



Chair in Gender Health and  
Caregiver Friendly Workplaces



CIHR IRSC  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
Institut de recherche en santé du Canada



# 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 60%**

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



**6.2%**

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



**41.5%**

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



## Cost to Employers

- Increase in absenteeism
- Increase in disability costs
- Decrease in employee retention
- Increase in employee turnover
- Loss of skilled employees
- Less 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

## For more information:

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### 7 Million

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



### 3.5 Million

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



### 3 Billion

hours of care are provided annually by caregiver-employees in Canada; the equivalent of 1.6 Million full-time employees.

**Check out the caregiver-employee decision tool for workplace accommodations:  
[www.science.mcmaster.ca/caregiver-employee](http://www.science.mcmaster.ca/caregiver-employee)**