When pressure at home leads to absence at work



Sometimes the greatest risk of absence comes from home.

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A blind spot?

Long-term caregiving, the demands of parenting, intense family dynamics or a child with high care needs can mean that the ongoing demands at home exceed a parent's ability to cope and opportunities to recover.



This often goes unnoticed for a long time, because work still provides structure, appreciation and stability. The employee keeps doing their job while their reserves gradually run down.

When these demands become prolonged and severe, we speak of **parental overload** or **parental burnout**. This is more complex than ordinary burnout, because exhaustion stems from ongoing demands at home as well as work pressure or personal boundaries. As a result, recovery can stall, with a risk of sick leave, setbacks or long-term absence.

Online Opvoed Uni offers specialised support for working parents whose demands at home affect their ability to cope, recover and work.

We help employers recognise an often-overlooked factor in absence prevention and recovery policies early enough to offer appropriate support.

The hidden risk

39%

Almost 4 in 10 Dutch parents experience symptoms of parental exhaustion each month.

This goes beyond tiredness or a busy spell that passes after a few quiet days. It is the exhaustion of years caring for a family where something always needs attention.
Sometimes it stems from caring for a child with a developmental disorder such as ASD or ADHD, or a child who needs guidance for other reasons. It often takes the form of intense family dynamics, with tension, care responsibilities and practical tasks that keep piling up.



Almost 3 in 4 employees felt something was wrong before calling in sick.



Only 1 in 10 managers raised concerns beforehand.



Stress-related absence is 2 times as high among women, partly due to combining work, care and family life.



Yet parental overload can affect any working parent.

The parent shouldering all of this keeps putting themselves last, until little remains of who they once were.

Sources: Erasmus University Rotterdam, Ouders onder druk (2026) · Highberg for Acture (2025) · ArboNed / HumanCapitalCare (2026)

Often invisible

For these parents, work is often the one place where things still go well

They are good at their jobs, feel appreciated and have a sense of control. They keep showing up and doing good work. Many overloaded parents say work is where they recover from weekends and holidays.

Parents rarely talk about it

We don't like to air our dirty laundry, and guilt and shame can make it very hard for parents to talk to others about what they are struggling with.

The gap between home and work

Line managers, HR and occupational physicians often feel powerless, because the difficulties are personal and there is little they can do to help.



Until pressure at home starts to affect work.

At first, you may notice a shorter fuse, poorer concentration, more mistakes or a few days off sick. Then one day, it really is too much.



Regular support



If a parent seeks parenting support, for example from a parenting adviser or a service working with the child, the focus is naturally on the child. There may first be a diagnostic assessment, often a lengthy process, followed by psychoeducation and parenting advice on structure, predictability and clear boundaries.

These are sensible steps. Yet they often place greater demands on a parent who is already struggling to cope.

If burnout becomes a concern, the focus shifts to rest, recovery and boundaries.

Both are valuable, yet nobody considers how they interact. You can set boundaries at home 100 times, but if your child wakes up 4 times a night and needs constant attention during the day, very little changes. You can introduce all the structure you like, but if you have no energy left, you won't be able to keep it up. And let's not even talk about 'getting more rest'. **Mission impossible.**

Recovery is hard

Home offers little room to recover
Home is hardly somewhere this parent can recover in peace. Their child needs just as much care, the nights remain disrupted and the treadmill keeps turning, now without the one place where the parent could briefly escape the pressures at home.



Returning too early means more sick leave later, often lasting longer and costing more than the first time.

Back to work too soon
With life at home so demanding, these parents want to return to work, their safe haven, as soon as possible. Full of good intentions, they report themselves fit for work while still far from recovered. A few weeks later they are exhausted again, because the demands at home remain unchanged.

High risk of further sick leave
Of employees who go off sick with psychological symptoms, 20 to 30% go off sick again, and unresolved pressure at home adds to that risk.

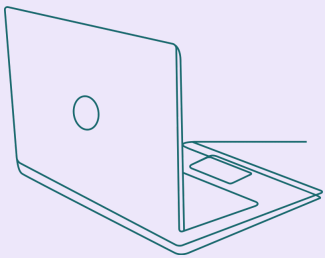
The whole picture

Online Opvoed Uni offers specialised support for working parents whose pressures at home extend into work, creating a real risk of sick leave, setbacks or stalled recovery. We consider the whole picture, including the child, family dynamics, the parent's daily demands, their opportunities to recover and how all of this affects work.

- Specialised team of orthopedagogues and psychologists.
- Our own framework that analyses patterns and maps the interaction between home and work.
- Targeted changes to family dynamics and everyday demands.
- Lasting change to prevent absence and support a return to work for employees who are already off sick.



Online support, accessible and effective. No waiting lists.



We offer 3 programmes, from Preventive to Intensive, depending on how far the overload has progressed. Online sessions make support easy to access and keep the time commitment low. There is no waiting list. A programme can usually start within 2 weeks.

What it delivers

Home life plays a greater role in absence and recovery than we often realise. Addressing this blind spot together can make a difference for employees and organisations.

Online Opvoed Uni is your partner in recognising parental overload and parental burnout and providing guidance and support to working parents.



Revealing the blind spot
Shows how pressure at home affects absence, recovery and ability to work.



More targeted action
Earlier recognition and better-matched support prevent sick leave, setbacks and unnecessary escalation.



Lasting impact
Support that strengthens employees' ability to cope, recover and stay in work over time.



Specialised partner
Our team brings years of combined expertise in the demands of parenting, parental burnout and complex family dynamics.



Human and results-driven
We focus on the person behind the employee, while keeping their ability to work and organisational goals in mind.

When to refer

- When an employee struggles with work alongside a demanding situation at home.
- When burnout coaching, parenting support or psychological care do not meet the employee's needs.
- When you want to protect an employee's ability to work or recover.

Together for lasting wellbeing. At home and at work.



Pressure at home often stays hidden

Work still seems a safe haven

Until reserves run low and the ability to work is under strain

The right support prevents sick leave and speeds recovery

Do you recognise this in an employee?
A shorter fuse, becoming irritable or emotional more quickly than usual, poorer concentration and more mistakes in tasks that usually come easily, more frequent short spells of sick leave without a clear reason, someone who keeps performing at work yet hints at difficulties at home, tiredness that persists after a weekend or holiday, or withdrawing from contact and avoiding meetings.

These signs may seem minor, yet together they can point to a parent facing ongoing overload at home, with a risk of parental burnout if nothing changes.

Programmes

The most suitable programme depends on how far the overload has progressed. After a free intake, we recommend the best fit.

Preventive

4 sessions

For early strain or to prevent sick leave

Recovery

8 sessions

For increasing stress and overload

Intensive

12 sessions

For long-term or complex overload

How it works

1. **Free intake**
A short conversation about the situation and the demands at home.

2. **Advice and quote**
After the intake, you receive a recommendation for the most suitable programme, along with a quote.

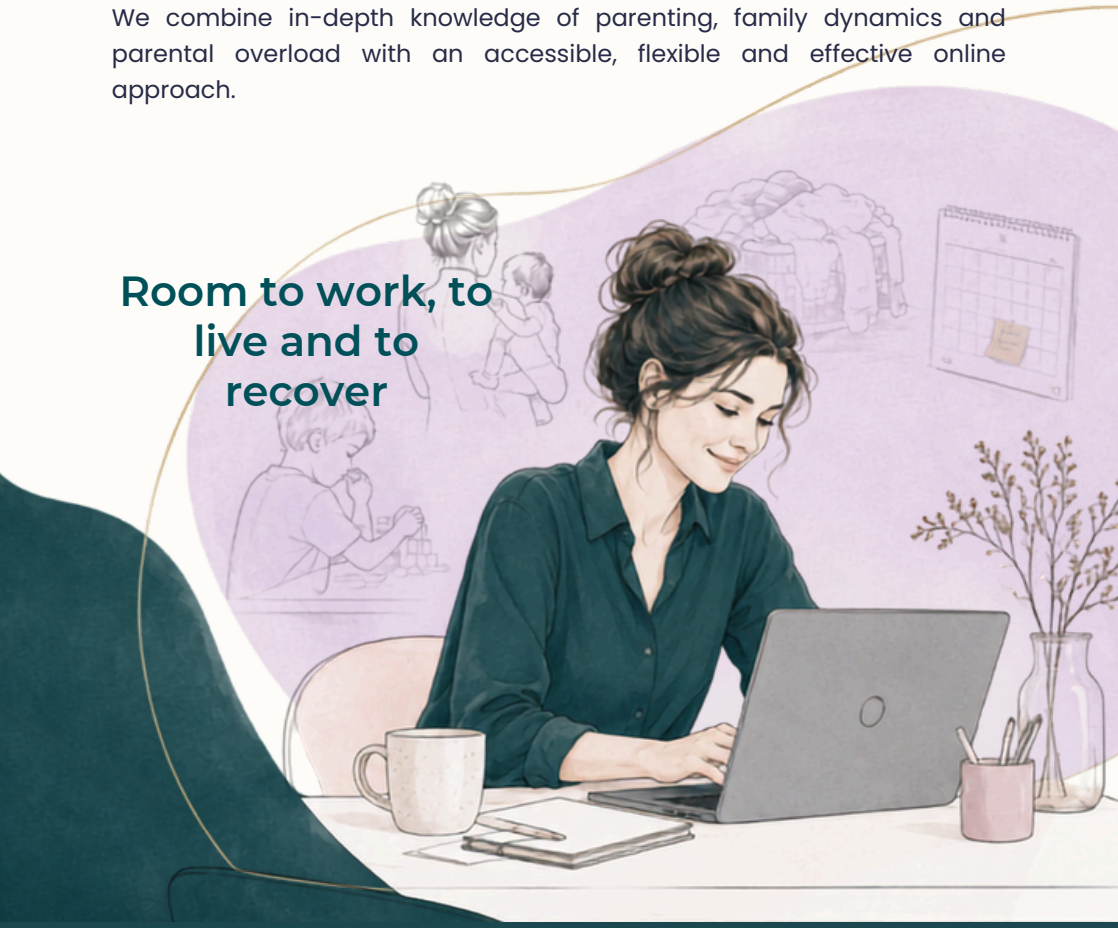
3. **The programme**
Online support from a specialised team of orthopedagogues and psychologists

4. **Feedback**
Only practical and administrative updates. Details of the support are never shared without the employee's consent.

Want to know more?

Would you like to discuss a case, support for your organisation or a tailored partnership? We would be happy to explore the options with you.

We combine in-depth knowledge of parenting, family dynamics and parental overload with an accessible, flexible and effective online approach.



Room to work, to live and to recover

Explore our support and prices, or get in touch.
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Packages and prices →