## FEATURED SCHOLAR

Each month the Work and Family Researchers Network spotlights the contributions of a scholar who is making significant advances in understanding work-family concerns. We are delighted to present the following interview with **Philip Badawy.**

**Philip Badawy**
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Experts Panel Link: https://wfrn.org/expert/philip-badawy-phd/

**WFRN – How did you first get introduced to work-family issues and become a researcher in this field?**

**Philip –** I first got introduced to work-family issues when I was younger. My mum was self-employed, and our family life revolved around the rhythms of her "feast or famine" work schedule. During busy periods, she worked long hours, often late in the evening; during slower times, she was more present in the home. I learned early on how work and family are deeply intertwined—and how conditions of one can spill into the other. These early experiences shaped my curiosity about how families navigate the boundaries between work and home life, especially in contexts shaped by flexibility.

As a graduate student, I returned to these questions with new theoretical tools. I became especially interested in the everyday ways people manage the boundaries between work and home—particularly through practices like multitasking, working from home, and staying connected to work after work hours. I was drawn to questions about how certain working conditions like schedule control or job authority help or hinder people's ability to manage their responsibilities across both domains. This curiosity grew into a broader research program that also explores how one partner's work role can cross over and impact their partner's experience of family life and health.

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**WFRN – How did you first get involved with the WFRN? What do you value most about the organization?**

**Philip –** I first became involved with WFRN when I attended the biennial conference in Montreal in 2024. As a first-time participant, I was struck by how welcoming and intellectually engaging the community was. It was one of the few academic spaces where I felt that rigorous scholarship and real-world application were held in equal regard. I appreciated the opportunity to connect with researchers working across disciplines – sociology, psychology, management, public policy—and to engage in conversations that spanned both theoretical and applied perspectives.

What I value most about WFRN is its interdisciplinary spirit and its commitment to supporting scholars at all career stages. This organization creates space for meaningful dialogue about the complex intersections of work and family life, while also fostering collaboration and mentorship. I've also been impressed by how WFRN elevates research that speaks directly to pressing social issues—such as

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workplace equity, care responsibilities, and well-being—values that are deeply aligned with my own work.

**WFRN – Tell us about your current research, what are you studying?**

**Philip –** My research examines how working conditions shape the everyday realities of family life and psychological well-being—for both workers and their partners. I'm especially interested in the blurred boundaries between work and home, and how pressures to stay digitally connected outside of work hours can create spillover and crossover effects that disrupt recovery, family relationships, and overall health.

A key focus of my research looks at how work-family stressors may reverberate across partners. In a recent publication in Society and Mental Health, I use five waves of panel data from the Canadian Work, Stress, and Health Study (2011 – 2019) to show that when respondents perceive their spouse to engage in work-family multitasking, the respondents report higher levels of psychological distress. The association between spousal work-family multitasking and respondents' distress is explained by perceptions of spousal work-to-family conflict and respondents' family-to-work conflict. While not based on dyadic data, this work suggests that the strains of managing work and family responsibilities do not stay contained within individuals—they can also shape the experiences and well-being of those closest to them.

My current research program is motivated by a central question: How do working conditions ripple through the lives of workers and families?

**WFRN – Does your research inform workplace practice? How?**

**Philip –** Yes. A key goal of my research is to generate insights that help organizations design working conditions that genuinely support workers' well-being. One area I've focused on in schedule control—often seen as a highly desirable job resource that allows workers to control the timing of their paid work. However, my findings suggest a more complex picture: while having control over one's schedule can help alleviate work-to-family conflict, it can also contribute to more role blurring—where workers feel pressured to stay digitally connected to work outside of regular work hours. In contexts of high job pressure, my research shows that schedule control leads to even more role blurring, not less. This research indicates that the impact of schedule control depends heavily on the broader work environment, as workers with schedule control might feel pressured to demonstrate their devotion to work

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at the expense of other non-work roles. My research supports the development of workplace policies that go beyond offering flexibility to address the conditions that shape how it plays out: workload expectations, norms about availability, and the presence (or absence) of supportive leadership.

**WFRN – Can you tell me about how your research might help individuals or families develop effective personal strategies?**

**Philip –** My research offers practical insights into how individuals and families can better manage the intersection of work and home. For example, by identifying the risks of role blurring, especially under conditions of job pressure, my work encourages individuals to set clearer boundaries around work-related communication outside of regular hours. I also highlight the importance of job control: when workers have more autonomy and flexibility over their schedules, they're better able to align work and family responsibilities. For families, my research on stress crossover suggests that open communication and shared understanding around household roles can help mitigate the unintended emotional spillover of multitasking and stress. While structural change is important, I believe individual awareness and relational strategies also play a pivotal role in fostering a healthier work-family life.

**WFRN – What directions hold the greatest promise for discovery in the work-family field? We are thinking here of theory, methods, or research questions that might be posed.**

**Philip –** I see several promising directions. The first involves continued theorizing and empirical work on intersectionality – particularly research on the diversity of work-family dynamics across social statuses. Second, as remote and hybrid work become increasingly normalized, we need more research on how the shifting time and space of work affect boundaries between roles, experiences of stress, and opportunities for recovery. Methodologically, longitudinal and mixed-method approaches are crucial for understanding change over time and capturing lived experiences. I'm also excited about the growing use of couple- and family-level data to examine interdependence in work-family experiences.

**WFRN – What advice would you give to graduate students or those early in their professional careers?**

**Philip –** One of the most important lessons I've learned is that rejection is a built-in part of life, and academia is certainly no exception. Whether it's grad school applications, grant proposals, journal submissions, or job searches, I've faced many rejections—

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including being rejecting from every graduate program I initially applied to. At the time, it felt like a major setback. But that experience taught me how to adapt, reflect, and pivot. Eventually, I found the right program, the right mentors, and a research path that deeply resonated with me.

The key is to separate rejection from self-worth. Rejection doesn't mean you're not capable or that you don't belong—it means the fit wasn't right, the timing was off, or the work needed refining. Every rejection contains information that you can use to improve. Some of my most meaningful research contributions came out of projects that were once turned down or heavily criticized.

So, my advice is this: expect rejection, and don't let it derail you. Learn from it, revise, and keep moving forward. The most successful people you admire—the scholars whose work you cite, the professors who mentor you, the professionals learning their fields—have all faced rejection more times than they can count. The difference is, they kept going. Cultivating adaptability and persistence will serve you just as much as any methodological skill or theoretical insight. And sometimes, the path you didn't plan for turns out to be the one that defines your work in the best possible way.

## ABOUT THE WFRN

The Work and Family Researchers Network's mission is to facilitate virtual and face-to-face interaction among academic work and family researchers from a broad range of fields as well as engage the next generation of work and family scholars. The WFRN welcomes the participation of policy makers and workplace practitioners as it seeks to promote knowledge and understanding of work and family issues among the community of global stakeholders.

To learn more about the WFRN, please visit our website WFRN.ORG. To become a member, please click on this link https://wfrn.org/become-a-member/.

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