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Maternity Leave: Policy and Practice

Victoria Gordon

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Maternity leave is a complex issue, both personally and professionally. And, more often than not, policy differs from practice. Based on interviews that highlight the perspectives and perceptions of new mothers, **Maternity Leave: Policy and Practice** examines the disconnect between maternity leave policy and practice. It presents the history and development of maternity leave policies and related legislation, and then provides a fresh perspective for understanding through individual interviews of women who recently utilized maternity leave.

The book also examines themes and patterns developed from the interviews, such as inconsistencies in administration of maternity leave policies, timing, transition back to work, child care, breastfeeding and pumping, and unmet needs and professional concerns. It also gives a voice to those who are absent from the core interviews?women who have children at a young age, men who utilize paternity leave, women in same-sex relationships who start families, and women who choose not to have children. The book highlights why some colleagues may be unsupportive of the utilization of maternity leave.

A single-source guide to understanding maternity leave, the book contains a wealth of information, including an overview of legislation related to pregnancy and maternity leave; trends in birth rates, fertility rates, employment patterns, and the relationship to the types of maternity leave offered and taken; issues related to maternal health; an international comparison of policies; and practical recommendations for policy and organizational change. It not only offers a comprehensive and complete understanding of the complexities of maternity leave, both in policy and in practice, but also practical recommendations for policy and organizational change.

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