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# **Supporting Employed Caregivers**





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# Welcome to the "Supporting Employed Caregivers" Challenge!

This September, Healthy Workplaces, in collaboration with Family Caregivers of British Columbia, is launching a challenge in honour of Caregiver Month. This challenge will include toolkits and resources for caregivers and workers or employers looking to cultivate a more caregiver-inclusive workplace culture.

## ***The topics are as follows:***

1. Self-Identification as a Caregiver
2. Building a Caregiver-Inclusive Workplace
3. Tips on Balancing Work and Caregiving
4. Words of Encouragement to a Caregiver
5. Resources to Use

The following page will help provide a basic understanding of caregiving in Canada through statistics. For more information and resources for caregivers, please visit [familycaregiversbc.ca](http://familycaregiversbc.ca).



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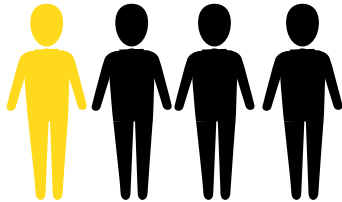


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# A VIEW ON CAREGIVING IN CANADA

**1 in 4**  
Canadians



provide care to a family member or friend  
This means that there are **8 million**  
caregivers in Canada.



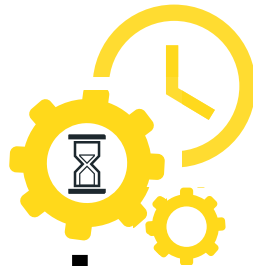
**54%**  
of caregivers  
are **female**

**21%**

of caregivers

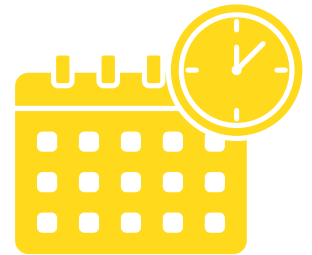
spend **20+ hrs**

per week providing care



**1.6 million**  
caregivers

took time off work  
to provide care.



On average, care receivers have about

**7 hrs**

of help per week  
from family or friends



and **2 hrs**  
from healthcare  
professionals

All caregivers  
providing care  
together save



Canada's health care system  
**\$24-31 billion** per year



# Self-Identification

## DAY 1



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# ARE YOU A CAREGIVER?

**Family or friend caregiver:** A family member or friend who gives unpaid care to an adult, either at home or in a facility, who has a physical or mental health condition, chronic illness or frailty due to aging.

## DO YOU HELP ANYONE IN YOUR LIFE OR COMMUNITY WITH THE FOLLOWING ...?

- Transportation
- Meal preparation, cleaning, dishes
- Home maintenance
- Running errands for/ with the person (e.g. grocery)
- Personal care (e.g. bath, shower, getting dressed)
- Medical procedures or treatments
- Attending appointments
- Coordinating care, support services or appointments
- Providing support or care from afar
- Finance (e.g. banking, paying bills, legal concerns)
- Talking to doctors, nurses, care managers etc. to understand what needs to be done
- Handling crises and arranging for assistance
- Visiting or regularly calling to ensure someone is safe and has their day-to-day needs met
- Providing emotional support

**IF YOU CHECKED OFF AT LEAST ONE OF THE ABOVE ITEMS, YOU ARE A FAMILY/ FRIEND CAREGIVER.**



# Caregiver-Inclusive Workplace

## DAY 2



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# CREATING A CAREGIVER-INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

Strategizing how to build a carer-worker inclusive organization requires understanding of some basic terms. Based on the [CSA Carer-Inclusive and Accommodating Organizations Standard](#), here are some common terms to refer to.



## WORKER-CAREGIVER

family members and other significant people who provide unpaid care and assistance to individuals who are recovering from illness or injury or living with a physical, mental, or cognitive condition or disability.

## INCLUSIVE

an organization where everyone feels respected, and all have the opportunity to contribute to the success of the organization to the maximum of their ability.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group that are a mix of values, beliefs, meanings, and expectations that group members hold in common and use as behavioural and problem-solving cues.

## ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOMMODATION

the intentional organizational actions, whether in practices, policies, or the organizational culture, which relieves work-family conflict; can include flexible work arrangements, such as working from home and job sharing.



# IS YOUR WORKPLACE CAREGIVER-INCLUSIVE?

What are the characteristics of a carer-inclusive and accommodating workplace? Assess your organization's values and current initiatives with the following checklists and reflect on the next action steps to take.

## DOES YOUR WORKPLACE...



### PROMOTE

- An environment that ensures workers can talk freely about work-life balance issues without being penalized or excluded
- Leadership demonstration of worker-caregiver support
- Zero stigma and an open door policy
- Worker-carer support as a priority
- Improving work-health balance



### PROVIDE

- Support and educational services (e.g. workshops, counselling, workplace caregiver support group)
- Flexible and customizable work arrangements (e.g. telecommuting, flex time, coverage)
- Financial assistance and relief
- Leave from work for caregiving responsibilities and gradual return to work policies



# Balancing Work and Caregiving

## DAY 3



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# BALANCING WORK AND CAREGIVING

*It can certainly feel overwhelming being an employee while providing caregiving. What are some strategies to balance these demands?*

## 1. Check in with yourself

- How is my current self-care?
- How resilient do I feel?
- What do I need for support?

## 2. Be honest and proactive

- Describe your situation to your employer
- Initiate opportunities to check in
- Maintain open communication

## 3. Find resources

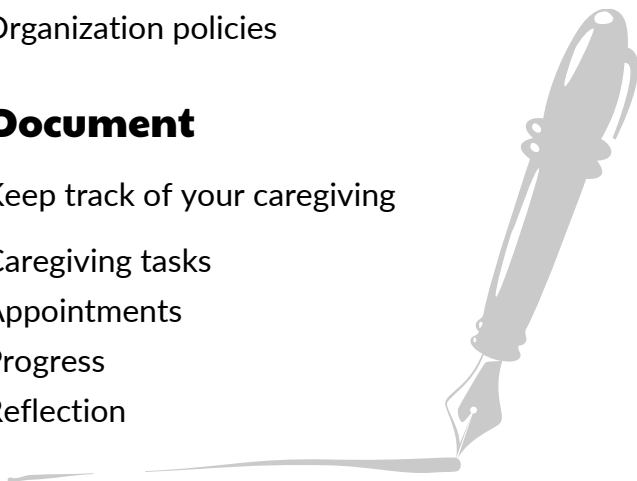
Learn what support is available at your workplace and in your community

- Flexible hours
- Coverage
- Organization policies

## 4. Document

Keep track of your caregiving

- Caregiving tasks
- Appointments
- Progress
- Reflection



## DID YOU KNOW...

**1 in 3**

Canadians combine paid work and caregiving



**1 in 4**

caregivers report a change in employment



**15%**

of caregivers report health and sleep problems





# Supporting a Caregiver-Worker

## DAY 4



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# WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

*It may be difficult knowing what to say to a fellow friend or coworker who is a caregiver. Despite being well-intentioned, sometimes our comments can be more hurtful than helpful. Here are some ways we can better construct our words to encourage the caregivers around us.*



## INSTEAD OF THIS ...

**"You should make time for yourself."**

**"I can imagine it's difficult to find time for yourself. Would you be open to me suggesting some resources that helped me with my self-care?"**

All caregivers know they should make some time to take care of themselves. But the reality is that that's easier said than done. Instead, ask if they are interested in resources regarding self-care that they can access when time permits.

**"They are so blessed to have you."**

**"What you are doing matters and makes a difference."**

Even though this is meant as a compliment, we can't know how the care recipient responds to being taken care of. Maybe they appreciate it, but maybe they don't. In that case, suggesting the care recipient feels blessed may be a negative trigger for the caregiver.

**"You look really tired."**

**"You've worked so hard. How are you doing?"**

Caregivers tend to sacrifice their self-care. They are aware that they are tired, because they spend all their times taking care of their loved ones. There is no need to have it pointed out. Instead, recognize the contribution they are making by giving care.

**"I couldn't do what you're doing, I'm just too busy."**

**"It must be very challenging at times, but you keep forging ahead, and I admire you for that."**

In most cases, caregiving happens unexpectedly and abruptly. Often caregivers step up when someone in their life needs help. Show understanding in how caregivers have made changes in their lives and rearranged their priorities in order to care.

**"Let me know if you need any help."**

**"What can I do to help? Would it be helpful if I did X, Y or Z?"**

Of course it is kind to offer your help, but it can be hard for a caregiver to think of specific requests. And often, they may not have the energy to reach out when they can use the support the most. Therefore, be concrete in what you can offer. For example, getting the groceries, helping with cleaning or walking the dog.



# Resources

## DAY 5



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# RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

If you are a caregiver, you are not alone! Family Caregivers of BC has many resources available for caregivers to support physical and mental wellbeing ranging from self-learning to support groups. Click on each item to learn more.



Toll-Free Caregiver  
Support Line (BC) at  
**1-877-520-3267**



Refer a  
**Caregiver** Self-refer or refer a friend,  
family member or colleague



**BC Resources**  
for Caregivers



Family Caregiver  
**Support Group**  
(available virtually)



Family Caregivers of BC  
**Learning Center**  
for podcasts, webinars, online  
courses, articles and more



1:1 Caregiver  
**Coaching Sessions**

**Caregiver**  
**Self-Assessment**

Are you a healthy caregiver?



Webinars for  
**Health Care  
Providers**

