

The Motherhood Index

The largest annual report on modern motherhood, examining the attitudes and trends of motherhood in 2026.

Michelle Battersby,

PRESIDENT, PEANUT

Peanut was built to ensure that mothers had a safe space to call their own, to share the joys and challenges of motherhood among a supportive peer basis. What that has developed into is a social barometer for what women care about.

The Motherhood Index has been established to amplify the voices of these women. Combining the most statistically significant survey of mothers alongside analysis of the conversations on the Peanut platform, our aim is clear - to take a data based approach to educating the rest of the world what matters most to mothers in 2026.

This report is produced by Peanut and Nuna: two brands built around the realities of modern motherhood.

What the data shows is not always comfortable. 93% of mothers experience burnout. Nearly half who needed support last year didn't receive it. 71% carry a disproportionate share of the domestic load. And what they want from the future is affordable childcare. Flexible work. A village.

But this report is not just about pressure. It is also about adaptation, honesty, reinvention and not waiting to be saved. In the absence of support, mothers have started building their own systems. Group chats. Voice notes at 2am. Communities of strangers who end up understanding each other better than the people physically around them.

As the only platform built to solve the most talked about problem in modern motherhood - the lack of a village - we see this day in and day out at Peanut - and we're not alone. We are fortunate to partner with Nuna, another brand deeply rooted in solving issues for modern motherhood, all while acknowledging sure it's hard, but sometimes a practical solution is as important as a structural one

Women are speaking more openly about identity, burnout, ambition, loneliness, trauma and matrescence than any other generation. And with that, they are becoming clearer and more uncompromising about what they need from the future.

What emerges from this data is not hopelessness, but a generation of women refusing to quietly absorb the realities any longer. The village may have changed shape, but mothers are rebuilding it themselves. Through community, technology, friendship, and brutal honesty. This shift has the power to reshape not just motherhood, but the systems, workplaces, and industries surrounding it.

We all know that if you want something done properly, you give it to a mother.

Now, it's time to listen to them.

The Gap

Modern mothers in 2026 are more informed, more intentional, and more connected than any previous generation. They are also more exhausted, more lonely, and more structurally unsupported than they have ever publicly admitted.

This is the story of a gap.

The gap between what modern motherhood demands of women and what the world currently provides for them. The gap between the 61% who describe their well-being as 'Good' and the 93% who experience burnout.

The gap between the village that used to exist and the community mothers are now building themselves - on their phones, in soft play cafés, in the small hours of the morning when the baby won't settle and there is no one else awake.

The Motherhood Index exists to name this gap, quantify it, and show where the opportunity to close it lies for individuals, media, policymakers, brands, and society. It is an annual, data-led report powered by the largest community of modern mothers, produced by Peanut and Nuna.

Five Headline Truths of Modern Motherhood

01

Burnout is not exceptional. It is the *norm*.

93% of mothers experience burnout, with 58% feeling it often or almost always. Burnout is no longer an exception or warning sign. It is the baseline condition many mothers are functioning within.

93% EXPERIENCE BURNOUT

58% OFTEN OR ALMOST ALWAYS

02

Mothers are carrying the weight *alone*.

71% of mothers do more childcare and domestic labor than their partner, 42% significantly more. 69% experienced meaningful career disruption. 1 in 10 are raising their children entirely unsupported. These are structural defaults that most partnerships, workplaces, and institutions lack mechanisms to interrupt.

71% DO MORE THAN THEIR PARTNER

42% SIGNIFICANTLY MORE

69% EXPERIENCED CAREER DISRUPTION

1in10 RAISING CHILDREN UNSUPPORTED

03

Motherhood *changes identity* at its core, and society offers almost no framework for this.

59% of mothers feel like a completely different person since becoming a mother. Only 2% say nothing has changed. Yet the concept of matrescence still has no mainstream cultural framework.

59% FEEL LIKE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON

2% SAY NOTHING HAS CHANGED

04

What mothers want from the future is *structural change*.

When asked what would most improve their experience, mothers named flexible work (58%), affordable childcare (36%), and stronger communities (32%). Mothers are building workarounds while they wait for institutional change. 43% find their greatest optimism in stronger motherhood communities. Friendship is a greater cause of optimism than anything else.

58% FLEXIBLE WORK

36% AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE

32% STRONGER COMMUNITIES

43% FIND OPTIMISM IN COMMUNITY

05

Safety and peer trust *drive purchases*.

80% of mothers cite safety as their primary purchase driver. 75% trust recommendations from other mothers above any other source. This is the architecture of decision-making: outcome first, peer validation second, brand third.

80% CITE SAFETY AS THE PRIMARY DRIVER

75% TRUST PEER RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) THE WEIGHT

Health, well-being, sleep deprivation, burnout, and the growing support gap in modern motherhood.

(2) THE VILLAGE

Community, loneliness, friendship, and the rebuilding of maternal support systems.

(3) THE SELF

Identity, matrescence, ambition, domestic labor, career disruption, and the psychological transformation of motherhood.

(4) THE DECISIONS

Consumer behavior, purchasing process, trust, community influence, safety, and the motherhood economy.

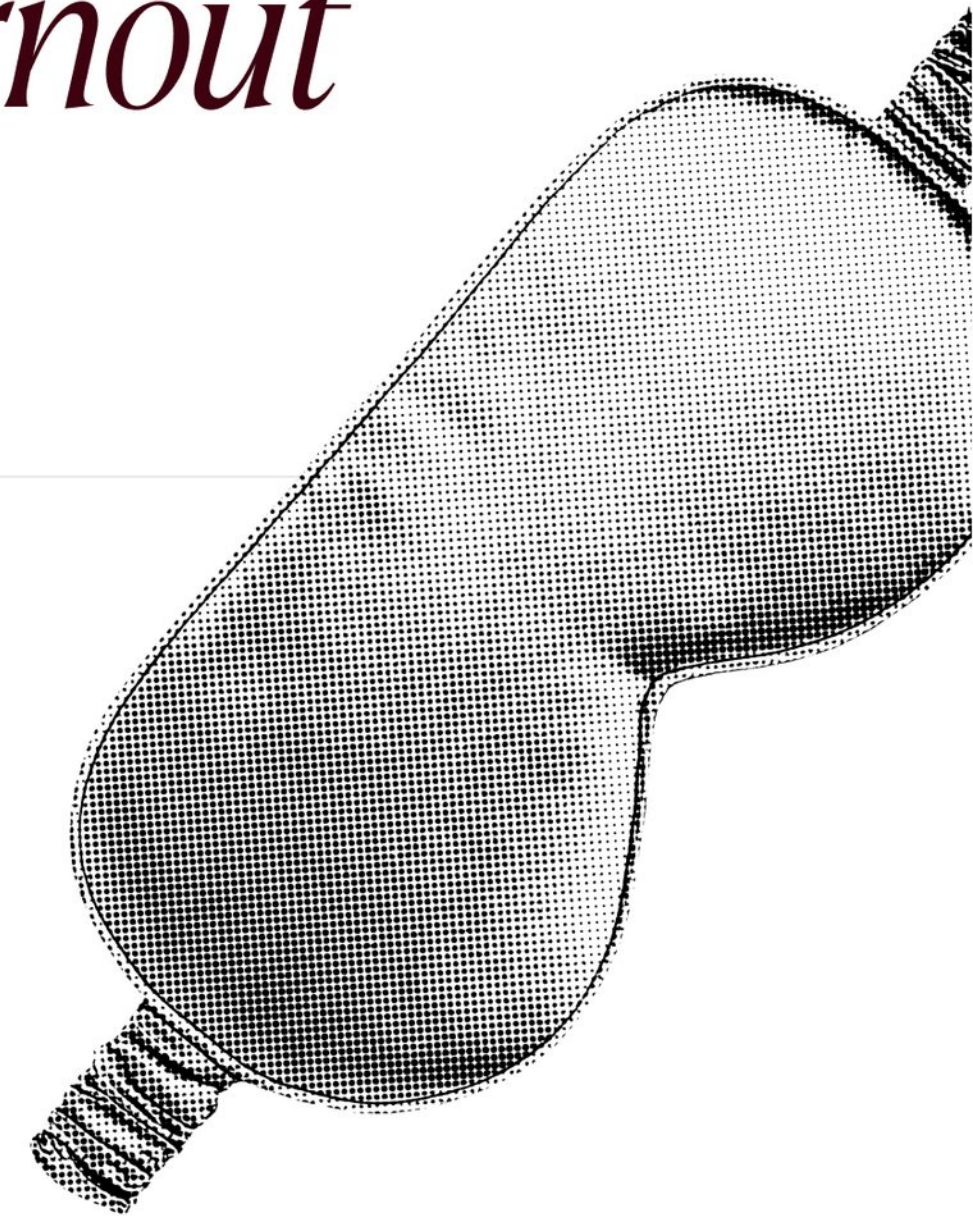
(5) THE FUTURE

Technology, AI, flexible work, healthcare innovation, and what mothers say they need next.

Health, Well-being & the Burnout Epidemic

The Good That Masks The Struggle

The most deceptive statistic in the dataset is this: 61% of mothers describe their current mental well-being as 'Good.' Taken alone, it sounds reassuring. Layered against the burnout data (93% experiencing it), the sleep data (37% surviving on fewer than four hours), and the support gap (48% who needed help and didn't adequately receive it), a different picture emerges entirely.



PILLAR ONE:

The Weight

The data shows that many mothers who call themselves ‘Good’ are, in fact, managing. Managing is not thriving; it’s the only way to cope with an unsustainable load.

25%

REPORT POOR OR VERY POOR MENTAL WELL-BEING.

93%

EXPERIENCE BURNOUT.

— 58% often or almost always.

70%

GET FEWER THAN 5 HOURS OF UNBROKEN SLEEP PER NIGHT.

48%

NEEDED SUPPORT BUT DIDN'T RECEIVE IT ADEQUATELY.

“I think I measure my wellbeing against others I’ve spoken to now. We all agree it’s much harder than it was before. I still function semi-well. But I know lots of mothers that are basically just breaking down every day.”

“A lot of women are depressed. I speak to loads of women and they’re just all depressed. It’s really sad. And it’s a lot more than the stats say.”

The Sleep Crisis

Nobody Talks About

Sleep deprivation is the invisible thread running through every other data point in this report. It shapes decision-making capacity, emotional regulation, physical health, and cognitive function. And it is near-universal.



The *Support* Gap

When mothers needed support for their physical or mental health in the past year, this is what happened:



“For a whole day they didn’t believe that I was in labor. I was 7 centimetres dilated. I had been telling them all day. They were worried about my husband’s concerns more than mine. They kept asking him ‘are you okay?’ And he was like ‘I’m really tired.’ And I’m just sitting there thinking - you’re tired?”

Modern motherhood is not failing because mothers have changed. It is failing because exhaustion has become normalised, and support, from healthcare, from partners, from institutions, has eroded. It is replaced, instead, with the expectation that women will take on the role of building it for themselves.

PILLAR TWO:

The Village

Community, Loneliness & the New *Social Infrastructure*

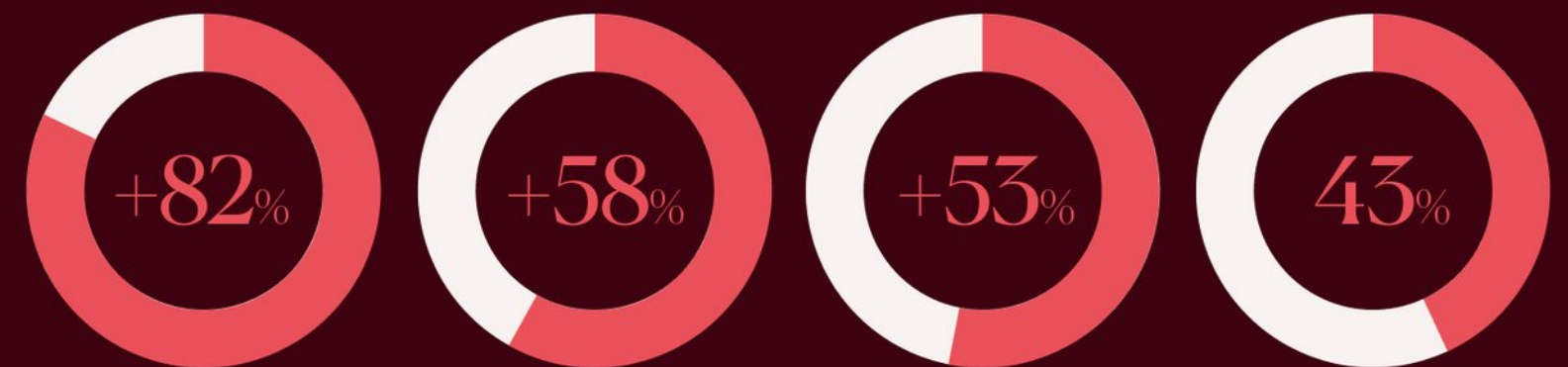
The traditional village is gone. It eroded with urbanization, family mobility, the rise of two-income households, and the transformation of social life from physical proximity to digital connection. Mothers are not waiting for the village to return. They are building a replacement themselves.

43%

Find their greatest optimism in stronger motherhood communities, friendship is a greater cause of optimism than anything else

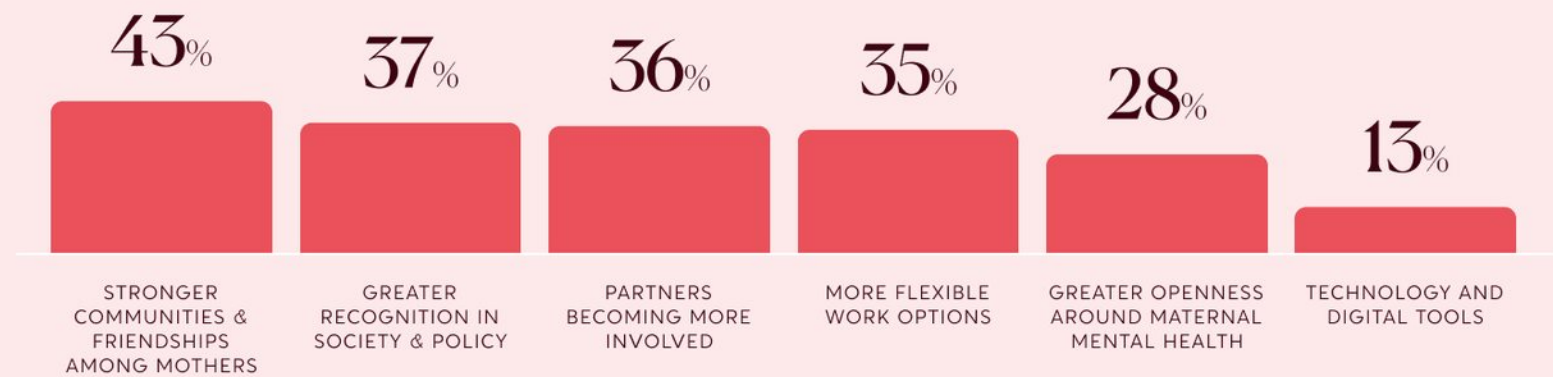
The Numbers *Behind* The Need

Peanut's year-on-year analysis of community posts reveals that the village crisis is deepening.



What Mothers Are *Optimistic* About

When mothers were asked what they were optimistic about (not just what they hoped for), they told us:



Community outranks technology, policy, and even mental health innovation. Mothers do not believe the future improves through building and optimizing alone. They believe it improves through connection.

The Proximity *Illusion*

In previous generations, community was given: it came from shared geography, from neighbours who knew your children and parents who lived nearby. Today, it must be actively constructed. Proximity is not enough.

The most painful form of isolation in this dataset is not the isolation of the mother who has moved somewhere new. It is the isolation of the mother who has, on paper, a village - and finds it is not there in practice.

The Village Takes Work, *Too*

This tension, between wanting connection and not having the reserves to reach for it, is what exhaustion does to the capacity for community. The 64% who cite lack of time as a barrier to their own well-being are describing, in the same breath, the barrier to the connection that might relieve it. Isolation deepens exhaustion. Exhaustion prevents reaching for connection.

"You have your baby and your whole pregnancy everybody's like 'I can't wait, I can't wait.' And then he's here and everybody's like 'Wow. That's a lot. Have fun with that. I'll see you later.'"

"For his first three to four months I felt very alone despite having a lot of people in the house and nearby. People could have been here having a chat, spending some time with me. But nobody really has been."

"If you want the village, you've got to be the villager. But I just don't feel like I have the physical or mental capacity to do that either."

PILLAR THREE:

The Self

Identity, Matrescence & the *Great Reclamation*

Becoming a mother is a full identity transformation. Society treats it as a role change. 67% of mothers have never heard the word matrescence: *The process of becoming a mother.*

59%

FEEL LIKE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON SINCE BECOMING A MOTHER

2%

SAY THEIR IDENTITY HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL

Matrescence: The Transformation With No Name

Women are undergoing a seismic psychological transition through matrescence that society barely names.

93%

93% OF MOTHERS HAVE EXPERIENCED A MEANINGFUL IDENTITY CHANGE SINCE BECOMING A MOTHER.

The question is not whether this transformation is happening. It is whether the world around them is acknowledging it.

"For him, I'm carpet. When he sees his dad, his eyes light up. But for me, I'm always there. I'm not that same kind of exciting - because I'm the carpet."

There is a specific loneliness in being the constant, the one who is always there and therefore never noticed arriving, the carpet. It is the identity cost of indispensability. The person who becomes invisible not through absence but through total presence.

The Labor *Imbalance*

Mothers doing significantly more domestic labor than their partners burn out at a significantly higher rate:

64%

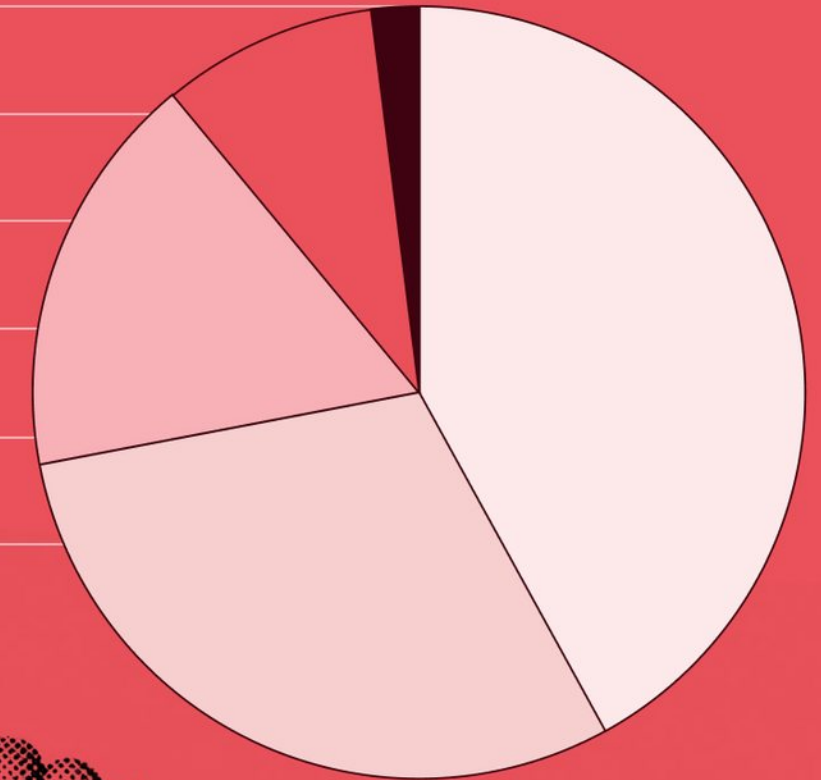
RATE OF BURNOUT IN MOTHERS DOING MORE DOMESTIC LABOR

48%

RATE OF BURNOUT IN MOTHERS WITH AN EQUAL SHARE OF DOMESTIC LABOR

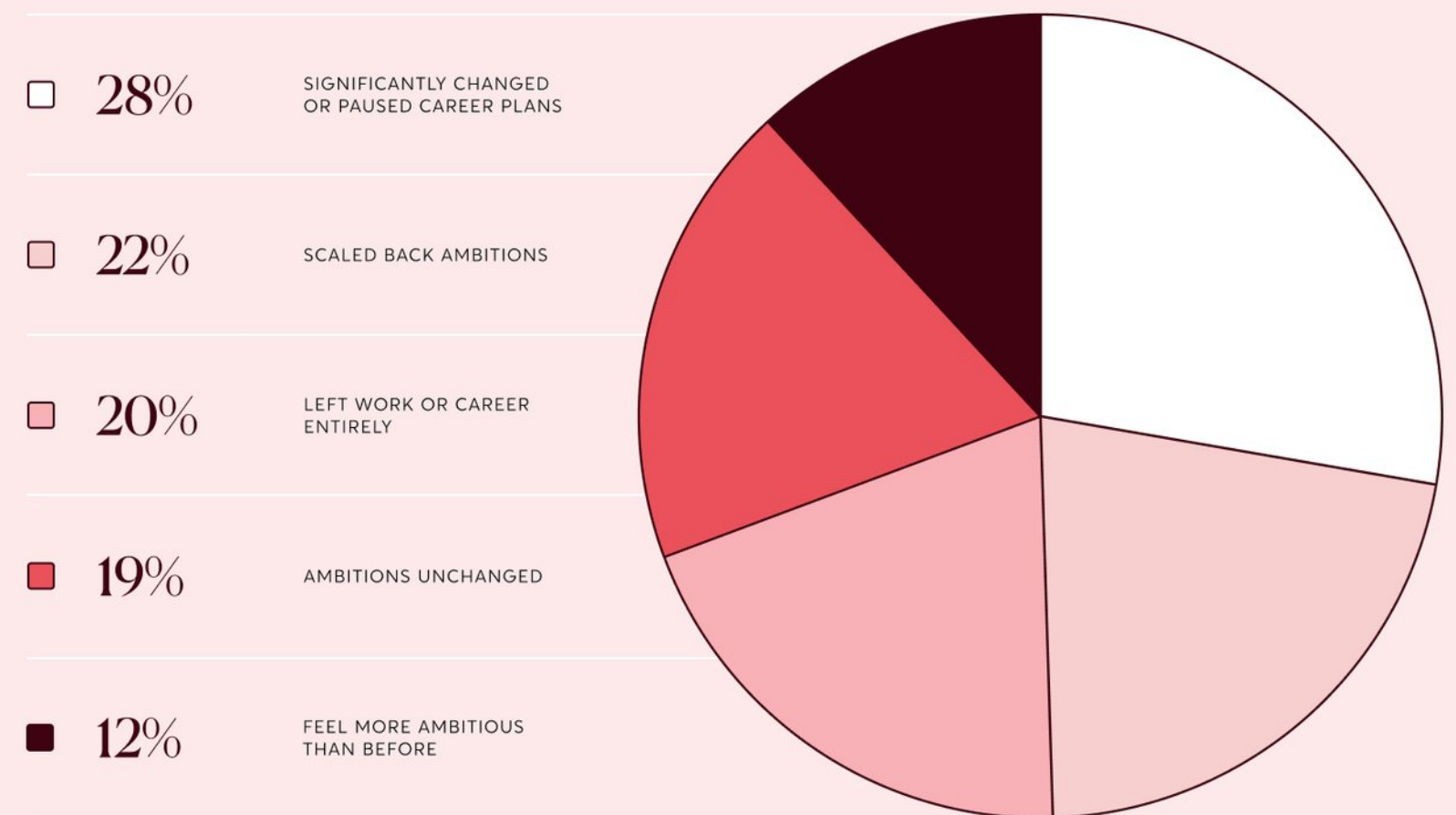
The domestic imbalance is measurably making mothers unwell.

- 42% I DO SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN MY PARTNER
- 30% I DO SLIGHTLY MORE THAN MY PARTNER
- 17% SHARED EQUALLY
- 9% I AM A SOLO PARENT
- 2% MY PARTNER DOES MORE THAN ME



“You start to think: what am I getting out of this? Not even just the relationship - what am I getting out of anything if I’m the one doing every single thing. The emotional labor, raising the children, *every single thing.*”

Career: The Sacrifice That Wasn't Supposed to Be *Mandatory*



WHAT THIS MEANS

What the interviews confirm is that for most mothers, career disruption was not a preference expressed. It was a constraint absorbed. The 12% who feel more ambitious than before are doing so despite the structural conditions, not because of them.

“I left my career to be a mother full-time because it was just too difficult. I had postnatal depression and sleep deprivation. I couldn’t imagine working full-time through that. If I were healthy, I would have probably gone back.”

THE SELF

Who Mothers Are *Raising*

The values a generation chooses to prioritize in raising the next one are the clearest signal of what the current generation has learned, and what it wants to change.

This is a generation that has felt the cost of achievement culture, the burnout, the identity loss, the domestic imbalance, the career disrupted not by choice but by circumstance, and is choosing to raise children with different values.



PILLAR FOUR:

The *Decisions*

Purchasing Behavior, Trust & the Motherhood Economy



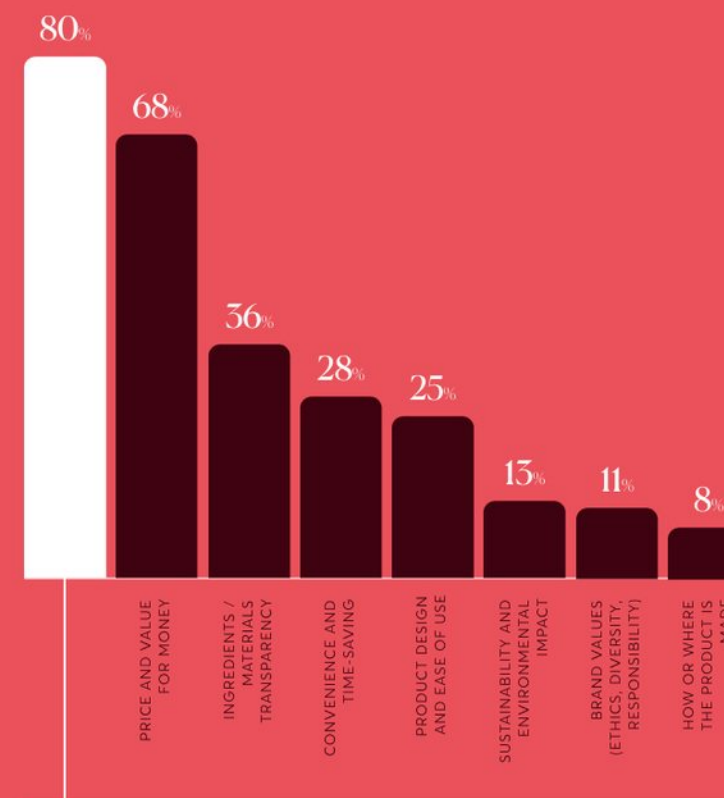
Mothers are the most intentional consumers in the market. They are spending more selectively, more efficiently, and almost exclusively on the basis of trust established through community.

The mechanism of peer trust is active, specific, and recalled precisely when needed - often long after the original exchange:

“We rely too heavily on immediate information sometimes, rather than just trusting ourselves. Back when my mom had me, she wouldn’t have been Googling tog ratings. Sometimes I’ll remember something someone shared in our group a month ago, and I’ll try that instead.”

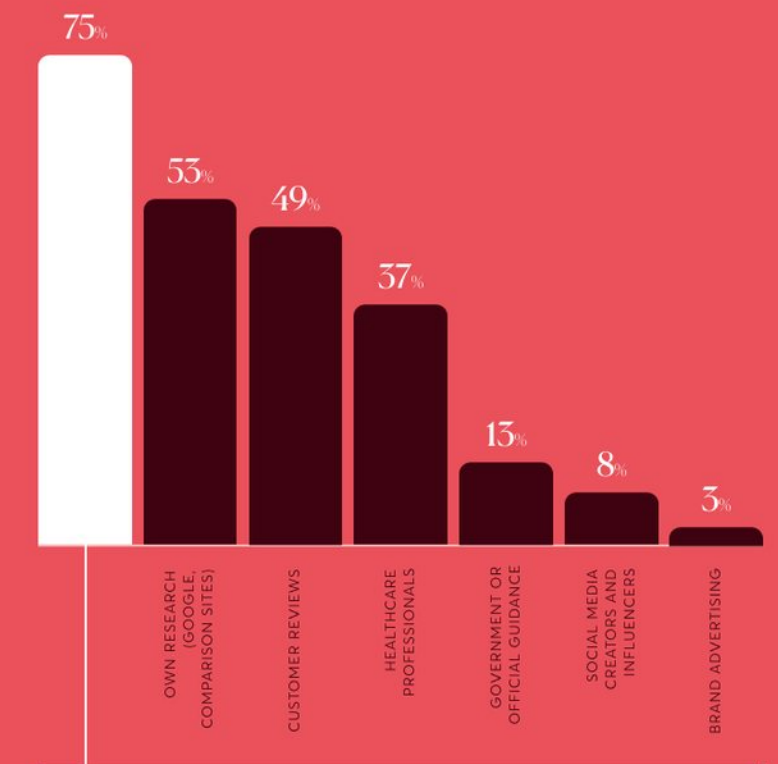
Brands now must sit alongside communities, it is these communities who truly control maternal trust and therefore distribution.

What Drives The Decision



80% CITE SAFETY AS THEIR #1 PURCHASE DRIVER

Where Trust Is Built



75% TRUST PEER RECOMMENDATIONS ABOVE ALL OTHER SOURCES

Underlying the trust hierarchy is a more fundamental shift in how mothers relate to brands after becoming parents.

This recalibration, from adventurous to anchored, is a response to raised stakes. For brands that have earned a reputation for reliability, through consistency and community validation over time, this shift is an asset. For everyone else, it is a call to action.

How the Decision Actually Happens

Mothers describe a decision process that is outcome-first and highly filtered. Brand enters later - after the outcome has been defined, the values have been applied, and peer validation has been sought.

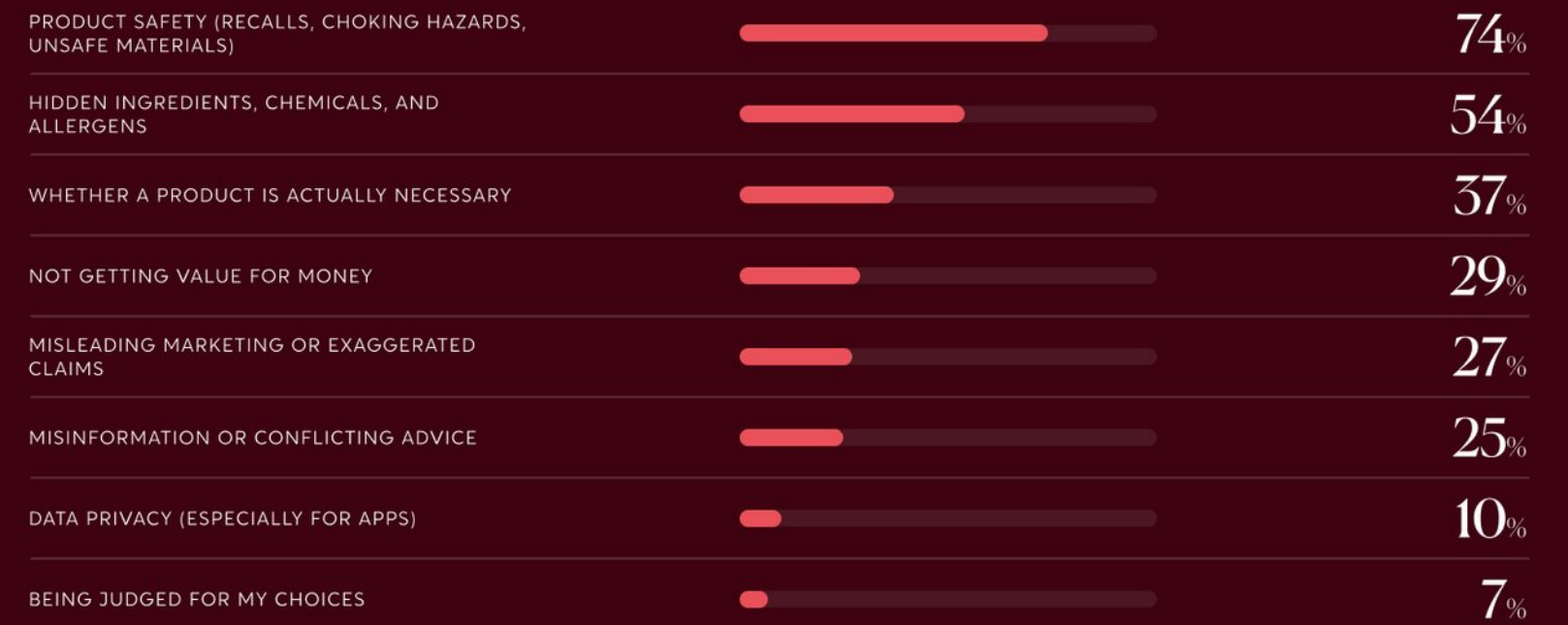


“Before, I used to venture more into new brands or cheaper brands over quality. Now I choose reliability over cost.”

“I start by asking whether the price matches the value - both in quality and in what the brand stands for. Then I’ll look at ingredients or materials, read reviews especially from other moms, and sometimes check social media to get a feel for the brand.”

“When making decisions, I start by identifying the specific outcome I want. I consider the desired result first, followed by cost and convenience.”

Consumer Concerns

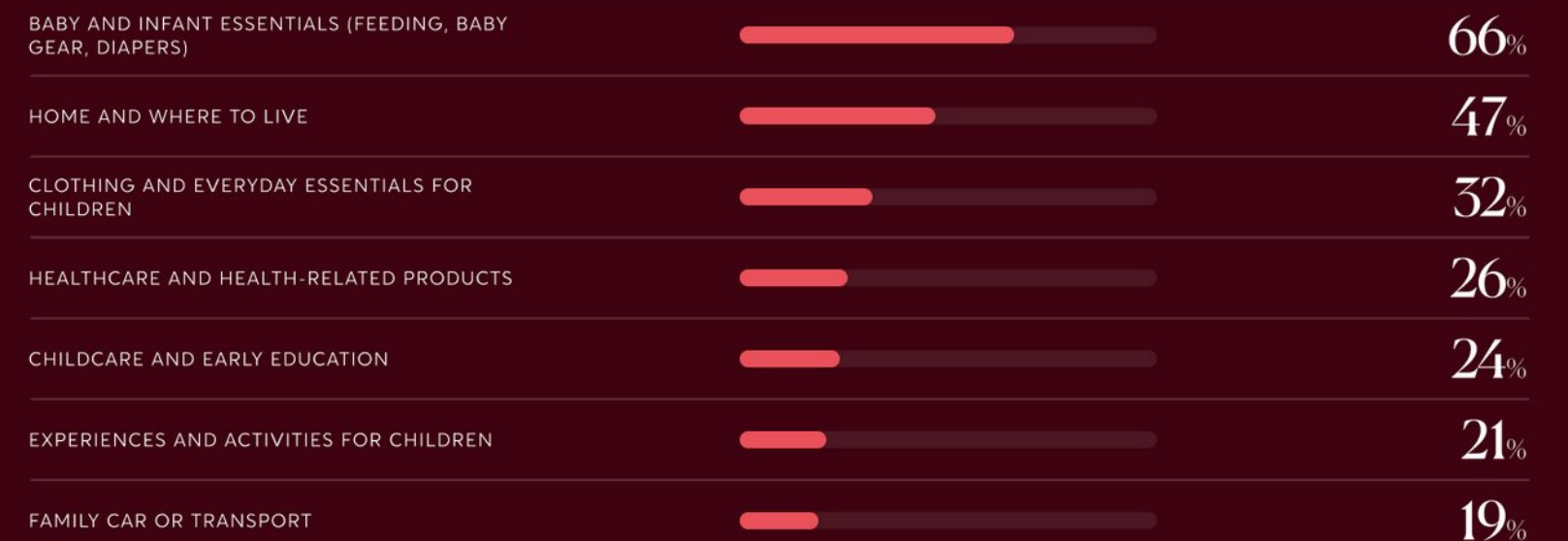


WHAT THIS MEANS

The 7% worried about being judged for their choices is notably low - a signal that mothers are growing more confident in their decisions and less susceptible to shame-based or aspirational appeals.

“I tend to choose brands that reflect that balance - ones that see me as a whole person, not just a parent. Brands that feel authentic, empowering, and aligned with my values usually stand out.”

Biggest Purchase Decisions



In 2026, mothers say baby essentials like formula, baby gear, and diapers are a *bigger purchasing decision* than where their family lives.



Home decisions are among the most significant financial commitments a family makes. But mothers feel more agency and more responsibility over infant decisions than structural life decisions.

This comes down to two factors. For a new mother, getting infant essentials right feels acutely important. Pushchairs, car seats, formula, feeding - these are daily, immediate decisions with direct consequences for her baby. Additionally, in the current economic climate, home decisions are increasingly out of reach - constrained by cost, already made, or deferred. What mothers can actively choose is what they buy for their baby, every week, at every stage.

The 80% who name safety as their primary purchase driver represent a desire to do the one thing that feels entirely within their power to do, right.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Alongside safety, a second evaluative standard runs consistently through mothers' accounts of meaningful purchases: whether something will last, adapt, and grow alongside the family.

"The most meaningful purchases are the ones that can grow with my family over time. I really value products that are durable, adaptable, and can be used in different stages of my child's life. It feels more intentional and sustainable."

Mothers Aren't Spending Less, They're Spending More Intentionally

Secondhand and preloved buying language in motherhood posts rose during the period of analysis. But the headline isn't thrift, it's discernment. Mothers are making greater distinctions between where to invest and where to economize, and those distinctions are increasingly converted into community wisdom.

The emerging norm is a two-tier purchasing logic: categories that carry long-term value, safety products, items built to last, products where quality directly affects a child's well-being, are bought new, and bought carefully. Everything else is fair game for circular purchasing: fast-growth stages, trend-led items, products a child will outgrow in months or weeks.

UNITED KINGDOM

+72%

CONVERSATIONS AROUND PRELOVED BUYING ARE UP 72%

The behavior has matured into a community norm with its own established rules. The most consistent principle, repeated across sampling: safety-critical products are always new. Circular purchasing is reserved for items where the cost of growing out of something quickly outweighs the case for buying new, not for the purchases that matter most.

UNITED STATES

+77%

CONVERSATIONS AROUND PRELOVED BUYING ARE UP 77%

The secondhand signal is also growing in the US but remains at a fraction of the UK's volume, not yet representing an established norm. The infrastructure is different: the UK's secondhand digital ecosystem has no US equivalent at scale.

PILLAR FIVE:

The Future

Technology, Innovation & What Mothers Actually Want

54%

SAY MOTHERHOOD TODAY IS HARDER
THAN FOR PREVIOUS GENERATIONS

58%

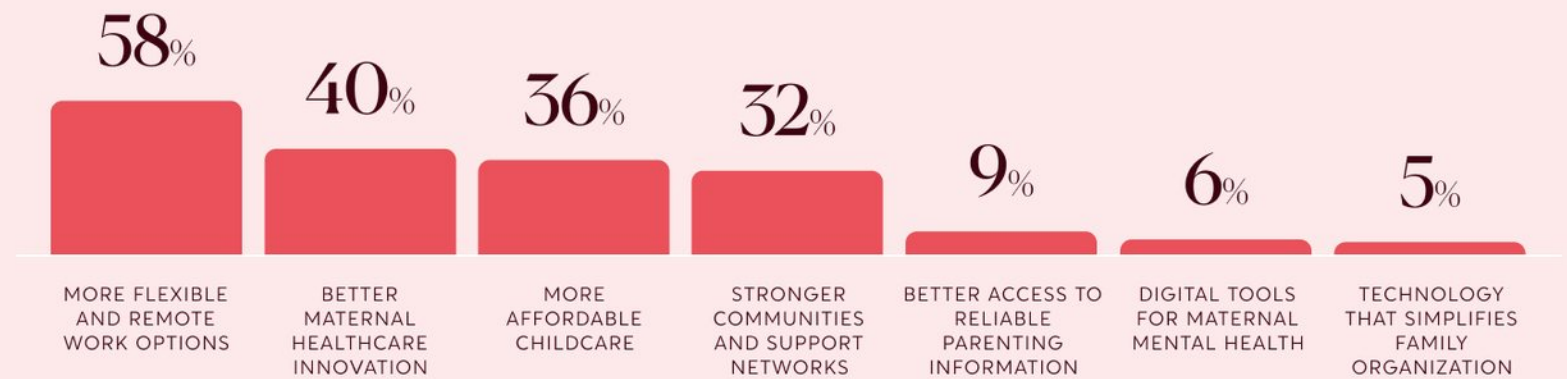
SAY FLEXIBLE WORK IS THEIR TOP
INNOVATION HOPE

Easier *or* Harder?

Modern motherhood is held together by trade-offs. As traditional systems fail to evolve at the speed motherhood demands... mothers are building replacement infrastructure in real time. AI, where healthcare is too slow, digital communities where the village disappeared, flexible work arrangements where traditional employment structures no longer fit, and peer-to-peer information networks where institutions are difficult to navigate. The pattern is consistent throughout the data. Mothers are not waiting for support systems to improve. They are creating alternatives around them.

The Gap Between Wanting & Having

What Would Actually Improve The Institution Of Motherhood



Flexible work is no longer viewed as a perk. It is seen as the minimum condition required to make motherhood functional.

The Maternal Well-Being Gap

Modern mothers do not lack awareness of what would improve their well-being. They lack the capacity to access it consistently.

What Would Actually Help

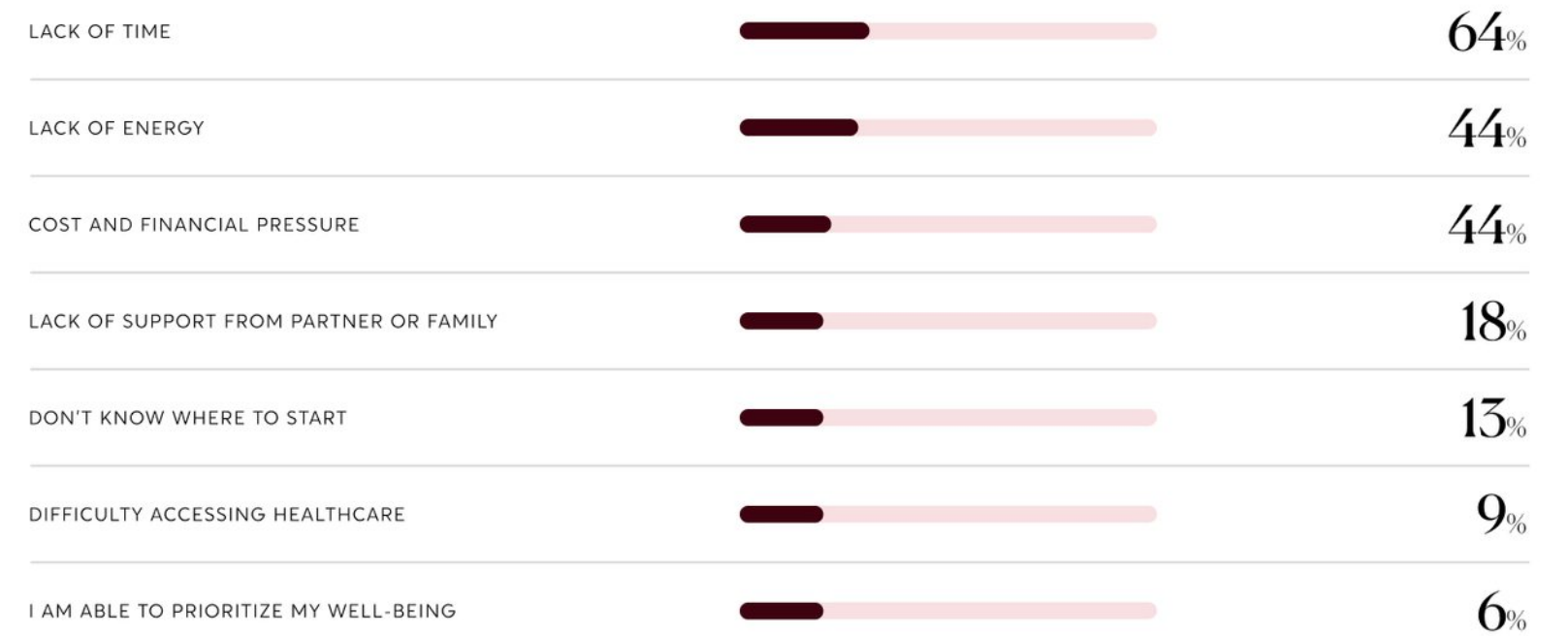


The result is a generation of women highly informed about well-being but structurally unable to reach it consistently.

"If having therapy was something that mothers had access to, even one free session, I think it would change things. It would really help people. I know it's out there, but if you don't have the money, how are you going to get to it?"

"If they expect three days in the office, I wouldn't see her for three days at a time - I'd leave at six and be home at eight. I would have to look for a new job."

What Stands In The Way



9%

ONLY 9% OF MOTHERS SAY THEY ARE ABLE TO PRIORITIZE THEIR OWN WELL-BEING.

Structural barriers get in the way lack of time, financial pressure, exhaustion, and support systems stretched too thin.

"I hope there's less shame about asking for help for the next generation of solo mothers. Maybe I come from a culture where it's shameful to ask. I'm still getting over the fact that it's not."

"I feel awkward asking people for help because I don't want to feel like I'm a burden. Everyone's so busy. You don't want to add more to their plate. And yet I would drop everything to help someone if they asked me."

Modern Mothers Are Building Replacement Systems *Faster Than Institutions Are Evolving*

AI is becoming a first responder in modern motherhood...

YOY INCREASE

+1,088%

In references to AI tools – ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude – in Peanut community conversations.

UNITED KINGDOM

In the UK, AI is functioning as a first-line adviser across an extensive range of maternal concerns: sleep schedules, fever management, symptom identification, medication dosage, fertility tracking, benefit eligibility, childcare funding rules, feeding decisions. Mothers are using it for guidance that formal services cannot provide at speed - and that they cannot always reach at all.

“It’s been my off-duty midwife, therapist, experienced friend, admin assistant, tracker, just general go-to for everything. I don’t know if I could have made it this far this sane without it.”

UNITED STATES

In the US, practical adoption is rising alongside a parallel signal that is largely absent in the UK: widespread anxiety about AI’s presence around children’s safety.

“AI can be helpful, but I was reading about people who used pictures of children to make harmful content. I had to tell my mom to stop sharing pictures of my daughter as a result.”

But it can’t replace human wisdom.

YOY INCREASE

+2,041%

Increase in women validating external AI responses from Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini with the Peanut community.

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Conclusion

In Conclusion

61% of mothers describe their well-being as *Good*.

That is the number this report returns to, because it is the number that contains everything else. Good means still standing. Good means the children are fed, and the job is done, and nobody had to know about 3 am. Good is the standard a generation of women has set for itself after absorbing, quietly and without much acknowledgement, an enormous amount of structural failure.

This is what the data shows, consistently, across every pillar. Not that modern motherhood is broken. But the gap between what it demands and what it provides has become so wide and so normalized that mothers can no longer see it from the inside. Could it be that women are recalibrating their definition of Good downward in order to survive? The exhaustion becomes ordinary. The guilt is ordinary. The domestic imbalance, the career disruption, the support that didn't arrive - ordinary, ordinary, ordinary.

What is not ordinary is what mothers are doing in response. They are compensating for institutional complexity with peer-built infrastructure. Friend-finding up 82%. AI as a first-line adviser, community as the number one source of hope. Brands that prioritize safety to ease the load.

What this year's data makes plain is where to start: with the two things mothers have named, clearly and repeatedly, in their own words. Affordable childcare. Flexible work. Community. The structural conditions that would make Good mean something different.

Until then, this is
what *good looks like*.

The Motherhood *Gap*

The *Weight*

Flexible work is no longer viewed as a perk. It is seen as the minimum condition required to make motherhood functional.

The *Village*

The traditional village has eroded. Mothers are rebuilding a replacement in real time.

The *Self*

Motherhood is a full identity transformation that society still treats as a lifestyle adjustment.

The *Decisions*

Brands must now sit alongside communities. Mothers trust each other above all else.

The *Future*

Mothers are not waiting for broken systems to improve. They are building alternatives around themselves.

Good should not mean surviving on burnout, workarounds, and peer-built infrastructure. But for many modern mothers, it does. The future will belong to the brands, employers, and institutions that stop marketing at mothers and start rebuilding systems around them, with them, for them.



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Methodology

Data Sources & Notes

01 SURVEY DATA

4,000 completed responses from Peanut community members, collected February–March 2026. Quantitative multiple-choice and multi-select questions across five pillar themes, plus open-text responses on key questions. All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number throughout this report. Survey findings reflect Peanut community members and may not be fully representative of all mothers globally.

02 PEANUT COMMUNITY DATA

Year-on-year analysis of Peanut community posts across eight matched monthly pairs: December 2024 vs December 2025, January 2025 vs January 2026, February 2025 vs February 2026, March 2025 vs March 2026. Pregnancy-related posts are excluded via keyword filtering, removing approximately 20% of UK posts and 16% of US posts per month. Year-on-year percentage changes (e.g. +82%, +1,088%) reflect the proportional change in the share of posts containing relevant language between matched year-one and year-two months. Figures should be treated as directional signals rather than precise measurements. Community data captures explicit keyword language only; the true prevalence of the experiences described almost certainly exceeds what keyword signals measure.

03 QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with Peanut community members in April 2026. Participants were randomly selected from the survey respondent pool and subsequently mapped against the report's five pillars, with question sets tailored accordingly. Interviews were conducted by Peanut team members in Australia, Canada, the US, and the UK, lasting 20–35 minutes each. Quotes are lightly edited from verbatim transcripts for length and clarity, with permission. They are representative of patterns confirmed at scale by the survey data and are also presented as individual case studies where the specificity of a single experience illuminates a broader finding.

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