

# TIPS & TOOLS FOR EMPLOYERS

Supporting employees to balance work and care responsibilities

## 1. KNOW THE IMPACT EMPLOYEE CARERS HAVE ON YOUR BOTTOM LINE.

**SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE CARERS 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 carers are between the ages of 45 to 65, in their peak earning years with valuable skills and experience. Developing strategies to support your employee carers 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](http://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](http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/research/pdf/BCCWF_Business_Case_EBS.pdf)



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## 2. RECOGNIZE EMPLOYEE CARERS.

**REFRAME THE CONVERSATION.** Many carers do not identify themselves as a carer. The first step in supporting employee carers is to help them self-identify and realize that balancing work and care 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 CARERS ARE AND WHAT THEY DO.** It's important to understand carers' 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 carers 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](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2013001-eng.htm). 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](http://www.ccc-ccan.ca/media.php?mid=423)



Balancing work and care  
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 carers. 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](http://www.hrpa.ca/Documents/360/Compassionate_Care_Policy.pdf).



Equip leaders  
with knowledge

## 4. BE FLEXIBLE AND CREATIVE.

**CAREGIVING CAN BE UNPREDICTABLE.** Employee carers' 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 report from the Employer Panel for Caregivers, 'When Work and Caregiving Collide: How Employers Can Support Their Employees Who Are Caregivers'

[www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/seniors/reports/cec.shtml](http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/seniors/reports/cec.shtml)



Flexible work  
locations

## 5. PROVIDE EMPLOYEE CARERS WITH NECESSARY INFORMATION.

**EMPLOYEE CARERS NEED TO KNOW WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE.** Include carer information and links to resources for carers on your internal website or in your regular corporate communications. Knowing how and who to access for external supports is critical for carers. 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' section at [www.canada.ca/seniors](http://www.canada.ca/seniors)



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](http://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](http://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 carers 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 carers 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 leaders have a good knowledge of employee carers' challenges.
- ✓ There are written policies or procedures to guide managers and staff in supporting employee carers.
- ✓ Resources are available and easily accessible for employee carers.
- ✓ Innovative approaches including the application of new technologies have been considered in your employee carer support programs.
- ✓ A comprehensive communication strategy that targets all employees and recognizes the commitment and dedication of employee carers.



As the number of employee carers increases with our aging population, it's important for the employee carers to have a supportive workplace environment.



CARERS CANADA  
SOIGNANTS CANADA

**ABOUT CARERS CANADA** | Established in 2000, the Carers Canada, formerly known as Canadian Caregiver Coalition, is a virtual alliance of diverse partner organizations that work collectively, and autonomously, to identify and respond to the needs of carers in Canada. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for carers through advocacy and synergistic partnerships. Together, we strive to achieve our vision of "a Canada that recognizes, respects, and values the integral role of carers in society." [www.ccc-ccan.ca](http://www.ccc-ccan.ca)