

CONNECTED EXPERIENCES

WORK FROM HOME TRANSITION

Initial Research document

Introduction

If you don't run the day, the day runs you

Before COVID-19 hit, the option of working from home was available to only some high-end businesses. That percentage has increased now more than ever. Remote work is on the rise now and is only becoming mainstream. Working from home is a lot more comfortable for many people. There is more flexibility in terms of doing work and other tasks simultaneously which would have not been possible earlier. Employees can save a lot of time and money since they do not have to travel so often, which means people will have more time for work and for themselves, too. They can wear whatever they like, eat whenever they wish to and work wherever they want.

However, working from home isn't easy, even for those who have been doing it for years. There are a lot of parameters to look at, such as, distractions, from chores to pets to families. It's also difficult to develop, and stick to, a new routine. Collaborating with coworkers is another issue altogether. There is no longer talking face to face and there are no more casual lunchroom conversations. Working from home can be lonely and depressing. There are bandwidth issues and children yelling in the background which could lead to embarrassment and frustration which could lead to bashing out on the people around. Working from personal space will eventually reduce direct interactions among colleagues even though there are regular zoom calls, the feeling of personally being there cannot be changed. It is also very easy for employees to get distracted due to a lot of external factors which makes it difficult for employees to get the work done. They might have to award them for their work to constantly get them back on track.

It's likely that working from home is here to stay for a lot more people. Therefore, it is essential to think about ways that would benefit people to work peacefully while at home, be productive and get work done.

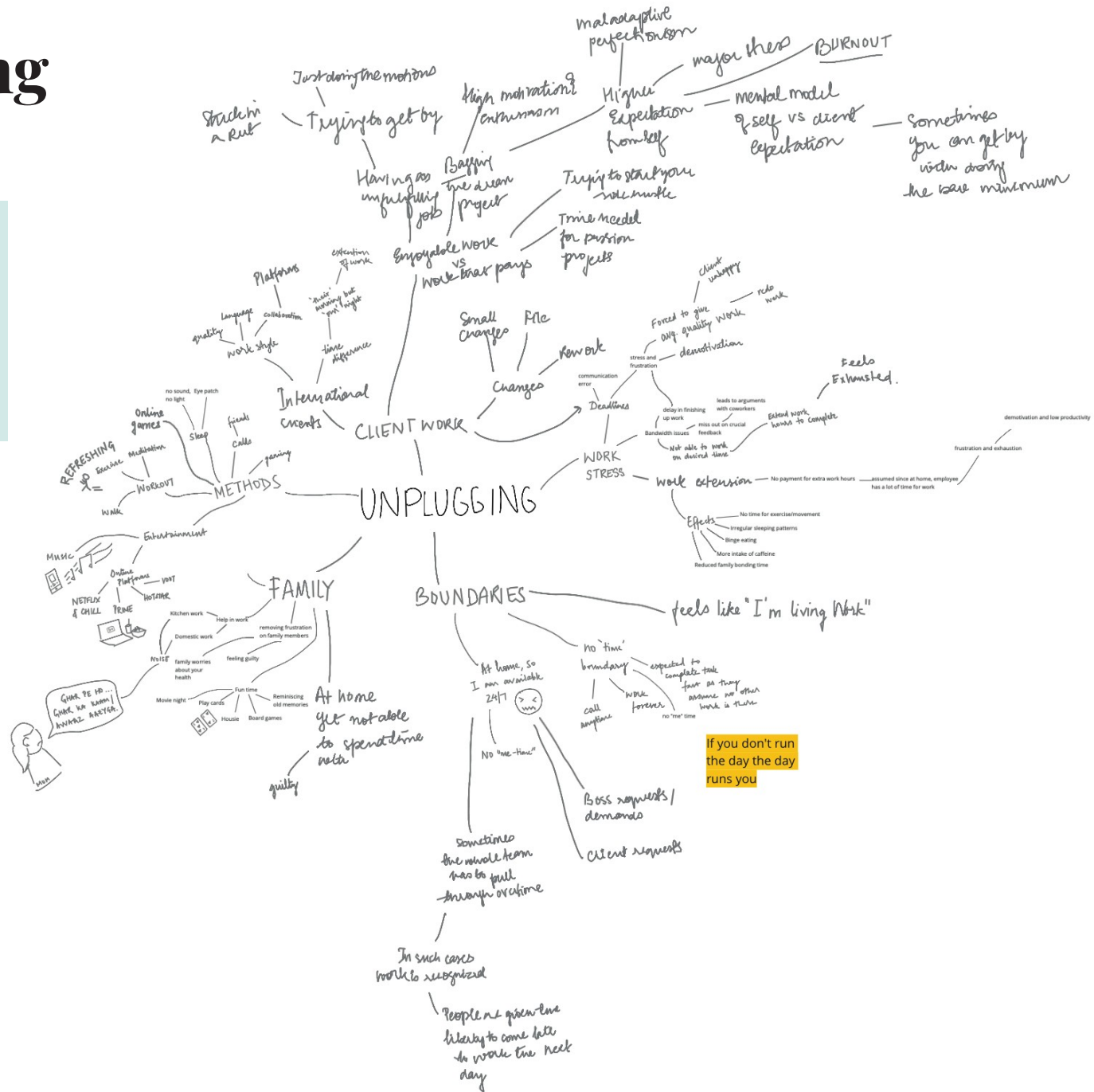
Brainstorming

Problem Area

THEME: WORK FROM HOME

PROBLEM AREA: UNPLUGGING FROM WORK

AUDIENCE: WORKING MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN AGED 6-9 YEARS



“We expect women to work like they don’t have children and raise children as if they don’t have work”

Secondary Research

WORK LIFE BALANCE IN THE PANDEMIC

Mothers continue to bear caregiving duties in addition to their professional commitments. Therefore, the situation hits women the hardest. They have been struggling to maintain a balance between their professional and personal lives in the home around their children all the time. The survey report shows that working mothers are the most to bear the brunt of distractions from childcare while men seek support from their family and friends. The survey results also reveal that more than 48% of working mothers report working late to compensate for work, while 43% of mothers unable to concentrate on working at home with their children.

DIVIDED SPACES, SINGULAR FOCUS

Having the designated space for office and home meant being in a distraction free environment that is conducive to the task at hand, whether it be working or helping with homework. The current WFH situation has led to blurry lines between the two. There is an expectation to be available all the time for work commitments since people are “at home” and have “nothing else to do”. However family obligations have increased more than ever, and the mother’s constant presence at home demands for attention by the family. Working mothers have suddenly found themselves trying to finish complex work tasks, home-schooling their children, and fulfilling house responsibilities - all at once. The “invisible work” of parenting as well as housework, is disproportionately taken care of by the mother.

GENDER BIAS AT WORK, WFH AS A DISADVANTAGE TO WORKING MOTHERS

Working from home for mothers means that they would be left out of some crucial conversations that are informal in nature. Women would hence be limited to the official channels of communication. On the other hand employees who have the privilege to visit the office would be a part of the informal and casual engagement that occurs across hierarchies. Even in work environments that have no WFH component, women find it harder to get the career benefits that come with being in easy contact with mostly male decision makers. There is a possibility of WFH accelerating this underlying inequality by further reducing opportunities for face-to-face networking. The informal but essential coaching that might happen after a key meeting or a big pitch, are crucial for building a strong path forward. Virtual meetings on Zoom do not afford the same rapport-building and feedback mechanisms. With this being said there is a possibility of constructive informal feedback (essential to the learning process), becoming an even-more-gendered activity.

Fighting the internal battle of doing the best as an employee, a wife, a daughter and most importantly a mother can be overwhelmingly exhausting.

Research Findings, Gaps and Analysis

Trying to strike a balance between progressing career wise and nurturing the family is seen to be difficult for most mothers. Mothers especially with young children find it difficult to devote the required attention to them with the constant juggling of work and family. With the pandemic making major shifts in the way that organizations operate, working from home is now to be embraced as the new normal. Work from home (WFH), already comes with its own set of hiccups for most employees, for Indian mothers the problems are amplified multifold. Not only does the mother have to work and cater to the family, now she has to make sure to get it done without the luxury of distinct boundaries of the workplace and home.

Getting the family to adjust to their mother, wife or daughter-in-law to not act and do the duties like one, while she is at home is a challenge to be overcome. Furthermore, the family's response to the space and acknowledgement they give to her work is subjective to their perceived value and importance they have for her as an employee. Fathers go to work, their child identifies them with it. Mothers take care of their child, and that is her primary identity to the people at home. Ironically, organizations overlook this crucial segment and make women with children conform to the standards of the predominantly male workforce.

Fighting the internal battle of doing the best as an employee, a wife, a daughter and most importantly a mother can be overwhelmingly exhausting. Moreover, venting out may also not be an option for many owing to the lack of a support system, perpetual guilt and the already existing stigma around mental health in our country. To aggravate this further, owing up to struggles with mental health is a

decision to be made, since this was her "duty" in the first place. For others being oblivious of deteriorating mental health or trivializing the reality of her struggles is part of the denial. Such dichotomous monologues can be extremely isolating for when she needs it the most.

INSIGHTS :

Primary + Secondary

Motherly duties and being the primary caregiver

Her role as a mother is **taken for granted** as she is always available to cater to the child's needs and wants. The "**umbilical connection**" is assumed as that as the **primary caregiver** (the mother is ideally best suited to comprehend her child's needs and can interpret and respond to those needs intuitively).

Spending quality time with her child

She feels the **need to compensate** for the times she is busy as she feels guilty of not spending enough time with them. Too **exhausted** by the end of day to **cultivate meaningful bonds** with her child

Childs right to seek for her attention

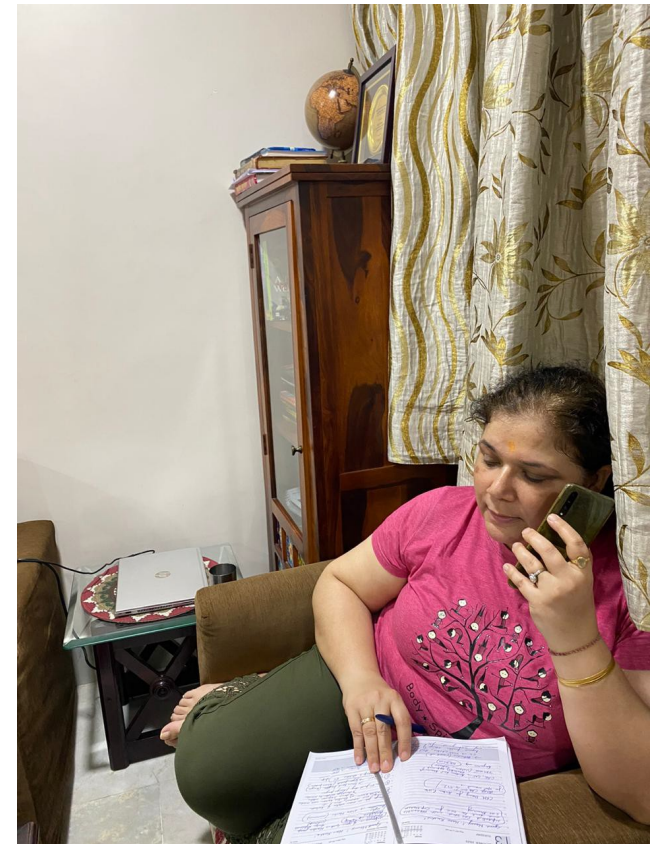
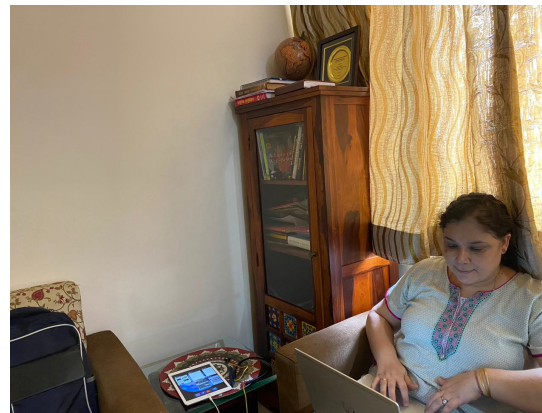
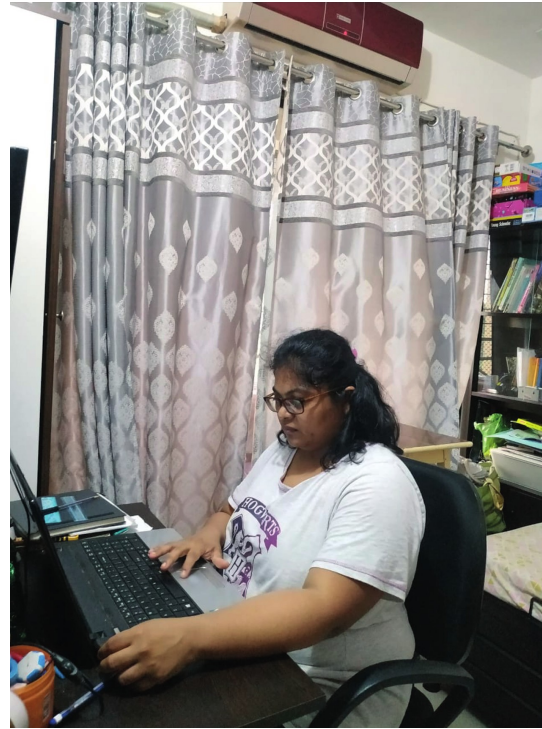
The child (and the family) does not understand the **seriousness** of their mother's work as they have **never seen her operate** in that area of life. The child feels it is their right to seek for their mother's attention since they **cannot grasp the concept** of their mother not doing her **motherly duties**

Work from home transition

Primary Research

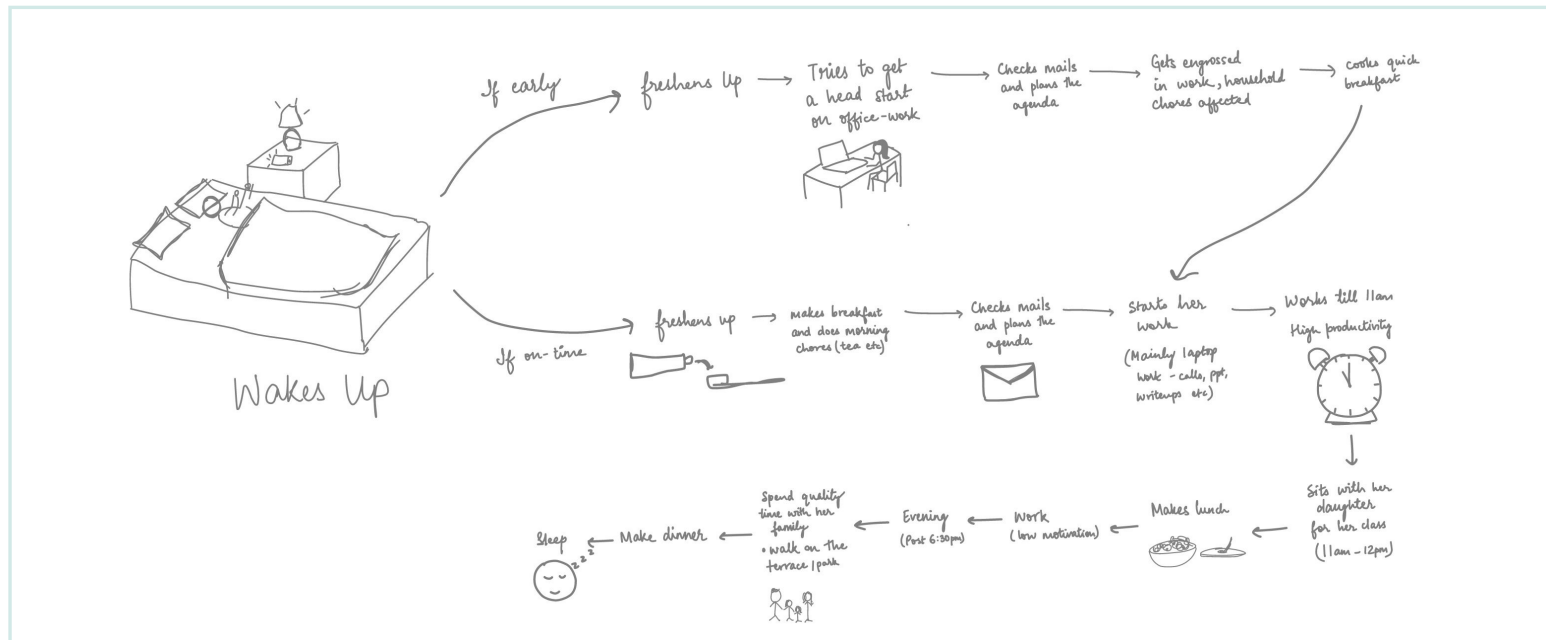
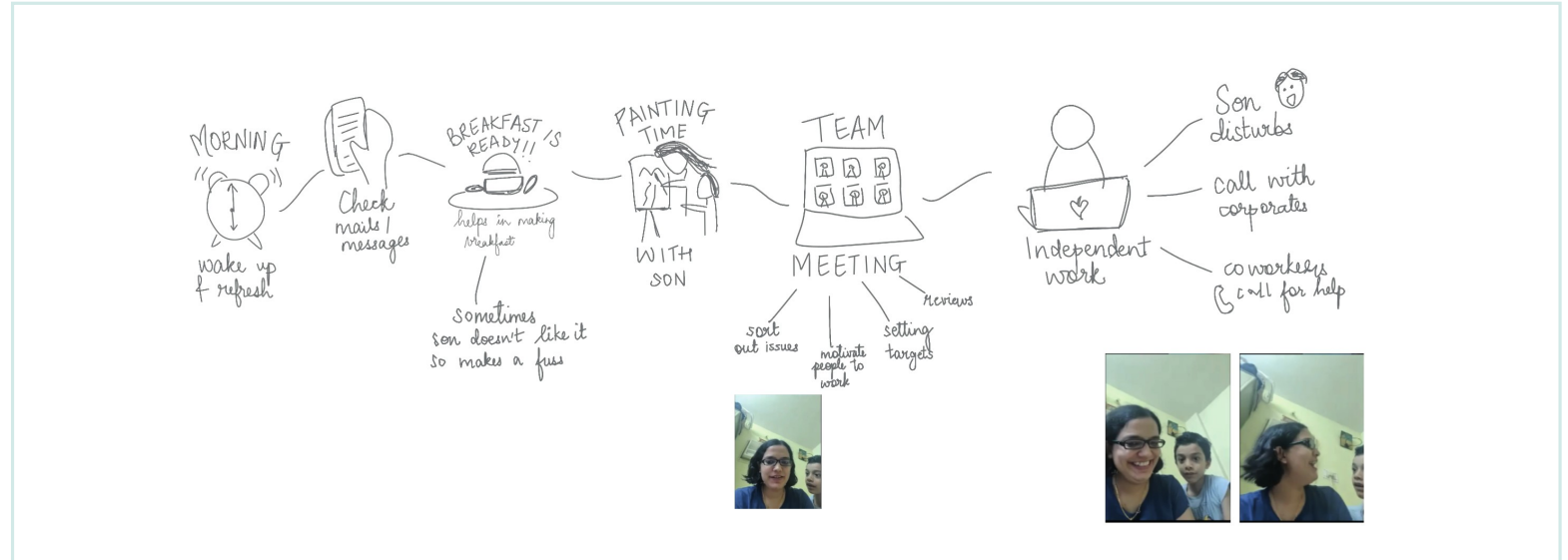
Camera Study

Observing the users and their environment was critical in understanding the problems they face. We observed that most mothers would work in a common area as they did not have a designated workspace. They had utilised their dining table or living room as their work environment. We also noticed the objects they had in their surroundings along with their child's belongings and toys.



Primary Research

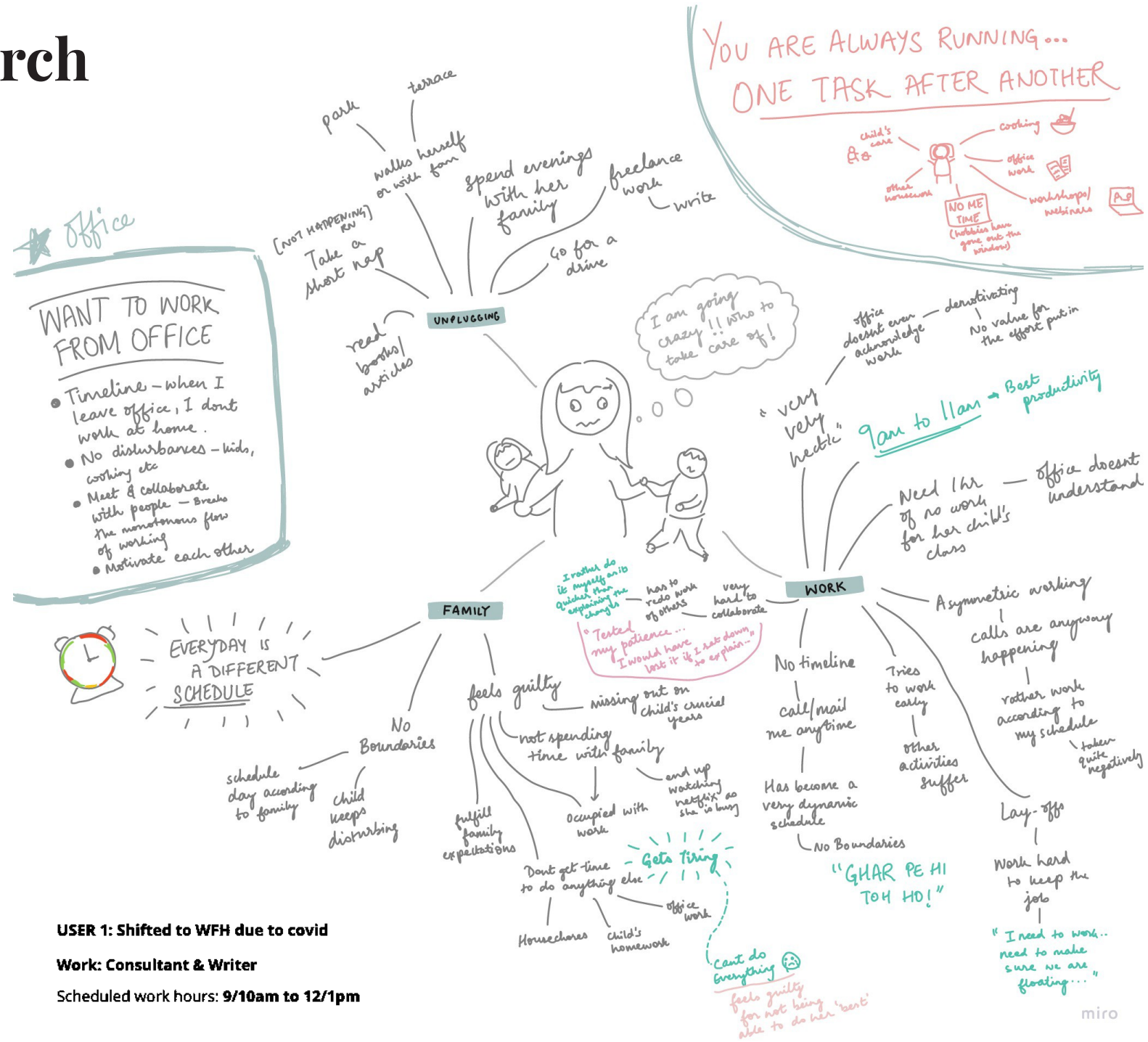
User Journeys



Primary Research

User Interviews

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PROBLEM AREA: UNPLUGGING FROM WORK
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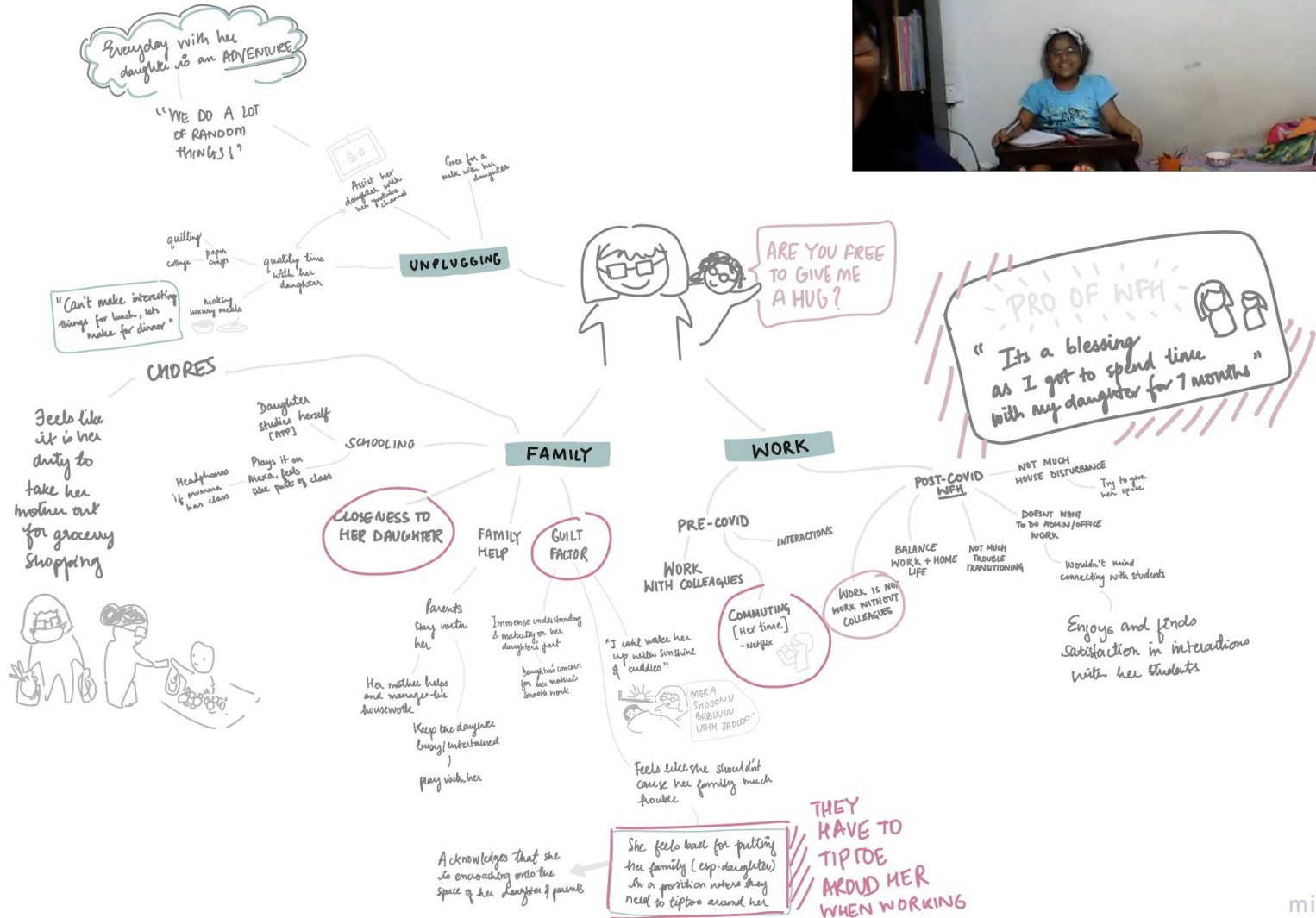


USER 1: Shifted to WFH due to covid
Work: Consultant & Writer
Scheduled work hours: 9/10am to 12/1pm

Primary Research

USER 2: Shifted to WFH due to covid

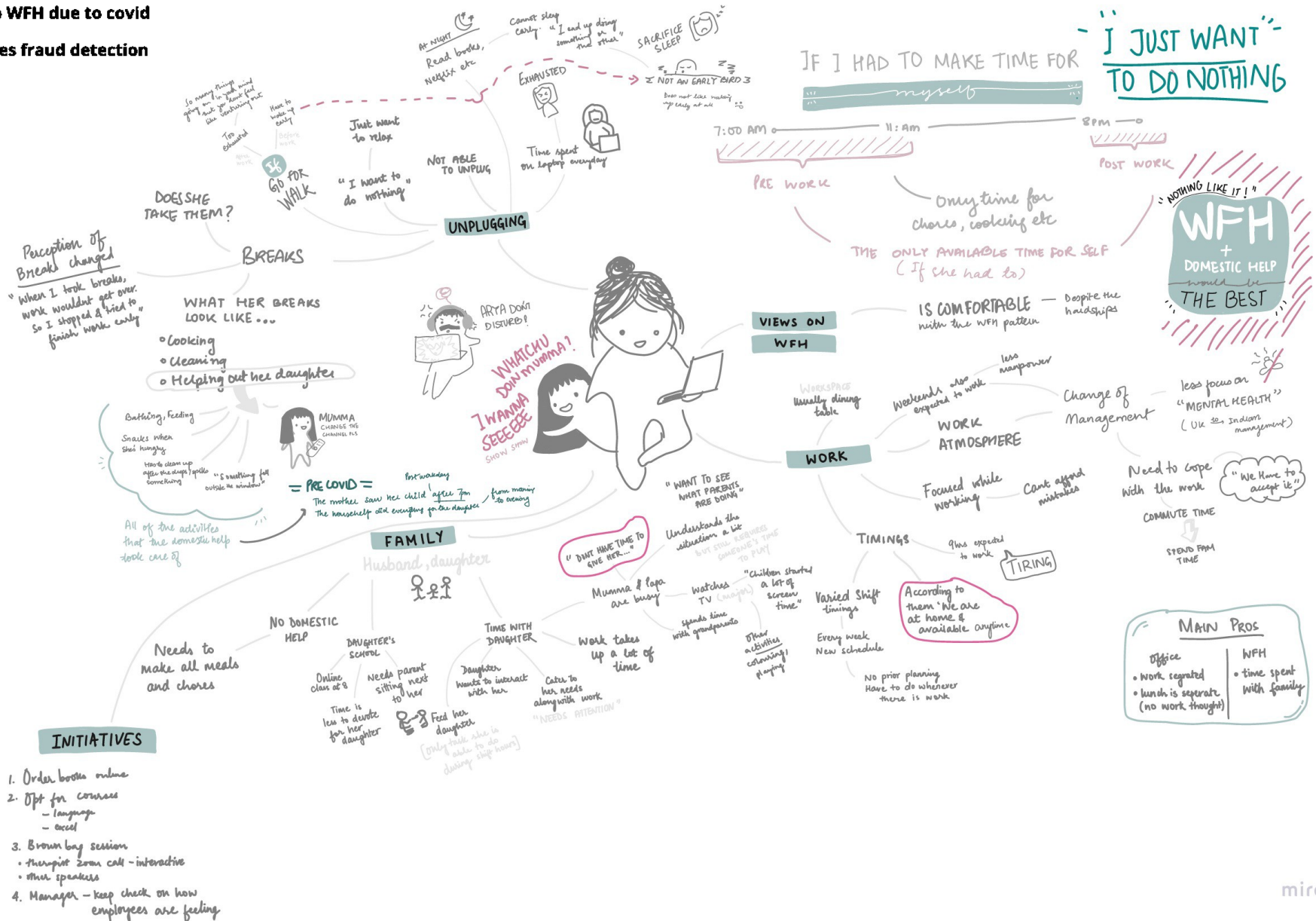
Work: Professor



Primary Research

USER 3: Shifted to WFH due to covid

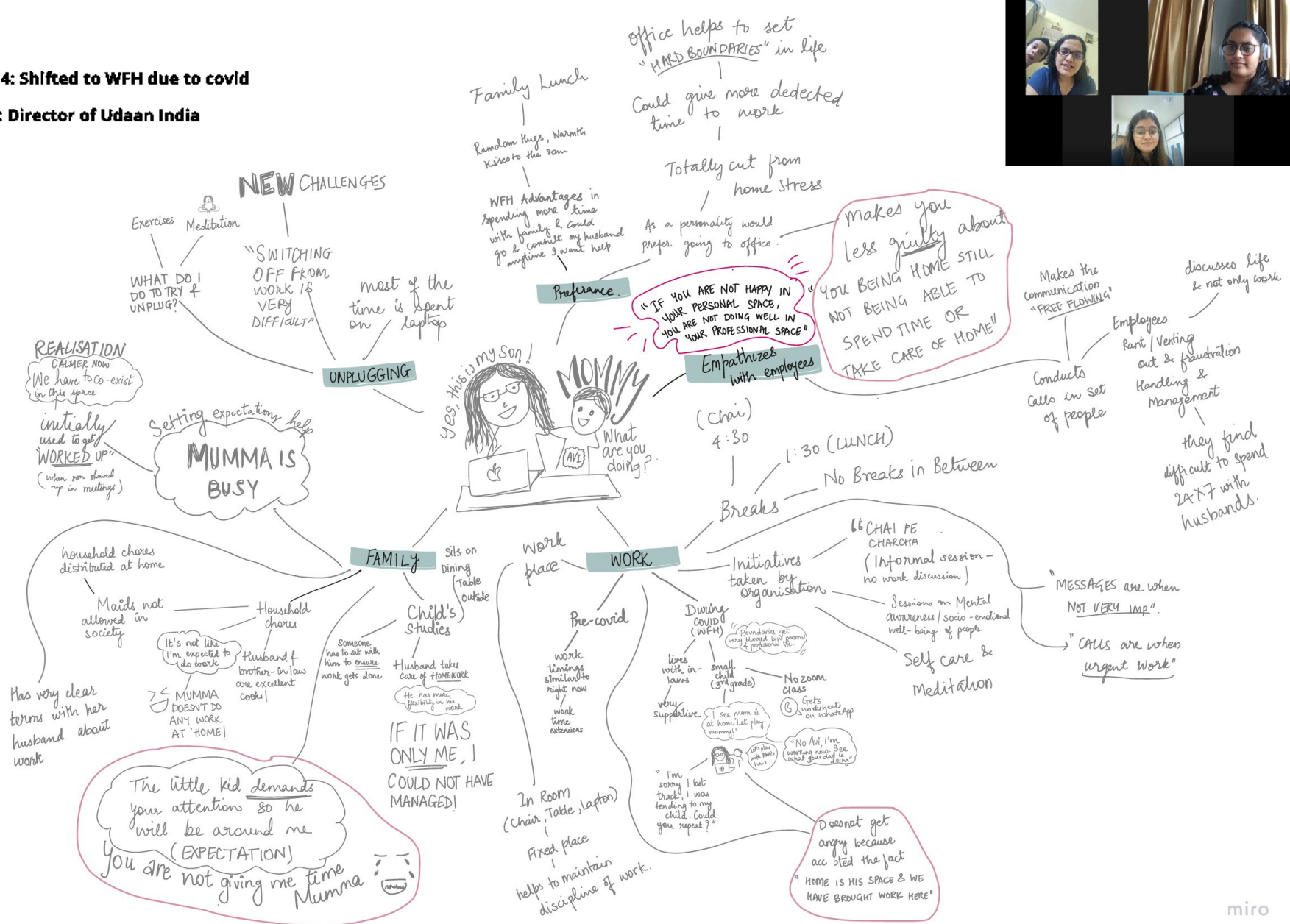
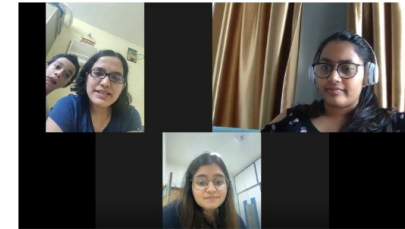
Work: money/taxes fraud detection



Primary Research

USER 4: Shifted to WFH due to covid

Work: Director of Udaan India



Primary Research

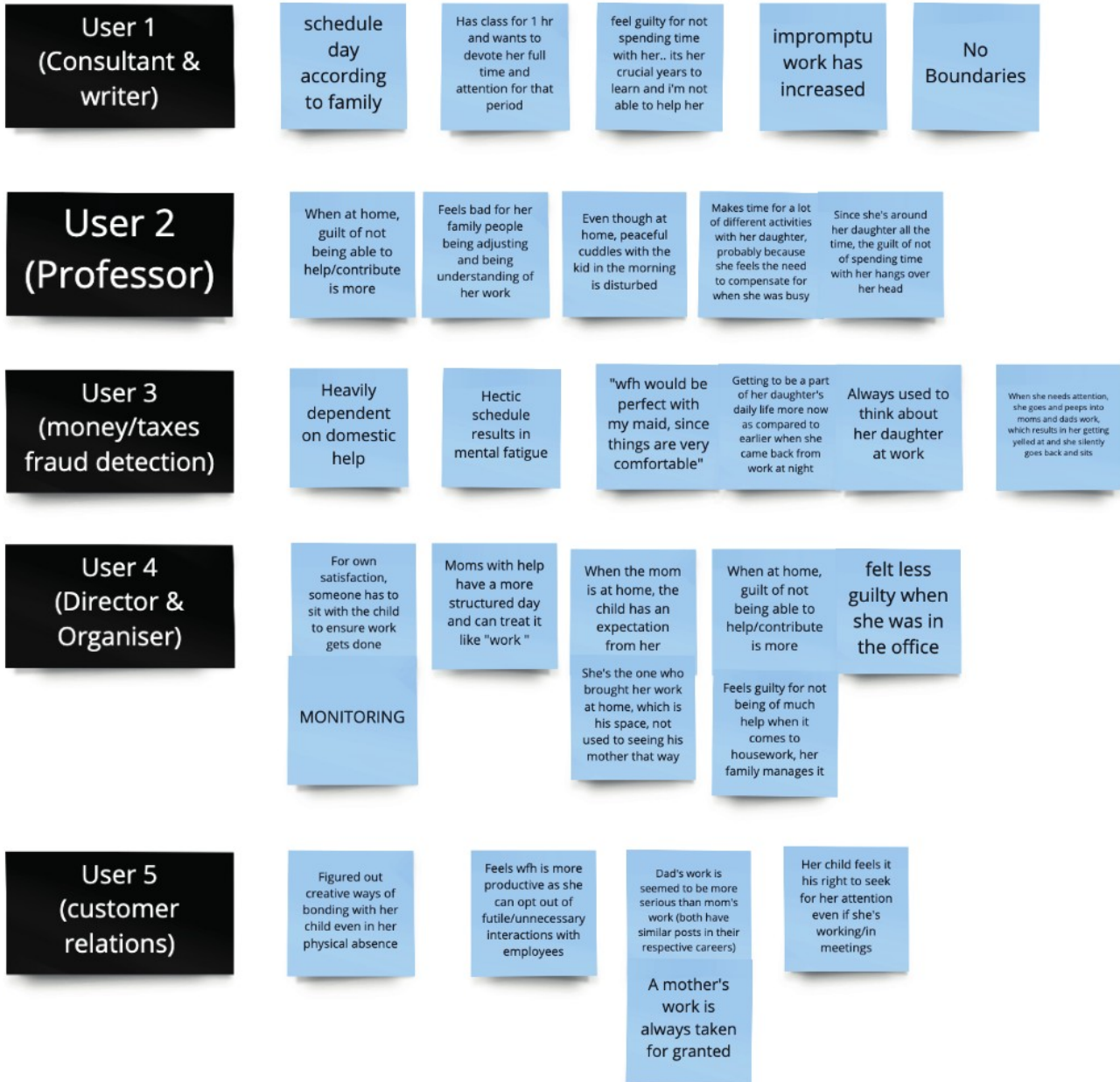
USER 5: Shifted to WFH due to covid

Work: Customer Relations



Primary Research

User Insights



Behavioural Insights

User 1 Consultant & writer	User 2: Professor	User 3: Fraud detection	User 4: Director/ Organiser	User 5: Customer Relations Manager
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CHILD SEEKING ATTENTION

When she needs attention, she goes and peeps into moms and dads work, which results in her getting yelled at and she silently goes back and sits

When the mom is at home, the child has an expectation from her

She's the one who brought her work at home, which is his space, not used to seeing his mother that way

Her child feels it his right to seek for her attention even if she's working/in meetings

Figured out creative ways of bonding with her child even in her physical absence



- Child tends to disturb when working
- Unable to grasp the concept of their mom (who usually asks to turn needs on volume) not giving them attention when they're watching

PRE LOCKDOWN

MOM → PLAYS WITH ME 😊😊

POST LOCKDOWN

MOM → WHY IS SHE NOT PLAYING WITH ME!?? 😭
She always does!

THE HOME IS "THEIR" SPACE & SHE'S GETTING HAD BY MOM, WHICH IS UNNATURAL

GUILT OF NOT PARTICIPATING IN FAMILY WORK

Moms with help have a more structured day and can treat it like "work"

When at home, guilt of not being able to help/contribute is more

Feels bad for her family people being adjusting and being understanding of her work

felt less guilty when she was in the office

Feels guilty for not being of much help when it comes to housework, her family manages it

DEPENDENCE ON DOMESTIC HELP

Heavily dependent on domestic help

"wfh would be perfect with my maid, since things are very comfortable"

CHILD'S SCHOOLING

MONITORING

Has class for 1 hr and wants to devote her full time and attention for that period

feel guilty for not spending time with her.. its her crucial years to learn and i'm not able to help her

For own satisfaction, someone has to sit with the child to ensure work gets done

WORK

Health related

Hectic schedule results in mental fatigue

When working from home, no hard boundaries make it harder to differentiate personal and professional life

Increase in impromptu work reduces physical movement and increases mental stress

Schedule

work is interdependent on her family

Productivity

Feels wfh is more productive as she can opt out of futile/unnecessary interactions with employees



BONDING WITH THEIR KID

Getting to be a part of her daughter's daily life more now as compared to earlier when she came back from work at night

Makes time for a lot of different activities with her daughter, probably because she feels the need to compensate for when she was busy

Even though at home, peaceful cuddles with the kid in the morning is disturbed

Always used to think about her daughter at work

Since she's around her daughter all the time, the guilt of not spending time with her hangs over her head

WHAT SHE CANT DO

GIVE HER CHILD ALL THE LOVE AND ATTENTION IN THE WORLD



MEERA SHOODU BABUUU WITH JADOO..

MOTHER'S ROLE IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED

Dad's work is seemed to be more serious than mom's work (both have similar posts in their respective careers)

Mom helps me with my work. Dad just does his own work.

Mom is MINE. Dad is just there

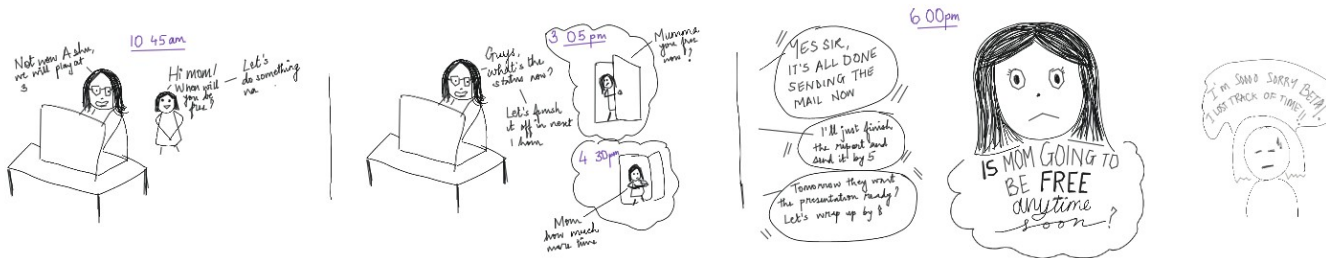
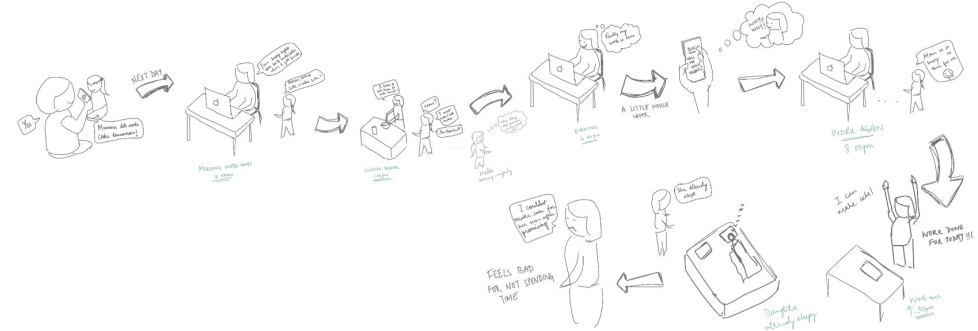


- Expected to be available 24x7
- ↳ later to unreasonable demands at odd times

- At home, sees her child 24x7 now
- ↳ NOT able to spend time with them

Initial Scenarios

1) The mother-daughter duo saw baking videos one day and the mom promised the child that they would bake a cake the next day. The next day, the child kept pestering her mom 4-3 times but unfortunately, the mom got tied up with her meetings and then later in the day, the child went to sleep



2) The mother has been in meetings all day long and sees her daughter pop in and out to ask if she would even be getting free to be with her

3) The mother feels guilty for not being able to help her son with the homework craft and ends up submitting it late



Problem Statement

Mothers with children aged 6-9 years want to not feel **guilty** for sacrificing work over their family and vice versa by **setting up clear boundaries** with their family that are **acknowledged** and **respected**.

Value Proposition

INSIGHT

1. **Guilt** of not being able to give 100% in all areas of life
2. Society judgement: career vs family priority
3. People in house not understanding the seriousness of her work as they have never seen her operate in the work area of her life

USER FEELING

Their personal space and role is **acknowledged**

Clarity and focus on the task at hand

Conclusion

Work from home is a burden for many employees but the working mothers are greatly affected by this. They have been struggling to maintain a balance between their professional and personal lives in the home around their children all the time.

Women's decisions about paid work and mothering are dichotomized as we often portray individual women as making choices between whether they will be "stay-at-home" and presumably "full-time" mothers, or "working mothers" and therefore ones who prioritize paid work over caregiving. The working mother is also characterized as a "supermom." The mythic "supermom" should be able to switch effortlessly from a high-powered career woman to an attentive mother/homemaker without sacrificing her job or children. Yet the "supermom" image and the very label itself suggests that when women work outside the home, motherhood should still be their primary duty.

We expect women to work like they don't have children, and raise children as if they don't work. Because of this, women feel guilty – guilty for working and guilty for not. Blurred boundaries of work time spill into their family time, and half listening to their children's stories from their day or missing out on meaningful time with them can lead to mother's feel like they are failing. It feels like a no-win situation, and it fuels feelings of overwhelm, exhaustion, and defeat that can lead to burnout.

Working towards and helping working mother's let go of this guilt should be the top priority. It eats away, disrupts their sleep, affects their mood, and gets in the way of being present. Going forward, the intervention to be designed should mitigate the guilt of the mother by making her family understand and acknowledge her role as a working employee. It must also help her cope with her stress through organizational intervention.