

TIPS & TOOLS FOR EMPLOYERS

Supporting employees to balance care and work responsibilities



April 7, 2015
NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVER DAY
Care & Work - A Balancing Act

1. KNOW THE IMPACT EMPLOYEE CAREGIVERS HAVE ON YOUR BOTTOM LINE.

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE CAREGIVERS IS GOOD BUSINESS. Most of your employees will take on a caring role at least once during their time with your organization. In fact, 3 out of 10 members of your workforce have already taken on a caring role to support someone with a diminishing physical ability, a debilitating cognitive condition or a chronic life-limiting illness—all while balancing their paid employment. Fifty percent of employee caregivers are between the ages of 45 to 65, in their peak earning years with valuable skills and experience. Developing strategies to support your employee caregivers will help you retain skilled workers and decrease recruiting and training costs. Check out this infographic: [Work & Care: A Balancing Act](#).

Check the costs of lost productivity in your organization by using the online eldercare calculator created by Met Life's Mature Market Institute available at www.eldercarecalculator.org

Ideas on how to frame a business case for work-life balance are included in 'Building the Business Case for Work-Life Programs' from the Boston College Center for Work and Family.

Go to www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/research/pdf/BCCWF_Business_Case_EBS.pdf



2. RECOGNIZE EMPLOYEE CAREGIVERS.

REFRAME THE CONVERSATION. Many caregivers do not identify themselves as a caregiver. The first step in supporting employee caregivers is to help them self-identify and realize that balancing care and work responsibilities is not a normal situation. Consider including a specific question about balancing work and care responsibilities in staff satisfaction surveys to assess and understand the needs of your employees.

LEARN WHO CAREGIVERS ARE AND WHAT THEY DO. It's important to understand caregivers' characteristics, the types of help they provide, the number of hours of care they give and the impact providing care has on their lives. Learn more about caregivers through Statistics Canada's 2012 'General Social Survey Portraits of Caregivers' available at www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2013001-eng.htm. 'Caregivers in the Healthcare Workplace'. See also findings from a 2008-2011 Action Research Project, 'Caregivers in the Healthcare Workplace', to learn more on the issues facing health care employees who also provide care to family members at home-visit www.ccc-ccan.ca/media.php?mid=423



Balancing care and work responsibilities is not a normal situation

3. MAKE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT PART OF YOUR CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY.

EDUCATE YOUR TEAM AND UPDATE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS. Equip your HR leaders with the knowledge and tools to respond to the needs of employee caregivers. A good resource for recognizing and accommodating employee's responsibilities for providing end-of-life care to loved ones is the 2014 Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) and Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) survey results on corporate resources for compassionate care leave policies.

The survey is available at www.hrpa.ca/Documents/360/Compassionate_Care_Policy.pdf.



Equip leaders with knowledge

4. BE FLEXIBLE AND CREATIVE.

CAREGIVING CAN BE UNPREDICTABLE. Employee caregivers' needs differ depending on the caring situation they face, and providing flexible work accommodations is critical. Explore a variety of options currently used by employers across the country, including flex time, telecommuting, job sharing, compressed work week, personal days off, bank of leave and flexible work locations. To learn more, check out the ESDC Report 'When Work and Caregiving Collide' at www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/seniors/reports/cec.shtml.



Flexible work locations

5. PROVIDE EMPLOYEE CAREGIVERS WITH NECESSARY INFORMATION.

EMPLOYEE CAREGIVERS NEED TO KNOW WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE. Include caregiver information and links to resources for caregivers on your internal website or in your regular corporate communications. Knowing how and who to access for external supports is critical for caregivers. Information about home care, long-term care, community support programs, respite care and legal assistance is available through the federal government's 'Information for Caregivers' portal at www.seniors.gc.ca/eng/sb/caregivers/index.shtml.



Link to resources

6. KNOW YOUR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS.

HUMAN RIGHTS LAW PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION BASED ON FAMILY STATUS. The courts have determined that family status protections extend to a person's family caregiving responsibilities. This means that when employees must care for a family member, employers have a legal obligation to accommodate those employees. This is best achieved through flexible work arrangements that enable employees to care for a family member and continue to do their work. For more information, check out the Canadian Human Rights Commission report 'Family Status and Human Rights' at www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/sites/default/files/a_guide_to_balancing_work.pdf.

To learn more about caregiving as a human rights issue within Canada and internationally, as well as to view interviews with leading caregiving experts in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, check out 'Beyond Recognition – Caregiving & Human Rights in Canada: A Policy Brief' at www.ccc-ccan.ca/media.php?mid=421.



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7. EVALUATE YOUR COMMITMENT TO A SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT.

CARING INVOLVES ALL OF US. The number of employee caregivers will increase as our population ages and we live longer with chronic and life-limiting illness. Canadian employers will feel a substantial impact. Now is the time to focus on the benefits of retaining skilled workers and helping employees to stay healthy and productive. A supportive workplace environment that recognizes and responds to the unique needs of employee caregivers requires multiple approaches. Regularly evaluate your organization on the following elements:

- ✓ There is a strong commitment from the leadership team.
- ✓ Human Resource and executive level leader have a good knowledge of employee caregiver challenges.
- ✓ There are written policies or procedures to guide managers and staff in supporting employee caregivers.
- ✓ Resources are available and easily accessible for employee caregivers.
- ✓ Innovative approaches including the application of new technologies have been considered in your employee caregiver support programs.
- ✓ A comprehensive communication strategy that targets all employees and recognizes the commitment and dedication of employee caregivers.



As the number of employee caregivers increases as our population ages, it's important for the employee caregiver to have a supportive workplace environment.



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CAREGIVER COALITION
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ABOUT THE CANADIAN CAREGIVER COALITION | Established in 2000, the Canadian Caregiver Coalition (CCC) is a virtual alliance of diverse partner organizations that work collectively, and autonomously, to identify and respond to the needs of caregivers in Canada. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for family caregivers through advocacy and synergistic partnerships. Together we strive to achieve our vision of "a Canada that recognizes, respects, and values the integral role of family caregivers in society."

www.ccc-ccan.ca