer. If the opinions of the employee’s doctor and the doctor selected by the employer differ, the employer may require the employee to obtain a third medical opinion from a doctor selected by agreement between the employee and the employer. The third opinion will be considered binding on both parties (29CFR 825.307).

It should be noted that the statute and regulations do not require medical certification for each medical visit required by pregnancy, but medical certification can be required for pregnancy.

The employer must allow the employee at least 15 calendar days to provide medical certification. Circumstances may prevent the employee from providing the information within 15 days, but as long as the employee is making a reasonable effort to provide the certification, the requirement is being met (29CFR 825.305). The Department of Labor has developed a medical certificate that can be used by employers. If the employee fails to provide requested medical certification, any leave taken by the employee is not FMLA leave.

**Notice:** The statute requires that when the need for leave is foreseeable, employees must give 30 days notice to employers of the intent to take FMLA leave. If the need is not foreseeable, employees are expected to give reasonable notice. If the leave is foreseeable and 30 days notice is not given, employers may delay the start of the FMLA leave for 30 days from the day the employee gives notice of the intent to take FMLA leave.

**Parents** of an employee include the biological parent of an employee or an individual who stood in loco parentis to an employee when the employee was a son or daughter as defined in the FMLA. Those who are "in loco parentis" to an employee are those who acted as parents when the employee has a son or daughter.

**Monetary damages** recoverable by an employee wrongly denied leave under the FMLA include wages, benefits, other costs such as expenses for paying another to care for a parent (up to 12 weeks) as well as liquidated damages, if it is shown the employer did not act in good faith. Equitable remedies such as employment, promotion and reinstatement are also available under the FMLA.

**Importance of Topic to Work-Family Studies**

The impact of the FMLA on the workplace is fertile ground for Work-Family Studies. Seen by many as the successor to the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, the FMLA has broadened the scope of statutorily mandated leave beyond pregnancy and the birth of a child. The FMLA has brought the issue of care giving for family members squarely into the workplace. It is a recognized piece of the employment mosaic.
Indeed, as more participants in the workplace recognize the importance of balancing work and family, the FMLA has become the linchpin for programs that foster this balance. The FMLA has been a catalyst for action by states in the area of unpaid leave. Some states have passed state versions of the federal FMLA; others are investigating ways to finance the provision of unpaid leave (Rosenberg, 2001). The activity in state legislatures in this area is critically important, for state mandated benefits that are more generous than those afforded in the federal FMLA are the benefits to which employees are entitled.

The governor of California has signed legislation creating paid family leave to take effect January 1, 2004. Employees become eligible immediately upon taking a job, after a seven day waiting period, to receive up to half pay for up to six weeks to care for a sick or injured family member or for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a new child. Under the new law, compensation for covered leave will be funded by an employee payroll tax which begins January 1, 2004, with benefits beginning July 1, 2004. Employee payroll funds will be deposited into a special family temporary disability fund and administered by California's State Disability Insurance program. California becomes the first state to mandate paid family leave. The legislation was opposed by most employer groups and has left many employers, particularly small business owners, since there is no exemption in the California FMLA for businesses with fewer than 50 employees, openly apprehensive about the cost and administration of such a measure. Proponents of the measure point out that employees who were financially unable to utilize the unpaid benefits of the federal FMLA can now avail themselves of the state-mandated benefits.

In 1995, separate surveys of employees and businesses concerning the FMLA were conducted for the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. These surveys resulted in the 1996 report from the U.S. Department of Labor's Commission on Family and Medical Leave. In this report 34 states were identified that had passed some type of family leave prior to the 1993 passage of the federal FMLA (Waldfogel, 1999). Some examples of states that currently provide family and medical leave include Montana with provisions for at-home infant care, Oregon that in 1995 passed a family leave provision and Minnesota. State statutes generally track the federal FMLA in areas such as benefits, but many vary in eligibility provisions or employer size. Oregon's statute, for instance, applies to employers with 25 or more employees. As in all matters when states pass versions of federal statutes, the benefits cannot limit the federal mandates, but can only broaden such mandates. Considering the dynamic nature of this area of the law, it is incumbent upon the reader to carefully check individual state policies.

There continues to be debate between those who see the statute as well-intentioned, but flawed in its administration, and those who see the statute as inadequate to meet workers’ needs. Some commentators support broadening FMLA coverage to include more employers, and consequently more employees. The expansion of the leave benefit to allow parents to take leave to attend children's school and sports activities is a topic of discussion. Some commentators and groups continue to lobby for paid leave on a federal level, rather than leave the matter to individual states legislatures, which are actually
quite active in this area. Conversely, other commentators and politicians would like to tighten the
definition of "serious health condition", reduce the paperwork burden on employers and reduce the ease
of taking intermittent leave (Papa, 1998).

Differing interpretations of the somewhat ambiguous statute have led to litigation in numerous instances.
Regulations promulgated by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) as well as opinion letters issued by the
DOL have at times contributed to this confusion. Even defining the illnesses that qualify as "serious health
conditions" has not been a simple task. Originally, illnesses such as colds and earaches were not
considered "serious health conditions" within the meaning of the statute. The definition of "serious health
conditions" has evolved into more of a totality of circumstances test, with the length of incapacity and the
question of whether the employee sought medical treatment becoming important factors in determining
whether a "serious health condition" within the meaning of the FMLA exists.

Discussions regarding work-family issues must include the FMLA as a given. Substantial usage of leave
by employees reflects the widening of work-family issues beyond personal health and childcare into other
areas including elder care. Such usage reflects the situation of many workplace participants who find
themselves responsible for the care of the younger and older generation. The recognition of multi-
generational care giving is important for practitioners in the work-family area (see Sandwiched Generation
entry). Practitioners and researchers in work-family studies however must be aware of the ongoing
discussions about the need or lack of need, for expanded coverage, concern over the statute's
administration, and the continual redefining of the statute in the courts.

State of the Body of Knowledge

The Family and Medical Leave Act continues to be interpreted by the courts. Regulations that were
promulgated by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) in enforcing the FMLA are also subject to judicial
review. Without ruling on the validity of 29 CFR 825.208 that requires an employer to give employees
written notice that an absence will be considered FMLA leave, the U.S. Supreme Court did invalidate the
penalty portion of 29 CFR 825.700(a) as being contrary to the FMLA and beyond the Secretary of Labor's
authority (Ragsdale, et al. vs. Wolverine World Wide, Inc. 535 U.S. 2002). In the regulation issued by the
DOL (29CFR 825.700(a)), an employer who did not timely inform an employee that leave would count
against an FMLA entitlement, would then be required to grant the employee twelve more weeks of leave.

In this litigated matter, Ragsdale's employer had granted her 30 weeks of unpaid sick leave under the
employer's leave plan and had not informed her when her FMLA leave began to be counted. While the
employer granted Ragsdale's six, 30-day requests for leave, kept her position open during her absence
and paid her health premiums during the first six months of her absence, it declined to grant her leave
beyond the 30 weeks. The court viewed the employer's leave policy as consistent with Congress's
encouragement to employers to offer more generous leave arrangements than provided by the statute. In striking down the penalty provision of 29 CFR 825.700(a), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the provision was invalid because in relieving employees of the burden of proving any real impairment of their rights and resulting prejudice, it altered the FMLA's cause of action in a fundamental way. The Ragsdale decision was met with relief from employers and by criticism from those lobbying for a more liberalized leave policy.

Employer groups point to the ongoing strict notice requirements of the statute, including the requirement to give employees written FMLA information each time they request FMLA leave. They are also concerned about the provisions allowing intermittent leave and the disruption in the workplace caused by this type of leave. Those supporting the plaintiff in the Ragsdale case voice concern about employees who are uninformed about their benefits under FMLA.

It is clear there will be continuing discussion regarding the statute and its interpretation. Indeed, these discussions have found their way into debates in state legislatures and in federal courtrooms. Recent decisions in lower federal courts have concerned such issues as whether an employee who is on FMLA leave can moonlight in a like job, and whether the combination of numerous ailments [which individually may not constitute a "serious health condition"] may constitute such a condition for purposes of the FMLA when taken together. Other litigation has concerned the issue of whether an employee is entitled to FMLA leave to care for healthy children while a spouse is staying with a hospitalized child. The relationship between the FMLA and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is also the topic of extensive discussion in determining employer responsibility and employee coverage. The U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Hibbs case previously discussed will have a major influence on state workers throughout the country.

Several major statistical surveys have been conducted regarding numerous aspects of the FMLA. The seminal issue of whether the FMLA and related state statutes have had an affect on the use of leave has been answered firmly in the affirmative. In an exhaustive analysis of FMLA usage data, Jane Waldfogel, found that the FMLA had accelerated usage of leave by men. She found that "the share of employees in medium-sized and large establishments with maternity leave coverage increased from 39% in 1991 to 86% in 1995, while the share with paternity leave coverage increased from 27% to 86 % over the same period" (Waldfogel, 1999, p. 15). Thus, medium-sized and large firms had been heavily impacted by the statute and men were major recipients of the changes wrought by the FMLA.

Waldfogel (1999) also found that some employers who were not covered by the statute and were therefore not mandated to provide leave to employees, instituted leave policies anyway. She hypothesizes that these policies could be the result of heightened awareness among employers of leave practices as well as the impact of state leave statutes. Her study also reflected increased usage by public
employees vis a vis private employees, with the pattern of increased paternity leave-taking also apparent in the public sector.

While Waldfogel tracked the impact of the statute on leave, in their paper, "Supporting Families as Primary Caregivers: The Role of the Workplace" Ellen Galinsky and James Bond of the Families and Work Institute studied data from the 1992 *National Study of the Changing Workforce* that provided a profile of those who take leave and those who do not. Approximately 41% of employed mothers and 49% of employed fathers met the eligibility and coverage requirements of the FMLA (1996). Galinsky's and Bond's own research reflected that among parents with children under six, those with lower-income and from larger companies found it very or somewhat hard to take time during the day for family or personal issues.

In continuing to chart leave taking under the FMLA, K.E. Ross (1998) found that legislation substantially extended the average length of maternity leave taken by women who "already had some options for job-protected leave" (Ross 1998, as quoted in Gerstel & McGonagle, p. 514). This conclusion was somewhat in conflict with that reached by The Families and Work Institute's (Bond, Galinsky, Lord, Staines, & Brown, 1991) study of four states with parental leave that showed women did not take longer leave after the passage of new state leave statutes. Two factors may have affected the apparent disparity of these finding. With the passage of time, employees and employers have become more familiar with the leave statutes and usage may have increased, as a result. Additionally, the difference between the attention and weight given to a federal statute as opposed to a state statute may make employees more willing to exercise the right to take leave and could encourage employers to educate themselves about the statute and facilitate the leave taking by employees.

Studies continue as to who uses the leave and employees who refrain from using the leave because of financial concerns. Gerstel and McGonagle (1998) found that married women are particularly likely to take leave pursuant to the FMLA. They also found that a majority of those (83%) who believed they needed leave actually took that leave. Those who expressed a need to take leave, but did not take it, refrained from taking leave because they did not believe they could afford such leave.

As well as documenting the impact of statutes on leave, and profiling those who take the leave, studies have been done on employers who are covered under the FMLA. In 1996, the above-referenced U.S. Department of Labor's Commission on Family and Medical Leave issued the results of their first surveys on leave taking under the FMLA, with a survey data update issued in 2001. A startling result was the dramatic drop in employer's opinion regarding compliance with the FMLA. While in 1995, 85.1% of reporting employers reported compliance with the FMLA to be "easy or somewhat easy", the updated report reflected a more than 20% drop in this attitude, with 63.1% employers stating they believed compliance as "easy or somewhat easy". While this percentage still reflects a majority of reporting
employers, the significant drop is worrisome for those who desire a broadening in the coverage of the FMLA. This same report and update reflected that in 1996, only 14.9% of the reporting employers believed compliance with the FMLA was "somewhat or very difficult", while the 2000 report reflected this number had grown substantially to 36.4% of the reporting employers. Also, while in 1995, 92.8% of reporting employers reported the impact of the FMLA had "No noticeable effect, or a positive effect, on business productivity", five years later in 2000, this number had dropped to 83.6%, a drop of 11% in 5 years.

However, Jane Waldfogel (2001) in reviewing the results of these more recent surveys, also noted that more establishments not covered by the FMLA were likely to offer FMLA benefits in 2000 than they were 5 years earlier. Indeed, Waldfogel stated the 2000 survey data indicated that a significant number of both covered and noncovered businesses offered leave beyond that mandated by the FMLA, "by providing more than 12 weeks of leave, covering employees who did not work 12 months, or covering employees who did not work 1,250 hours in the previous year" (p. 19). Waldfogel also found a decrease, from 1995 to 2000, in the number of employees who believed they needed to take leave, but were unable to do so. Finally, Waldfogel found the 2000 employee survey reflected that while employee's own health was still the primary reason for taking leave under the FMLA, this usage showed a decrease over the last five years, with an increase shown in taking leave to take for others such as a spouse or parent.

The FMLA recognizes the reality that employees carry family responsibilities and ties into the workplace. The statute has institutionalized the recognition that family obligations do not disappear during the workday, and responsible employees can utilize leave to manage these obligations. As Waldfogel noted in her analysis of the year 2000 surveys, it appears "family and medical leave is becoming a more important part of the experience of employers and employees" (Waldfogel, 2001, p. 21).

**Implications for Practice and Research**

Commentators and scholars reviewing the FMLA and its implications for the workplace can consider areas of study including the effect of definitional changes on the use of the benefits of the statute. Additionally, research on whether the size of the employer (i.e. number of overall employees) affects the use by employees of FMLA leave would be instructive in determining whether expanding the field of "covered employers" is feasible and desirable. Continuing research on the reasons for use of the FMLA, be it maternity, paternity, eldercare or personal health reasons would be instructive in determining whether amendments to the statute are appropriate. The issue of paid leave, which is essentially additional paid time off, is a highly controversial issue likely to be vigorously protested by employers.

Practitioners in this area would be well advised to stay well informed of the continual changes in the statute's interpretation by the courts. Human resource managers and labor relations managers should not
only be aware of the continual debate over the statute, but also understand the implications for the specific workplace for which they are responsible.

References


Rosenberg, D. (August 27, 2001). We Have to Sacrifice: States offer to pick up the tab for unpaid leave. Newsweek, p. 46.


Other Recommended Readings on this Topic:

Books

Articles


Web sites


Locations in the Matrix of Information Domains of the Work-Family Area of Studies

The Editorial Board of the Teaching Resources section of the Sloan Work and Family Research Network has prepared a Matrix as a way to locate important work-family topics in the broad area of work-family studies. (More about the Matrix ...).

Concepts related to adult development are relevant to all of the "Individual" domains in the Matrix of Information Domains of the Work-Family Area of Study. In addition, theories of adult development are relevant to Domain F: Theoretical Underpinnings.
Note: The domain areas most closely related to the entry's topic are presented in full color. Other domains, represented in gray, are provided for context.

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Domain F: Theoretical Underpinnings to All Domains
About the Matrix

Sloan Work and Family Research Network
Resources for Teaching: Mapping the Work-Family Area of Studies

Introduction

It was appropriate that the members of the Founding Editorial Board of the Resources for Teaching began their work in 2000, for their project represented one of the turning points in the area of work and family studies. This group accepted the challenge of developing resources that could support the efforts of teaching faculty from different disciplines and professional schools to better integrate the work-family body of knowledge into their curricula. The Virtual Think Tank began its work with a vision, a spirit of determination, and sense of civic responsibility to the community of work-family scholars.

A fundamental challenge emerged early in the process. It became clear that before we could design resources that would support the teaching of those topics, we would first need to inventory topics and issues relevant to the work-family area of studies (and begin to distinguish the work-family aspect of these topics from "non work-family" aspects).

The members of the Virtual Think Tank were well aware that surveying the area of work and family studies would be a daunting undertaking. However, we really had no other choice. And so, we began to grapple with the mapping process.

Purpose

1. To develop a preliminary map of the body of knowledge relevant to the work-family area of study that reflects current, "across-the-disciplines" understanding of work-family phenomena.

2. To create a flexible framework (or map) that clarifies the conceptual relationships among the different information domains that comprise the work-family knowledge base.

It is important to understand that this mapping exercise was undertaken as a way to identify and organize the wide range of work-family topics. This project was not intended as a meta-analysis for determining the empirical relationships between specific variables. Therefore, our map of the workfamily area of study does not include any symbols that might suggest the relationships between specific factors or clusters of factors.
Process

The Virtual Think Tank used a 3-step process to create the map of the work-family area of studies.

1. **Key Informants:** The members of the Virtual Think Tank included academics from several different disciplines and professions who have taught and written about work-family studies for years. During the first stage of the mapping process, the Virtual Think Tank functioned as a panel of key informants.

   Initially, the Panel engaged in a few brainstorming sessions to identify work-family topics that could be addressed in academic courses. The inductive brainstorming sessions initially resulted in the identification of nearly 50 topics.

   Once the preliminary list of topics had been generated, members of the Virtual Think Tank pursued a deductive approach to the identification of work-family issues. Over the course of several conversations, the Virtual Think Tank created a conceptual map that focused on information domains (see Table 1 below).

   The last stage of the mapping process undertaken by the Virtual Think Tank consisted of comparing and adjusting the results of the inductive and deductive processes. The preliminary, reconciled list was used as the first index for the Online Work and Family Encyclopedia.

2. **Literature Review:** Members of the project team conducted literature searches to identify writings in which authors attempted to map the work-family area of study or specific domains of this area. The highlights of the literature review will be posted on February 1, 2002 when the First Edition of the Work-Family Encyclopedia will be published.

3. **Peer Review:** On October 1, 2001, the Preliminary Mapping of the work-family area of study was posted on the website of the Sloan Work and Family Research Network. The members of the Virtual Think Tank invite work-family leaders to submit suggestions and comments about the Mapping and the List of Work-Family Topics. The Virtual Think Tank will consider the suggestions and, as indicated, will make adjustments in both of these products. Please send your comments to Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes at pittcats@bc.edu

Assumptions

Prior to identifying the different information domains relevant to the work-family area of study, members of the Virtual Think Tank adopted two premises:
1. Our use of the word “family” refers to both traditional and nontraditional families. Therefore, we consider the term “work-family” to be relevant to individuals who might reside by themselves. Many work-family leaders have noted the problematic dimensions of the term “work-family” (see Barnett, 1999). In particular, concern has been expressed that the word “family” continues to connote the married couple family with dependent children, despite the widespread recognition that family structures and relationships continue to be very diverse and often change over time. As a group, we understand the word “family” to refer to relationships characterized by deep caring and commitment that exist over time. We do not limit family relationships to those established by marriage, birth, blood, or shared residency.

2. It is important to examine and measure work-family issues and experiences at many different levels, including: individual, dyadic (e.g., couple relationships, parent-child relationships, caregiver-caretaker relationships), family and other small groups, organizational, community, and societal. Much of the work-family discourse glosses over the fact that the work-family experiences of one person or stakeholder group may, in fact, be different from (and potentially in conflict with) those of another.

Outcomes

We will publish a Working Paper, “Mapping the Work-Family Area of Study,” on the Sloan Work and Family Research Network in 2002. In this publication, we will acknowledge the comments and suggestions for improvement sent to us.

Limitations

It is important to understand that the members of the Virtual Think Tank viewed their efforts to map the work-family area of study as a “work in progress.” We anticipate that we will periodically review and revise the map as this area of study evolves.

The members of the panel are also cognizant that other scholars may have different conceptualizations of the work-family area of study. We welcome your comments and look forward to public dialogue about this important topic.

Listing of the Information Domains Included in the Map

The members of the Virtual Think Tank wanted to focus their map of work-family issues around the experiences of five principal stakeholder groups:
1. individuals,
2. families,
3. workplaces,
4. communities, and
5. society-at-large.

Each of these stakeholder groups is represented by a row in the Table 1, Information Domain Matrix (below).

**Work-Family Experiences:** The discussions of the members of the Virtual Think Tank began with an identification of some of the salient needs & priorities/problems & concerns of the five principal stakeholder groups. These domains are represented by the cells in Column B of the Information Domain Matrix.

- Individuals' work-family needs & priorities
- Individuals' work-family problems & concerns
- Families' work-family need & priorities
- Families' work-family problems & concerns
- Needs & priorities of workplaces related to work-family issues
- Workplace problems & concerns related to work-family issues
- Needs & priorities of communities related to work-family issues
- Communities' problems & concerns related to work-family issues
- Needs and priorities of society related to work-family issues
- Societal problems & concerns related to work-family issues

**Antecedents:** Next, the Virtual Think Tank identified the primary roots causes and factors that might have either precipitated or affected the work-family experiences of the principal stakeholder groups. These domains are highlighted in Column A of the Information Domain Matrix.

- Individual Antecedents
- Family Antecedents
- Workplace Antecedents
- Community Antecedents
- Societal Antecedents

**Covariates:** The third set of information domains include factors that moderate the relationships between the antecedents and the work-family experiences of different stakeholder groups (see
Column C in Table 1).

- Individual Covariates
- Family Covariates
- Workplace Covariates
- Community Covariates
- Societal Covariates

**Decisions and Responses:** The responses of the stakeholder groups to different work-family experiences are highlighted in Column D.

- Individual Decision and Responses
- Family Decisions and Responses
- Workplace Decisions and Responses
- Community Decisions and Responses
- Public Sector Decisions and Responses

**Outcomes & Impacts:** The fifth set of information domains refer to the outcomes and impacts of different work-family issues and experiences on the principal stakeholder groups (see Column E).

- Outcomes & Impacts on Individuals
- Outcomes & Impacts on Families
- Outcomes & Impacts on Workplaces
- Outcomes & Impacts on Communities
- Outcomes & Impacts on Society

**Theoretical Foundations:** The Virtual Think Tank established a sixth information domain to designate the multi-disciplinary theoretical underpinnings to the work-family area of study (noted as Information Domain F).
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<td>Workplace Experiences: Needs &amp; Priorities; Problems &amp; Concerns</td>
<td>Workplace Covariates</td>
<td>Workplace Decisions &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Workplace Outcomes &amp; Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Antecedents</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Domain F: Theoretical Underpinnings to All Domains**