

The Demands of Caregiving

Why is it always me? As a caregiver, have you said those words to yourself? These thoughts are commonplace along with the responsibilities of caregiving, no matter how devoted you are to the care receiver. Caregiving can be a twenty-four hour, seven day a week job, even if you share the responsibilities with others. Many times even if you are not there physically providing care, your thoughts are still on their well being and their situation. If you do not have some respite from these responsibilities, the risk of emotional burnout and a decline in your own health increases.



For more information about addressing end-of-life issues in the workplace, Visit www.caringinfo.org
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Grief in the Workplace: A Guide for Working Caregivers



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National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

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What You Can Expect

If you are a working caregiver, your life is even more complicated. Juggling the responsibilities and the demands of your job, and pursuing a career, often are interrupted by the demands of your caregiving responsibilities. There are things that you can do to balance your work and caregiving responsibilities.

If you have a good work history, your employer will want to work with you to keep you as an employee during these difficult times. Everyone's situation is unique, and finding solutions will depend upon the circumstances involved, however there are solutions. These solutions may be temporary, or may have to be long term, depending on your situation.

What You Can Do

Consider talking with your supervisor about your caregiving responsibilities, before these interruptions in your workday are misinterpreted as having a different cause. Consider the following in preparations for your meeting with your supervisor.

- Ⓜ When others offer help, are you saying "yes" and assigning specific tasks that will help you?
- Ⓜ Is there another position at work that you could move into that would make caregiving easier for you?
- Ⓜ Would it help you to job share/work part time? Is this an option at work?
- Ⓜ Will telecommuting help you to meet your work responsibilities and caregiving responsibilities and is this an option at work?
- Ⓜ Would a temporary leave from work help, if the caregiving needs were short term?
- Ⓜ Familiarize yourself with the Family Medical Leave Act, and talk with your supervisor about how to use this benefit.

What You Can do to Care for Yourself

- Ⓜ Remember to take care of your health, by getting proper sleep and nutrition, and use respite care whenever possible.
- Ⓜ Do those activities that give you a sense of renewal and replenish your spirit.
- Ⓜ Consider joining a support group. Talking with others in similar situations can reduce stress and provide needed emotional support.

These are a few suggestions you may want to consider. Being open and honest with your employer about the demands outside the workplace will work to your advantage. Remember, by assuming the role as a caregiver, you have demonstrated your sense of responsibility for others, a quality your employer also values in the workplace.

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