

Why is looking after caregivers in your organization important?

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Every day, the nation's workforce struggles to navigate care for loved ones while working full-time jobs. Though a less-apparent crisis, it is increasingly occurring in the U.S. and is impacting employers in every industry. From 2015 to 2020 alone, the number of unpaid family caregivers in the U.S. increased by nearly 10 million people, jumping from 43.5 million to 53 million.¹ These numbers are staggering and are only expected to climb.

To make matters worse, the complexities of individual caregiving needs require in-depth research, planning and coordination that make it hard for employees to focus on anything else. It also leaves little time for caregivers to be present with their loved ones, adding even more stress to an already difficult situation.

Why is this important?

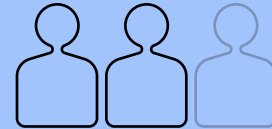
With over 50% of employees working 40+ hours per week while also needing to dedicate at least some time to caregiving,² a sizeable proportion of your workforce will have care responsibilities.

Ensuring that your employees are supported with their caregiving responsibilities as well as understanding their needs can be a difficult balancing act. As an employer, you need to be able to support your employees while being inclusive and fair to everyone.

A long-term challenge

The caregiving crisis has been going on for quite some time, with studies pointing to the increasing care needs of families and its impact on businesses since as early as 2010.

Today, following a pandemic that has pushed many working parents and caregivers to the brink, the mental, physical and emotional toll on employees is obvious.



2/3 of caregivers experienced mental health issues during the pandemic³

Women have been leaving the workforce in record numbers³, and burnout and mental health challenges among employee caregivers are significant, particularly during times of uncertainty. Two-thirds of caregivers experienced mental health issues during the pandemic.⁴

A study of employee caregivers conducted through the pandemic found that caregivers were almost twice as likely as non-caregivers to say they would leave their current employer within the next six months. The study concluded that those who feel unsupported in the crisis are likely to leave their organization once the pandemic is over.⁵

All the while, employers are left trying to figure out how to best support their employees through unprecedented times. Those employers that saw the caregiving crisis developing have begun to implement a variety of solutions to support these stressed-out employees.

1 "The State of Unpaid Family Caregiving in the U.S." <https://mylifesite.net/blog/post/state-of-unpaid-family-caregiving-in-u-s/>

2 "Caregiver Statistics: Work and Caregiving" <https://www.caregiver.org/resource/caregiver-statistics-work-and-caregiving/>

3 CBS News, February 5th, 2021 "Nearly 3 million U.S. women have dropped out of the labor force in the past year" <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-crisis-3-million-women-labor-force/>

4 "Unpaid caregivers were already struggling. It's only gotten worse during the pandemic." <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/06/17/1007579073/unpaid-caregivers-were-already-struggling-its-only-gotten-worse-during-the-pande>

5 Boston Consulting Group, March 4, 2021 "Take care of the caregivers at your company" <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2021/prioritizing-caregivers-during-covid-19>

Multi-generational caregivers

Caregivers can be caring for someone of any age, be they young children right through to aging parents or relatives. In some cases, people can have care responsibilities for multiple people of different ages, each with different needs. These caregivers are often referred to as the ‘sandwich generation’ because they have dependents and parents to care for at the same time.

Caregivers with multi-generational care responsibilities are often under immense pressure⁶ as they have to consider the differing care needs of the people they are supporting. These caregivers often work full-time jobs while juggling care responsibilities that can lead to high levels of stress and anxiety both at home and work.

There is also a growth in the number of millennials who are now multi-generational caregivers. These millennials now make up over a third of the ‘sandwich generation’⁷. This group is set to grow over the coming years and highlights the need for companies to support the ever-increasing needs of caregivers.

Access to help

Access to backup care facilities, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), flexible work schedules and caregiver leave programs have all been launched to address the various needs of employees as they care for their loved ones in order for them to remain present at work.

Even as these supportive offerings become more widely available, the challenges of COVID-19 revealed the missing link in many employers’ benefit ecosystems: dedicated assistance, concierge guidance and support when navigating both self-care and care for loved ones.

Transactional approaches will not cut it

The current employee experience with many EAPs and patient advocacy services is transactional; addressing a single need at a time in isolation. And while a select few employers are giving employees the time, space and flexibility to address their caregiving challenges, time and space alone do not guarantee that employees will actually return to work with the answers they were seeking.

The needs of employee caregivers are far too great for transactional services to be enough, and far too varied and nuanced to allow for point-solutions each time a need arises.

Support for caregivers

Employee caregivers need someone to accompany them on their care journey — someone to be in their corner as they navigate the ongoing unknowns and challenges that too often keep them from actually being present with their loved ones.

Organizations like Cariloop can help employees navigate the often-confusing support options caregivers need to select. Cariloop’s Care Coaches support and guide caregivers when they need it most. They spend time researching and vetting resources for caregivers based on their specific needs.

How can additional support help caregivers?

Employees in your organization that are caregivers may be supporting anyone, young or old. But the support each caregiver needs may differ due to the age and/or needs of the person they are supporting. Here are a few examples of how organizations like Cariloop can support individuals using Care Coaches.

6 BBC.com, January 29th 2021, “Why the ‘sandwich generation’ is so stressed out” <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20210128-why-the-sandwich-generation-is-so-stressed-out>

7 “Caregiving and COVID-19. How the pandemic is expanding the sandwich generation.” https://www.newyorklife.com/content/dam/nyl/newsroom/docs/pdfs/New_York_Life_Sandwich_Gen_White_Paper.pdf

Pediatric case study

A mother needed support for her young child with speech challenges. The child was already in a program and the parents wanted to explore any additional options for programming or support that might be available to them, including a specific type of therapy approach recommended to them.

How a Care Coach helped:

- Provided information on the specific therapy approach recommended to the family, including connections to national organizations related to this therapy approach.
- Gave additional local options offering the requested therapy and provided more information on insurance coverage, vetting, availability and the process for initiating care.
- Identified emotional support resources for both the child and parents, including; parent support groups, self-care resources, apps and other resources focused on easing the anxiety of speech challenges for children.
- Provided resources for parents to share with the child geared toward promoting acceptance and support for children experiencing speech challenges — videos, books and online programs/support specific to the child's age group.
- Collaborated with family and a Care Coach specializing in education to offer additional support for the child at school — including suggestions and tips on questions to ask school personnel and any additional support that could be put into place during the school day.
- Maintain ongoing check-ins to offer support and assistance to the family.



Adult case study

An employee was seeking support for her spouse who was experiencing heart problems and was preparing for the placement of an internal defibrillator/pacemaker (ICD).

How a Care Coach helped:

- Shared information on what to expect living with an ICD.
- Offered questions to consider discussing with the doctor.
- Discussed emotional health, coping, anxiety and depression after the ICD placement.
- Explained safety around devices with an ICD.
- Provided information on Advanced Directives and Last Will and Testament.
- Educated the spouse on the importance of having legal caregiving documents in order, for example, an Advanced Directive leading up to medical procedures.
- Offered to find attorneys to help prepare legal documents.



Why is supporting caregivers important?

Giving support to employees who are caregivers demonstrates your commitment to supporting the wellbeing of your employees. Being a supportive employer helps with employee engagement and optimizes the overall employee experience in general.

Supporting employee caregivers can also be quantified. According to Cariloop's own figures, in 2020 their Care Coaches generated an additional 217,000 hours of productive time for employees. This meant employees could be more focused, engaged and present in their jobs and with their families. This amount of time saved generated an estimated \$8.3 million of macroeconomic value for Cariloop's customers.

Not only is supporting employee caregivers the right thing to do as a responsible company, it doesn't have to come at a great financial cost. In fact, the benefits of supporting employee caregivers can help to improve employee wellbeing and the productivity of staff.



217K

productive hours generated in 2020 by Cariloop



\$8.3M^{est.}

macroeconomic value generated in 2020 for Cariloop's customers

How can you support the caregivers in your organization?

If you would like to know more or find out how Aight and Cariloop can support the caregivers in your organization, please contact us.

[Learn more](#)

About Cariloop

Cariloop provides a Caregiver Support Platform to help working caregivers and families plan for and manage the care of their loved ones.

Caregivers get a dedicated Care Coach who guides them through decisions they have to make concerning caregiving as well as access to a digital care portal that securely stores important health, financial and legal documents. To learn more about Cariloop visit cariloop.com

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