Helping Your Business, While Helping Your Employees who also Provide Family Care

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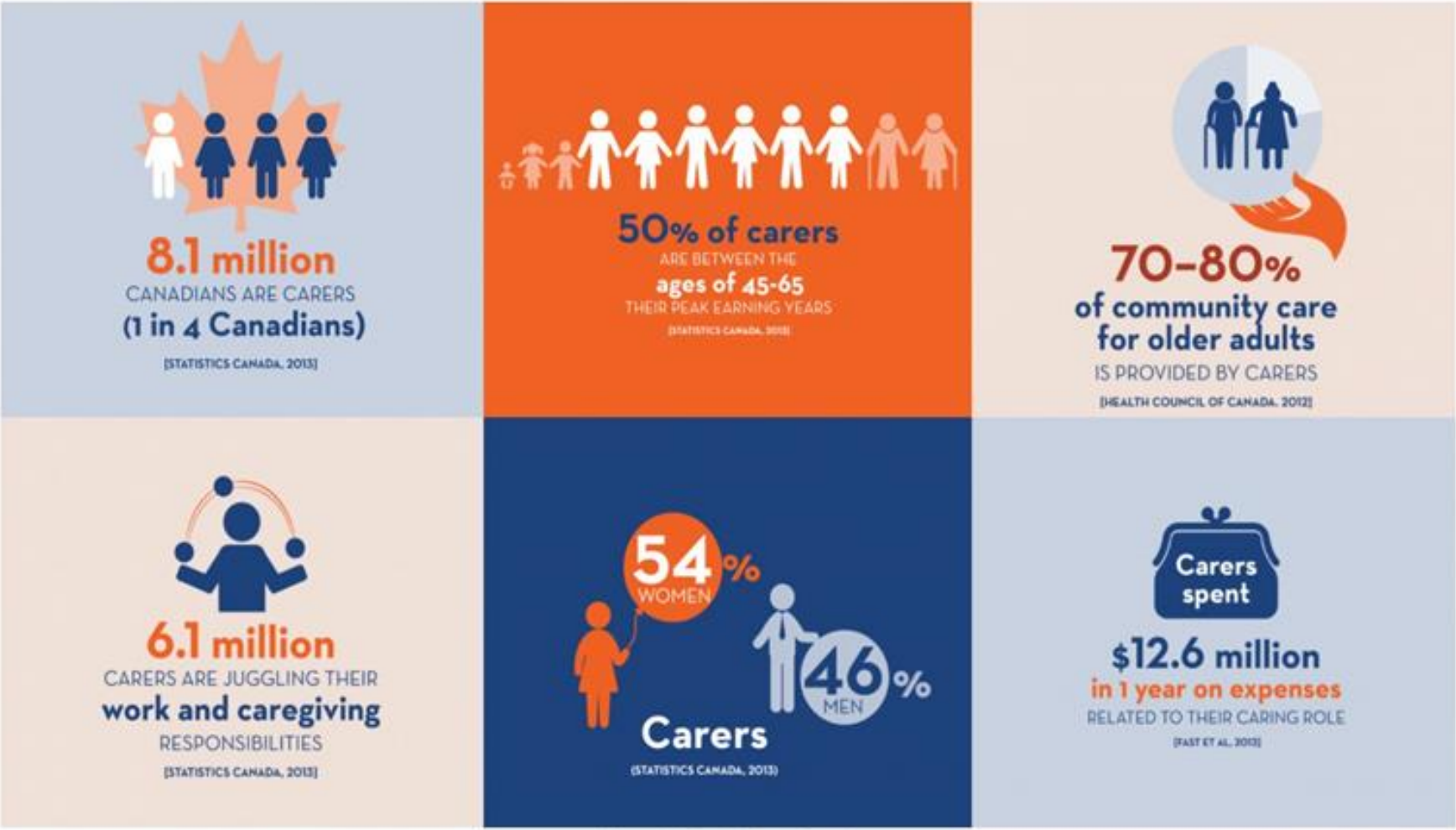
Gender Health and Caregiver Friendly Workplaces

McMaster University



Infographic Credit: Carers Canada

Impacts of COVID on Carers

- Increasing demands to care
- Financial pressures
- Mental health
- Grief & Bereavement
- Changes to provision of formal care

81%

of unpaid carers are spending more money at the moment. (72% are spending more on food and 50% are spending more on household bills)

69%

of unpaid carers are providing more help with emotional support, motivation or keeping an eye/ checking in on the person they care for

70%

of unpaid carers are providing more care due to the coronavirus outbreak

35%

Over a third of unpaid carers are providing more care as a result of local services reducing or closing

10hrs

Unpaid carers are on average providing 10 additional hours of care a week

55%

of unpaid carers feel overwhelmed and are worried that they are going to burnout in the coming weeks

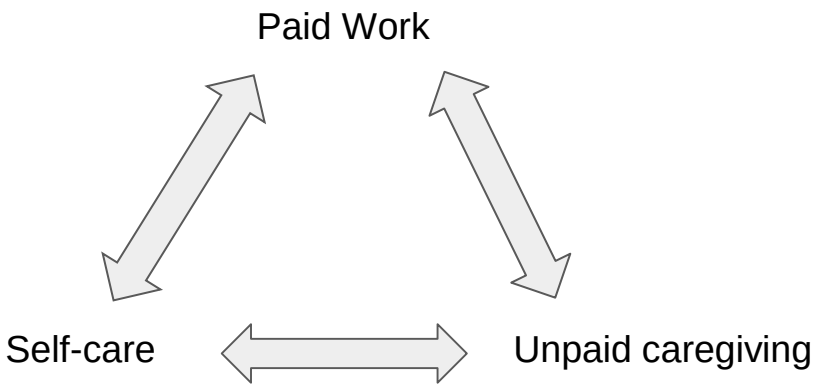
Carers UK, 2020

Care-Employees

Individuals working in paid employment while also providing informal care.

Growing employee group due to increase in number of dependent seniors.

Role conflict and insufficient workplace supports can result in carer-employees experiencing health, interpersonal and economic consequences.



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Caregiver-Friendly Workplace Policies

Innovative Solutions for the Workplace

Who are Caregiver-Employees?

Caregiver-Employees (CEs) are family members and other significant people (often identified by the care recipient) who provide care and assistance to individuals living with debilitating physical, mental or cognitive conditions, while also working in paid employment.

CEs can be caring for a range of different types of people, including: a parent, parent-in-law, spouse, life partner, grandparent, sibling, adult child or friend.

What are Caregiver-Friendly Workplace Policies?

Caregiver-Friendly Workplace Policies (CFWPs) are understood to be the intentional organizational changes, whether in practices, policies or the workplace culture, which relieves work-family conflict. They are sometimes called family-friendly workplace policies.

CFWPs are wide ranging and include:

- Support Services, such as: counselling, support groups and skills training
- Flexible work arrangements, such as: working from home and job sharing
- Strategies which support employees, such as: culture change initiatives and educational workshops
- Paid or unpaid leave, such as: sick days/leave and family medical/ compassionate care leave
- Financial and other forms of assistance, such as: employee assistance plans (EAPs) and insurance coverage

Over 50%

of caregiver-employees are caring for their parents, or their parents-in-law.

1 in 4

caregivers are sandwiched between child rearing and caregiving, in addition to their paid work responsibilities.

50%

of caregiver-employees are between the ages of 45-65, representing the most experienced in the labour market.

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Cost to Employers
• Increase in absenteeism
• Decrease in employee retention
• Loss of skilled employees
• Increase in disability costs
• Increase in employee turnover
• Loss productive workforce
Simple Solutions = Huge Benefits
• Competitive advantage
• Retain skilled staff
• Improve productivity
• Reduce absenteeism
• Reduce number of employees coming to work sick
• Engaged workforce

Tips for Employers:

- Emphasize the importance of work-life balance and promote a family-friendly workplace culture
- Educate line managers and supervisors on policies, programs and information available for caregivers
- Make employees aware of programs available in the workplace, and support their use
- Accept diversity in the workforce, including differences in family needs
- Ask employees how you can support them

8.1 Million
Canadians aged 15 years and older provide care to a chronically ill, disabled, or aging family member or friend.

5.6 Million
Canadians provide unpaid care to a family member or friend, while also in paid employment. The majority of these employees work full-time.

For more information:

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2.4 Billion
hours of care are provided annually by caregiver-employees in Canada; the equivalent of 1.2 Million full-time employees.

Check out the caregiver-employee decision tool for workplace accommodations: www.science.mcmaster.ca/caregiver-employee

References available upon request. This fact sheet was funded by a CIHR Operating Grant titled "Evaluation of Caregiver-Friendly Workplace Policies (CFWPs) Interventions on the Health of Full-Time Caregiver-Employees (CEs): Implementation and Cost Benefit Analysis" (#137844) (2014-2017)

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CSA Group

B701-17

Carer-inclusive and accommodating organizations

Link: PDF

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'DOUBLE-DUTY CARERS'

"We just see this as the right thing to do. We are out there working with and supporting family caregivers every day, why wouldn't we do the same for our own staff?"

NANCY LEFEBRE
SVP, Knowledge and Practice
Chief Clinical Executive
SE HEALTH & ELIZZ

A CARER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE STANDARD

IS YOUR HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY ADDRESSING THE UNIQUE RISK-PROFILE OF YOUR EMPLOYEES?

Health care workers are balancing work responsibilities and unpaid caring duties for their loved ones. These individuals, known as worker-carers are dealing with emotional and physical challenges as a result of their double-duty caring. Employers are impacted through costly increases in extended health benefit plans and the potential loss of skilled workers.

Forward-thinking health and home care employers create strong, healthy and productive workforces to ensure they attract and retain the most skilled and dedicated employees.

Take steps now to help ensure you remain an employer of choice.

Check out the Carer-Inclusive and Accommodating Organizations Workplace Standard and Helping Worker-Carers in your Organization Implementation Guide

(B701-17)

(B701HB-18)

Both resources are complimentary for a time-limited period.

A Solution for Employers—A New Workplace Standard and Implementation Guide

The Carer-Inclusive and Accommodating Organizations Workplace Standard (B701-17) and Helping Worker-Carers in your Organization Implementation Guide (B701HB-18) helps employers create practical and effective workplace accommodations that address the stigma and challenges of worker-carers. Health and home care organizations can leverage their current HR practices and create a carer-inclusive culture through four straightforward steps:

1 Review current HR policies and practices

According to a recent Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA) survey of 47 health and home care employers, all of them have at least 2 types of workplace accommodations that can be applied to worker-carers, and half of them have more than 9 types of accommodations. Building on this foundation, employers can be a carer inclusive and accommodating organization by:

- Recognizing the number of worker-carers currently employed (hint: it is more than you expect!)
- Understanding what type of accommodations your worker-carers need and will use
- Identifying the gaps and barriers to using your current accommodations for worker-carers

2 Engage senior leaders as champions

The vast majority (91%) of health and home care employers surveyed indicated that their senior management team would commit to and engage in creating a caregiver-friendly workplace. The **Helping Worker-Carers in your Organization implementation guide** provides concrete actions to engage senior leaders by:

- Facilitating senior management buy-in, commitment and support
- Empowering HR to support and train managers in strategies that support worker-carers
- Creating a culture where employees are comfortable discussing challenges in balancing work and care

3 Co-design with employees

The CHCA employer survey revealed that organizations consistently identified an "open-door policy" as important to their managers and employees. **The Carer-Inclusive and Accommodating Organizations Workplace Standard** helps to expand this approach by:

- Creating an open dialogue with all employees
- Empowering worker-carers to co-design workplace accommodations
- Developing strategies for organization-wide inclusion

4 Communicate and raise awareness

Health and home care organizations are using effective strategies to communicate with employees. **The Helping Worker-Carers in your Organization implementation guide** contains ideas on how to raise awareness of accommodations specifically for worker-carers by:

- Ensuring your worker-carer employees know what is available to them
- Being flexible in how you communicate and using different ways to engage
- Sharing success stories of how worker-carers are supported to balance their dual responsibilities

Mental Health and Caregiving

- Carer-employees (CEs) are more likely to experience negative health than non-carers
  - CE burden: stress resulting from the balancing care provision & employment

- 2016 the MHCC estimated the economic cost of mental illness > $50 billion/yr [1]

- COVID-19 has resulted in significant transformations to work and caregiving, creating additional mental health issues

> "Working from home has increased my stress levels because I am no longer able to use going to work as respite from my caring role."

Carers UK, 2020

1. Mental Health Commision of Canada, 2017. "Strengthening the Case for Investing in Canada's Mental Health System: Economic Considerations

Mental Health and Caregiving (2)

Carer Burden can result in:

Employee impacts:

- Depression/Anxiety
- Fatigue
- Greater difficulty performing care work
- Sleep disturbance
- Poor morale
- Social isolation
- Loss of sense of independence
- Other comorbidities

Employer/employee costs:

- Absenteeism ($)
- Presenteeism ($)
- Increased turnover ($)
- Delayed career advancement ($)
- Reduced engagement with workforce ($)

Mental Health, Caregiving & Work

- 2012, 43% of Canadian CEs missed partial or full work days due to care[1]
  - 1.6 million carers took a leave from work due to caregiving
  - 600,000 reduced work hours
  - 390,000 left the workforce altogether to provide care
- CEs reduce work if accommodations lacking (ex. flextime, compressed week)
- Barriers - lack of: managerial support, employer awareness, work culture

> "Prior to this outbreak, I could rely on other family members getting involved in taking my wife's shopping, or out for coffee, etc, giving me a break and some free time to do activities just for myself. Coronavirus now means I have that responsibility for 100% of the time."

1. Employer Panel for Caregivers, 2015 "Combing Paid Work and Eldercare"

Economic Costs of Care on Employers

Total reduced hours by carers estimated at 2.2 million hours/wk in 2012[1]

- Equivalent of 157,000 lost FT employees

Costs of carer burden results in $1.3 billion lost/yr[1]

- MetLife (U.S) estimates cost of $2,400USD/CE/yr due to lack of workplace support for carers[2]
- In our own study, we estimated a cost of $8,674 per CE/yr to a University workplace[3]

1. Employer Panel for Caregivers, 2015 “Combing Paid Work and Eldercare”
2. MetLife, 2005. “Caregiving Cost Study: Productivity losses to U.S Businesses
3. Mofidi et al. 2019. “Impact of a Caregiver Friendly Workplace Policy Intervention: a prospective economic evaluation”

Grief in the Workplace

With COVID-19, workplaces are now facing additional challenges, with many of their employees struggling with their work-life balance.

With the number of deaths in long-term care, and the vulnerability of older adults, many employees are dealing with additional grief, anxiety, guilt, and anger.

Workplaces need to be sensitive, flexible and adaptable.

> My mum died at the end of March. She tested positive for coronavirus. She had been not well and was taken to A&E where she was admitted and tested. She lasted four days and we could not see her or phone her.

Carers UK, 2020

Compassionate Workplace Campaign:
Transforming how we experience caregiving, serious illness and grieving in the workplace

To learn more, please go to **www.pallium.ca**

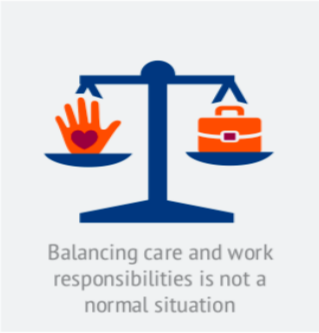
Tips and Tools for Employers

1) RECOGNIZE CARER-EMPLOYEES

2) MAKE A CARER SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT PART OF YOUR CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY

3) BE FLEXIBLE AND CREATIVE

1) PROVIDE CARER-EMPLOYEES WITH NECESSARY INFORMATION



Tips and Tools for Employers (2)

5) EVALUATE YOUR COMMITMENT TO A CARER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

6) KNOW YOUR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

7) KNOW THE IMPACT CARER-EMPLOYEES HAVE ON YOUR BOTTOM LINE

Link to resources

When employees must care for a family member, employers have a legal obligation to accommodate those employees.

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

SEEKING WORKPLACES AS RESEARCH COLLABORATORS IN AN *ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AND HEALTH INTERVENTION STUDY*

What do you have to do?

From your labour force, a combination of:

- Three workplace-wide anonymous online surveys
- Individual interviews with:
  - managers/supervisors/HR (6-12 employees)
  - employees currently caregiving (6-12 employees)

From workplace research collaborators:

- Distribution of survey through email lists
- Input on research provided policy suggestions
- Assistance with implementation of policy intervention

*our intervention is highly flexible and can be customized to meet your needs and time!

Participating workplaces will receive free consulting services in the form of customized policy/program suggestions, an implementation plan, workplace health and productivity reports, and economic evaluation of programs

For more information about this study, please contact: **Regina Ding (**dingry@mcmaster.ca)

SSHRC - CIHR PG: Healthy and Productive Work HWP – 146001 (CIHR) 890-2016-3018 (SSHRC)

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CCOHS
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Centre for Families, Work & Well-Being
UNIVERSITY of GUELPH

Canadian Cancer Society Société canadienne du cancer

Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association
Association canadienne de soins palliatifs

Canadian Home Care Association
canadienne de soins et services à domicile

UNIFOR
theUnion | lesyndicat

L'Institut Vanier de la famille
VANIER
The Vanier Institute of the Family

Additional Resources

1. Caring behind closed doors: Forgotten families in the coronavirus outbreak

   file:///C:/Users/Allison%20Williams/Downloads/Caring_behind_closed_doors_April20_pages_web_final%20(2).pdf

1. Tools-and-curriculum: Employers checklist, Employees checklist, Check for Unions

   https://ghw.mcmaster.ca

1. ***Carer-Inclusive Standard for Workplaces: B701-F17 – Carer-inclusive and accommodating organizations***

   English Standard: https://www.csagroup.org/article/b701-17/ French Standard: https://www.csagroup.org/fr/article/b701-f1

1. ***Implementation Guide: B701HB-18 – Helping worker-carers in your organization***

   English Guide: https://www.csagroup.org/article/b701hb-18 French Guide: https://www.csagroup.org/fr/article/b701hb-f18

1. Carers Canada Infographic and Educational Briefs https://www.carerscanada.ca/work-care-standard/#:~:text=STANDARD,Standard%20(CSAB701%2D17).&text=*Worker%2Dcarers%20are%20employees%20balancing,work%20with%20unpaid%20caring%20responsibilities.