

5 Tips for Balancing A Career and Caregiving

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An estimated 34 million Americans provide unpaid care to adults age 50 or older every year, according to the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, and that number is rapidly growing. More than half of those caregivers feel they have to make compromises at work to care for their aging parents, according to a new survey from Home Instead, Inc., franchisor of the Home Instead Senior Care network.

With the rise in our aging population, more and more adult children are assuming the role of caregiver while also maintaining a full- or part-time job. This pressure to balance work and caregiving responsibilities has left 61 percent of working caregivers feeling as if they must choose between being a good employee and being a good daughter or son. To make matters worse, only 29 percent of these caregivers are

satisfied with their employer's family leave policy.

As this issue grows to impact a larger percentage of the workforce, it will be essential that employees and employers work together to find solutions. Consider the following recommendations as ways to get started:

1. Ask for help – For caregivers, it can be extremely difficult, but also tremendously beneficial, to ask their employer for help. For employers, create opportunities for employees to express their needs. Schedule brief weekly meetings to check in and ask how they are doing. Transparency helps eliminate pressure on the employees to keep their concerns to themselves.

2. Create a flexible policy -When it comes to caring for a loved one, there are no fixed hours or planned deadlines; emergency situations can come at any moment. With a plan in place, employers and employees can be on the same page about flexible working hours or situations that require time off.

3. Offer in-office assistance – Employers can create a culture of safety for working caregivers by forming a support group for employees who are in similar situations. Such groups not only provide a place for relief, but also create the opportunity for employees to grow relationships with one another – positively affecting workplace culture.

4. Provide care for the caregiver – It can be easy for a caregiver to quickly forget about his or her own needs when caring for a loved one. Encourage individuals to take time to care for their own physical, mental and emotional well-being. In addition, pay attention to signs that indicate your employee may need a break. Connect them with available resources or encourage time away from work.

5. Make time to listen – Lending an ear is one of the most impactful things an employer can do for a working caregiver. More than half of caregivers have expressed feelings of

depression and find it difficult to care for themselves. When employers open the door for a conversation, they are providing hope and reassurance to the working caregiver.

Family caregivers and employers can view more resources and tips at caregiverstress.com. Or, contact your local Home Instead Senior Care office for additional resources and to learn how a professional CAREGiverSM may be able to assist.

Find an office near you at www.homeinstead.com/state/.