



Even though many caregivers feel appreciated and closer to their loved ones as a result of the care they provide, they often experience additional stress, anxiety, and isolation. This in conjunction with the financial, social, and occupational challenges involved in caring for a loved one, can leave a caregiver feeling overwhelmed. Caregivers are oftentimes so busy providing care to others that they forego taking care of their own physical and mental health. In fact, 23% say that caregiving has made their own health worse (1).

Caregivers spend an average of fifteen hours per week assisting in the care of loved ones. The time spent caring for a loved one increases to 31.8 hours per week for the more than 8.4 million caregivers providing care to an adult with an emotional or mental health condition. Those caring for someone with a mental health issue experience greater financial strain than those caring for someone without a mental health condition (2). Nearly two-thirds of caregivers (62%) have the additional pressure of balancing work responsibilities while caring for someone with a mental health condition.

Workplace Considerations

Caregivers are more likely to arrive late, leave early, or take time off. They may turn down promotions, or not apply for promotions due to concerns about balancing responsibilities at work and home. 15% of caregivers transition from full-time to part-time work, and another 6% quit their jobs entirely (3). The challenges associated with caregiving can lead to lost productivity, loss of talented workers, understaffing, recruiting costs, and burnout for remaining employees.



Employers can play a key role in supporting their employees that serve as caregivers to loved ones.

Here are 5 ways employers can create a more supportive environment for caregivers:

1. Surveying their workforce to better understand the number of employees currently serving in a caregiver role
2. Providing information, resources, referral services, and tools through your organization's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or another centralized location, to help caregivers navigate the healthcare system for their loved ones, access respite services, and care for their own health and well-being
3. Allowing more flexible work arrangements and paid time off for caregiving responsibilities to afford the time needed as care needs change. Inform employees about Family and Medical Leave (FML) and other relevant policies and benefits afforded to them

4. Creating a more caring culture around caregiving by:
 - a. Including communications about caregiving as part of wellness initiatives and programming.
 - b. Providing training to leaders and managers about the impact of caregiving on an individual, and how flexibility can benefit the employees and the workplace. In addition,
 - c. Utilizing mental health training, like the Center's 35-minute e-Learning module Notice.Talk.Act. at Work to support people managers to notice signs of a potential mental health concern, talk with the person they're concerned about, and act by connecting them with the right services and supports.

5. Organizing Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to create communities for caregivers that provide support, help reduce isolation, and cultivate idea-sharing and problem-solving.

Workplace Policies to Consider Putting into Practice

- Paid sick days
- Flexible work hours
- Hybrid or work-from-home policies
- Paid caregiver leave
- Programs to help caregivers (e.g. paid backup care assistance and referrals for advanced care needs, such as memory care)
- Online Resources (local caregiving resources)
- Expert Consultations
- Counseling
- Leadership communication about the important role of caregiving to reduce shame and embarrassment. Testimonials from leaders who are or have been caregivers can be powerful in demonstrating understanding and empathy.
- Regular communication about benefits, including manager training and education so employees are better equipped to refer those who need access to the services and supports offered.
- Survey employees to determine if current offerings are valuable, and if not, adjust benefits and offerings accordingly if possible.



To Learn More

1. AARP Public Policy Institute, Caregiving in the United States 2020
<https://www.aarp.org/ppi/info-2020/caregiving-in-the-united-states.html>
2. National Alliance for Caregiving & AARP, Caregiving in the U.S. 2020 Study
https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys_statistics/ltc/2021/family-caregivers-cost-survey-2021.doi.10.26419-2Fres.00473.001.pdf
3. SHRM, Supporting Employees with Caregiving Responsibilities
<https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/spring2022/pages/supporting-employees-with-caregiving-responsibilities.aspx>

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