

# THE CARER-INCLUSIVE AND ACCOMMODATING ORGANIZATIONS WORKPLACE STANDARD AND 2SLGBTQ+ CARER- EMPLOYEES

Research Brief

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March 2022

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## WHY IT MATTERS

Carer-employees, defined as workers who balance their paid employment duties with unpaid caregiving duties, are a large and growing segment of the Canadian workforce (Eales et al., 2015). However, little attention has been paid to the experiences of Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (2SLGBTQ+) carer-employees, who often have unique needs and face unique challenges (Henz, 2006). Accessing accommodations for these workers may be a fraught process, particularly for older 2SLGBTQ+ carer-employees, who are significantly less likely to be out at work (Anderson & Flatt, 2018).

## STUDY METHODS

Using a mixed methods approach, two exploratory studies were conducted. 1) A quantitative survey was used to examine how their experiences as a 2SLGBTQ+ carer-employee impacted their self-reported quality of life and worklife, as well as their comfort accessing caregiver accommodations. 2) A series of focus group interviews that focused on the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ carer-employees at work, and whether they felt the CSA Carer-Inclusive and Accommodating Organizations Workplace Standard (CSA Technical Committee on Caregiver-Friendly Workplaces, 2017), and Implementation Guide: Helping Worker-Carers in Your Organization (Canadian Standards Association, 2018. B701-17 Carer-inclusive and accommodating organisations Standard & B701HB-18 Implementation Guide: Helping Working-Carers in Your Organization. Canadian Standards Association. Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. Complimentary as a 2-document package at: <https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/B701%20PACKAGE/>) would be sufficient to support them and their needs as carer-employees.

## RESULTS

The first study revealed the significant relationship between age, gender identity, workplace-level experiences of discrimination, and overall quality of life and worklife for 2SLGBTQ+ carer-employees. Both older and younger 2SLGBTQ+ carer-employees were less likely to be out at work, and were less likely to access accommodations if doing so would result in identity disclosure. Workplace-level experiences of homophobia or transphobia were significantly associated with poorer quality of life, poorer quality of worklife, and higher levels of carer burden. These results have significant implications for the accommodation of 2SLGBTQ+ carer-employees.

The second study revealed that, in addition to age, geographic location, workplace seniority, and type of work highly impacted the ability of 2SLGBTQ+ carer-employees to access carer accommodations. They also indicated that they were often uncomfortable accessing caregiving supports which seemed, to them, to be aimed at a heterosexual and cisgendered audience. When asked directly about the Standard and its ability to meet their needs, respondents either indicated insufficiency or a lack of willingness for employers to adopt the policies.



# Future Considerations

## PRIDE AT WORK

2SLGBTQ+ carer-employees often feel as though policies or supports for caregivers are not for them. Workplaces should conduct self-assessments to see if they are meeting the needs of their 2SLGBTQ+ employees, and workplaces that may have cultural or social norms which may be unfriendly to 2SLGBTQ+ people should be sure to directly intervene to make the appropriate changes. There exist a number of organizations, including Pride at Work (<https://prideatwork.ca/>), which may be able to help these workplaces conduct these assessments and ensure that their general policies and culture are inclusive and accepting of 2SLGBTQ+ people.

## ACCOMMODATION

Caregiving accommodations should not be limited to workers caring for biological or legal kin, as doing so will exclude many 2SLGBTQ+ carer-employees. Instead, workplaces should consider offering general caregiving leave that is available to anyone who is providing care to another individual, without limiting it to family.

## REPRESENTATION

When adapting standard policies such as the Standard for use in their workplace, managers should ensure that the implementation team includes the voices of 2SLGBTQ+ carer-employees, and that their concerns are treated seriously. This is necessary for the ongoing support, accommodation, and retention of 2SLGBTQ+ carer-employees.

## REFERENCES

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