The Evolution of Care: How EAP’s can Effectively Support Elder-caregiving

Kelsey Loushin, LICDC-CS, CDP
President, Eldercare Professionals of Ohio, LLC

Agenda

- Review the relationship between EAP’s & Work Life programs
- Define and describe how elder care-giving impacts employees
- Describe interventions to support employees who are caregiving with special attention focused on eldercare

Work Life

- Most prevalent of optional EAP services
- Typically includes childcare, eldercare services, financial & legal consultations
- Introduced in the early 80’s primarily with childcare
- Elder care is usually in the form of information & referral services, support groups & eldercare publications
Why should EAP's care about caregiving?

- No one will escape care-giving...whether you have been, will be, are currently or will be cared for. Most care-giving occurs between children & parents, informal care: unpaid care

- Caregiving greatly impacts employee attendance, productivity, & commitment to employment

Who is a caregiver anyway?

A caregiver, sometimes called an informal caregiver: Unpaid individual (spouse, partner, family member, friend, or neighbor) assisting others with activities of daily living (ADLS) and/or medical tasks
Types of care-giving

- 3 distinct groups of informal caregivers, roughly defined by the age of who they care for: (1) children with chronic illness & disability are typically cared for by young adult parents, (2) adult children with such conditions as mental illness are cared for by middle-aged parents, & (3) older individuals are cared for by their spouses or their middle-aged children (largest number)

- Sandwich generation (47%) of adults in their 40's & 50's have a parent age 65 or older & are either raising a young child or financially supporting a grown child (age 18 or older). About 1 in 7 middle-aged adults (15%) is providing financial support to both an aging parent & a child

Eldercare-giving expansion

- Increasing life expectancy & lower fertility rates have increased the elderly dependency ratio in most industrialized countries

- Increased numbers of older adults living with worse health has resulted in a higher demand for care. Families have reduced in size, we move to secure careers, more single parent families, all result in the growth of the eldercare industry


Caregiver characteristics

- Most caregivers don't disclose to their employer their caregiving situation
- Most caregivers have a close relationship with the recipient
- Typically informal caregivers have had no professional care-giver training
- Have no working contract
- Receive no pay or equivalent pay for their duties
- Have diverse & wide range of care duties that can change daily
- No official hours (never really off the clock)
The day of a care-giver; your employees;

63% of caregivers spend more than 3 hours per week on eldercare related tasks

Imagine adding these elements to an existing workday:

- Awaken an hour earlier to prepare for the day
- Awaken your parent & prepare them for their day: toilet, feed, medicate, dress
- Before leaving for work, meet with homecare aid, review care plans for the day
- Travel to work & get a call from the aid about your parent’s lack of cooperation
- During lunch, call aid & review morning. Make Dr. apt. for your parent & call insurance regarding coverage issues. Contact Medicaid office to schedule homecare waiver program to get more assistance
- In the afternoon, interrupt staff meeting to take a call from the Dr’s office
- Leave work 30 mins early to buy adult diapers & medication
- Relieve aid, eat dinner with parent, clean up, talk about “the old days”
- Give medications, check & record their BP & blood sugar
- Prep parent for bed: toilet, dress, attempt to manage mood swings & poor sleeping
- Manage the mail, organize new medical bills, return calls/e-mails
- Prep for the next day, go to bed….Set your alarm for 2:30 am for medication

This is an example of a care day without problems!

Caregiving impact on employees:

Care-giving is time consuming, so combining it with regular employment is difficult.

Care-givers often need to reduce or adjust work hours & even quit to provide sufficient care.

Those who are unemployed or work part-time have more time therefore are more likely to be caregivers.

Those who provide care for long hours over a longer period are far more likely to adjust their job participation or leave employment.

49% of caregivers feel they have no choice about taking on caregiving responsibilities (no other sibling or they live elsewhere, care recipient has no financial resources, “guilting” from recipient)

Caregiving impact on employees:

- 70% of working caregivers suffer work-related difficulties due to dual roles
- 44% arrive to work late/leave early/take time off
- 15% take a leave of absence
- 14% reduce their hours/take a demotion
- 7% receive a warning about performance/attendance
- 5% turn down a promotion
- 4% choose early retirement
- 3% lose job benefits
- and 6% give up working entirely.

[National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP. (2015). Caregiving in the U.S.]

A sense of obligation is higher in caregivers that provide 21 or more hours of care per week (59%) & live-in caregivers (64%).

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Resignation
- 39% of caregivers leave their job to have more time to care for a loved one
- 34% leave because their work does not provide flexible hours. [National Alliance for Caregiving & AARP. (2015). Caregiving in the U.S.]
- 17% of caregivers of people diagnosed with dementia quit their jobs either before or after assuming caregiving responsibilities
- 54% arrive to work late or leave early, 15% take a leave of absence, & 9% quit their jobs in order to continue providing care. [Alzheimer’s Association. (2015). 2015 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts & Figures.]

Caregiving maze…how can we assist our employees?

The decision to care; implications for caregivers
EAP’s can discuss several considerations with caregiver before they begin
- 1) Most care recipients stay & receive care in their own homes; family members need to consider how to do so or to bring in formal care if accessible & affordable
- 2) Caregivers need to remember their duties are stressful & involve major responsibility that are time consuming
- 3) Eldercare may involve another older adult spouse or partner which adds another dimension of responsibility, limited assistance & stress
- 4) Caregivers are commonly employed &/or have other household obligations, therefore if choosing to be caregiver, may add challenges to their existing job and/or their own family/personal life
How EAP's can help caregivers

- Bring in experts for lunch & learn
- Provide a library of resources
- Organize health-fairs with experts available
- Encourage on-site support groups
- Contract with eldercare specialists to design care plans & assist with education & referrals
- Help with designing difficult conversations for elders about driving, medical care, safety, money & end-of-life issues
- Provide legal referrals for assistance with health care proxies, wills, trusts & other documents
- Information about transportation options, financial consultation, home health care workers & senior living options
- Referrals to Medicare, Medicaid, VA professionals
- Referrals to care managers who can help with planning or make home or hospital visits
- Referrals to special needs specialists to help with disabilities
- Home modification referrals for ramps, chairlifts, & other tools for improved daily living
- Pre-vetted lists of assisted living options, including pricing & availability

Interventions

EAP's should be familiar with local resources:

- Area Agency on Aging: Eldercare Locator; https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/About/Aging_Network/AAA.aspx
- Respite care resources: https://archrespite.org/
- Geriatricians: https://www.healthinaging.org/
- Hospice organizations: https://www.nhpco.org/
- Geriatric Care Managers: https://www.aginglifecare.org/
- Free educational publications on aging: https://order.nia.nih.gov/

Caregiver resources

- Family Caregiver Alliance
  National Center on Caregiving
  415-434-3388 | (800) 445-8106
  Website: www.caregiver.org
  FCA CareJourney: www.caregiver.org/carejourney
  Family Care Navigator: www.caregiver.org/family-care-navigator
- Caring.com
  0800 973-2540
  https://www.caring.com
- National Alliance for Caregiving
  https://www.caregiving.org
  1001738-8444
Summarize

- There is a strong likelihood that your employees are care-takers
- Provide education on a regular basis through table toppers, posters, newsletters, podcasts, webinars, health fairs, support groups, and lunch & learns
- Discuss with other EAP's how they support their companies
- Call or write me to brainstorm!

Kelsey Loushin
President
Eldercare Professionals of Ohio, LLC
440-212-4987
www.eldercareofohio.com
kelsey@eldercareofohio.com