

LifeSpeak Inc.

Invisible Load, Visible Impact: Supporting Caregivers at Work in 2026

A practical guide for HR leaders



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The New Reality of Caregiving

Every day, millions of employees are working two full-time jobs: the one they're paid for, and the one that comes with no paycheck. They're caring for newborns, aging parents, partners recovering from illness, and children with special needs. These responsibilities don't pause for the workday — they run alongside it, shaping focus, energy, and the ability to stay in the role.

Caregivers are already in your workforce. You see it when a colleague takes a call from a doctor's waiting room, rearranges their schedule for a school pickup, or spends a lunch break coordinating home care. Without the right support, that strain can show up in absenteeism, disengagement, and turnover.

But when organizations put real solutions in place, the story changes. People stay. Teams hold onto experience and trust. The workplace becomes somewhere employees can succeed in their careers and still care for the people who matter most.

“

Supporting caregivers at work is both compassionate and strategic. When we invest in their wellbeing, we strengthen the entire organization and set a strong foundation for long-term success.”



Jason Campana
CEO, LifeSpeak Inc.



“

I wouldn't know where to start without this service. It has been a gamechanger in caring for my mom.”

LifeSpeak member

The Caregiving Challenge at a Glance



1 in 4 employees is a caregiver¹



Caregivers average **27 hrs** a week of unpaid care¹



More than **22%** of caregivers experience frequent mental distress, and nearly **1 in 4** report a depression diagnosis²

Across North America, caregivers are struggling to balance work and care

In the U.S., 24% of adults – about 63 million people – provide unpaid care, averaging 27 hours per week, the equivalent of a part-time job.¹ In Canada, about 20% of people aged 15+ – roughly 7 million – are caregivers, providing a median of 8 hours per week, with many putting in 20 or more.³

Caregiving isn't new – but who's providing it, and for whom, is shifting fast. For the first time, **more Americans are caring for an older adult than for a child.**¹ Women still provide the majority of caregiving hours, but men are increasingly represented, particularly in eldercare. And with life expectancy rising, smaller family sizes, and more dual-income households, the demand for working caregivers is only growing.

“

We used to talk about the ‘sandwich generation.’ But today, I’ve heard it called the Panini generation – pressed from both sides, caring for kids and aging parents at the same time. Without the right support, that pressure can derail even the most resilient employees.”

Molly Prues
Gerontologist and
Caregiving Subject Matter
Expert, LifeSpeak Inc.



For the first time, more Americans are caring for an older adult than for a child.¹

ACTION STEP

Survey your workforce anonymously to understand the caregiving landscape.

Ask how many employees are caregivers, who they’re caring for, and their top challenges. Use this baseline to shape benefits and policies that truly meet employee needs.

Behind the Scenes: How Caregiving Impacts the Workplace

Burnout linked to caregiving costs employers \$4,200-\$20,000 per affected employee annually⁶



Caregiving employees are often some of your most dedicated team members. They've mastered prioritization, problem-solving, and keeping calm under pressure — skills that make them valuable in any role. But without the right support, even top performers can face limits on how much they can give at work.

When the demands of care collide with the demands of work, it can mean missed meetings, last-minute schedule changes, or reduced focus during the day. Over time, those barriers translate into lost productivity — around \$5,600 per caregiving employee each year.⁴ And because caregiving strain takes a toll on health, caregivers also generate about 8% higher healthcare costs than non-caregivers.⁵

\$5,600
/year

average productivity impact without caregiver support⁴

16%

of caregivers have left a job due to responsibilities⁷

50 -
200% of
salary

cost to replace a skilled employee⁸

And for some, the pressure becomes too much to manage. **Sixteen percent have left a job because of caregiving responsibilities.⁷** Replacing an experienced employee can cost anywhere from 50% to 200% of their salary.⁸ Beyond the budget hit, those departures mean losing institutional knowledge, disrupting team dynamics, and slowing momentum.

The good news: these outcomes aren't inevitable. Organizations that invest in caregiver support — through flexibility, access to resources, and targeted benefits — often see the opposite: stronger retention, lower healthcare claims, and more engaged teams.

“

I would be lost trying to figure out how to help my son without this benefit. There is so much information and navigating it without the background I have received here would be close to impossible for me as a working mother.”

LifeSpeak member



ACTION STEP

Run the numbers

Estimate how many employees in your workforce are caregivers, then calculate the annual productivity cost. Share this figure with leadership to show the **urgency of support**.



Why Caregiving is a Workplace Equity Issue

Caregiving responsibilities don't affect all employees equally. Women, racial and ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ+ employees are more likely to shoulder the caregiving load — and more likely to face negative career and health outcomes as a result. Without employer support, caregiving becomes a barrier to workplace equity.

Women: About 60–66% of caregivers are women.¹ Caregiving significantly disrupts their careers: **33% reduce their hours, 29% pass up promotions or training, 20% move to part-time, and 16% quit altogether.**¹¹ The most recent NAC/AARP 2025 survey confirms these disruptions remain widespread among working caregivers overall — with women still the majority impacted.¹ Women caregivers also report higher rates of stress, anxiety, and depression.¹²

Who Carries the Caregiving Load?

60% of caregivers are women¹

33% of them reduced work hours

29% of them passed up promotions

16% of them quit their jobs

Racial and ethnic minorities: Roughly 30% of caregivers identify as a racial or ethnic minority.⁴ Among Millennial caregivers, 27% are Hispanic/Latino, and more than half are people of color.¹

LGBTQ+ employees: LGBTQ+ individuals are 1.2× more likely to be primary caregivers and 3.5× more likely to provide care to friends or chosen family than their non-LGBTQ+ peers.¹²

Caregiving is not just a family issue — it's a DEI issue. When employers provide equitable caregiver support, they help close gaps that disproportionately affect women and underrepresented employees.

30%

of caregivers are racial /ethnic minorities⁴



ACTION STEP

Track health and absence data with caregiving in mind

Measure the impact of caregiving strain on healthcare claims, absenteeism, and engagement. Use this data to build the case for expanded caregiver support — such as flexible scheduling, stress management resources, and access to expert guidance.

The Hidden Health Costs of Caregiving

Without the right workplace support, the dual load of employment and caregiving takes a serious toll on health and wellbeing. The costs — both human and financial — are substantial.



Mental health: Between 40–70% of caregivers show clinically significant symptoms of depression, with dementia caregivers particularly at risk.¹⁰

Physical health: Only 1 in 4 caregivers report good physical health.¹⁴ Caregivers fare worse than non-caregivers in 13 of 19 major health indicators, including obesity, asthma, and arthritis.¹⁴

Equity gaps: Women caregivers are more likely to delay their own medical care, and LGBTQ caregivers face higher barriers to accessing health and social services.^{11, 12}

Employer costs: Caregiving reduces productivity by about one-third, costing employers roughly \$5,600 per caregiver per year in absenteeism and presenteeism.⁴

Nearly 1 in 4 employed caregivers report absenteeism or presenteeism in a single month — yet access to resources significantly improves retention and wellbeing.⁴



The Cost of Unsupported Caregiving

40-70% of caregivers show depression symptoms without adequate support¹⁰

only 25% of caregivers report good physical health¹⁴

Caregivers fare worse in **13 of 19 health indicators**¹⁴

Caregiving challenges are not a reflection of employees' commitment — they reflect a lack of systemic support. Employers that step up with proactive solutions protect both their workforce's health and their organization's bottom line.

ACTION STEP

Design caregiver benefits with equity in mind —

from inclusive definitions of family to culturally competent resources that meet women, LGBTQ+, and employees of color where they are.



The ROI of Supporting Your Caregivers



Supporting caregivers isn't just the right thing to do — it delivers measurable results for both employees and organizations. When employers step up with resources and flexibility, caregivers are healthier, more engaged, and more likely to stay.

When caregiving stress is left unchecked, it chips away at performance and wellbeing. **But with the right support, that same group becomes one of the most stable, loyal, and productive segments of the workforce.** Retention means knowledge and trust stay on teams, lower healthcare costs reflect proactive care, and leaders earn a reputation for supporting the whole employee.

Caregiver Support: Impact at a Glance

- 66%** report it prepares them for caregiving challenges
- 41%** report it reduces stress levels
- 48%** are grateful to have this benefit

Why it matters for employers

\$5,600
/year

lost productivity per
caregiving employee
(absenteeism and
presenteeism)⁴

16%

have left a job due to
care responsibilities;
turnover costs range
from 50% – 200%
of salary⁷

Caregivers
have ~8%

higher healthcare
costs than non-
caregivers⁵



And beyond the metrics, there's the human return:

- Employees can focus on their work without feeling they're neglecting loved ones
- Teams are more collaborative and resilient
- Leaders build a reputation for understanding the full scope of their employees' lives – a powerful edge in attracting talent

ACTION STEP

Pair numbers with stories

When presenting caregiver benefits to leadership, back up the business case with data and a short employee story. It keeps the ROI grounded in human impact.

ROI Snapshot: The Caregiver Impact

Let's look at a mid-sized organization with 1,000 employees. Based on national data, we can expect at least 250 employees (1 in 4) to be caregivers. In some large employer studies, that number climbs to **1 in 3 or even higher**, making caregiver support one of the most critical workforce issues.

The financial impact shows up across multiple dimensions – from burnout and retention to absenteeism and healthcare costs. Here's how it adds up:



Burnout Avoided

- Burnout costs an average of **\$4,000 per employee per year.⁶**
- For 250 caregivers, that's **~\$1M at risk annually.**
- With LifeSpeak, **97% of members say the platform helps manage stress and prevent burnout**, helping employers prevent a large share of these losses.¹⁵



Retention Protected

- Turnover costs an average of **33% of salary (~\$20K per \$60K employee).⁸**
- If 5% of caregivers leave due to strain, that's **~\$2.7M in replacement costs.**
- With LifeSpeak, **92% of members say they're more likely to stay with their employer**, showing the power of preventive caregiver support to protect talent.¹⁵



Absenteeism Reduced

- Caregiving often leads to missed work and presenteeism.
- For 250 caregivers, even **one fewer missed day each (~\$250/day) = \$62,500 saved annually.**
- With LifeSpeak, **88.5% of members avoid missing work**, proving real impact on attendance and productivity.¹⁵



Healthcare Costs Controlled

- Caregivers incur **~8% higher healthcare costs** than non-caregivers.⁵
- At \$10,000 average healthcare spend per employee, that's an **extra \$200K annually** across 250 caregivers.
- With LifeSpeak, **90.5% of members report fewer doctor/therapist visits**, helping bend the cost curve.¹⁵

Bottom line: For caregivers, prevention is measurable. **Employers can avoid millions in burnout, turnover, absenteeism, and healthcare costs** while improving quality of life for one of their most at-risk populations.

The Support That Makes the Biggest Difference

Caregiver needs are as varied as the people providing the care — but the most effective employer programs share a common structure. And those needs aren't identical: the best programs meet employees where they are, in all their different realities.



“

Navigating the procedural process of IEPs is daunting. [The expert advisor] provided more clarity than the attorney I had hired for the same reason! Her experience is extensive and her advice invaluable.”

LifeSpeak member

Employees with access to comprehensive caregiver support report higher job satisfaction and lower stress across both U.S. and Canadian studies.^{1, 3}



ACTION STEP

Audit your benefits through a caregiver lens

Compare what you offer against the four proven pillars: care navigation, expert advising, digital resources, and live events. Identify gaps and choose scalable ways to close them.

Four pillars that make the biggest difference for working caregivers:



Care Navigation

Care decisions are complex, but employees don't have to navigate them alone. Guidance to move through complicated healthcare, education, and legal systems – from finding the right specialist to understanding benefits and coverage. Saving employees hours each week, reducing stress, and helping them make confident decisions.



Expert Advising

The right answer is rarely one-size-fits-all. On-demand access to specialists such as gerontologists, child development experts, and educational consultants. Employees get personalized, practical guidance tailored to their unique situation.



Digital Content & Micro-Learning

Support works best when it's available anytime, anywhere. Trusted, evidence-based resources available 24/7 – articles, tip sheets, videos, and checklists that employees can access anytime, in multiple formats and languages.



Live Events

Caregiving can feel isolating – connection changes that. Expert-led live sessions give employees the chance to ask questions, learn alongside peers, and feel supported in the moment. These touchpoints foster confidence, reduce isolation, and reinforce that they're not navigating caregiving alone.

When these elements work together, they create a **net of support** – helping employees stay engaged at work, safeguard their own health, and continue providing care at home.

Caregiver Support is a Workplace Strength

The most impactful caregiver support strategies go beyond benefit offerings — they're built into workplace culture. When employees feel safe to share their challenges and confident that leaders will respond with empathy, they're more engaged, more loyal, and more likely to stay.

Here's what leading organizations are doing:

- Flexible scheduling & remote options**
Give employees the ability to adjust hours or work from home when caregiving needs arise. Even small changes — like shifting start/end times — can have a big impact.
- Manager training**
Equip leaders to recognize caregiver stress and respond with empathy. Managers often set the tone for whether employees feel safe asking for help.
- Normalize caregiving conversations**
Share stories and highlight resources in internal communications to reduce stigma and make support visible.
- Centralize access to resources**
Create a single hub for all caregiving information — benefits, contacts, guides — so employees can quickly find what they need without added stress.

A manager's willingness to adjust a start time can mean the difference between an employee making a specialist appointment — or missing it for the third time.



Flexible work options are among the most requested accommodations by working caregivers in both the U.S. and Canada.^{1,3}

“

My advisor has been compassionate and caring throughout the process of navigating care for my mother-in-law. This service has helped me focus on work while figuring out the best options for our family.”

LifeSpeak member

ACTION STEP

Launch a Caregiver Champions program

Build a network of trained employees who share resources, answer questions, and provide peer support. It's a cost-effective way to strengthen community and increase benefit awareness.

The LifeSpeak Parenting & Caregiving Advantage

You've seen what effective caregiver programs look like: coordinated guidance, expert access, trusted content, and community connection. LifeSpeak's flexible support for parents and caregivers is designed to deliver those best practices in one place — tailored for the realities of today's workforce.



Here's how LifeSpeak's Parenting & Caregiving wellness track puts them into action:



Expert-driven guidance

From gerontologists to child development specialists, every resource is grounded in evidence-based expertise, available on demand.



Always accessible

Employees and their families can access resources anytime, anywhere, in multiple formats and languages.



Engaging delivery

A mix of live Q&As, self-serve resources, and one-on-one expert connections ensures every learning style and situation is supported.

What employees get:



Advising

Guidance from specialists who understand caregiving — from eldercare to parenting — so employees can make informed decisions with confidence.



Trusted Resources

A 24/7 library of articles, short videos, and tip sheets in multiple formats and languages, available to employees and their families.



Care Navigation

Concierge-style support to navigate complex care needs, connect with the right services, and save time during stressful moments.

When organizations offer this kind of comprehensive support, employees save time, feel less overwhelmed, and stay engaged. Employers see stronger retention, reduced healthcare costs, and healthier, more resilient teams.

For many employees, the workday doesn't end when they log off or leave the office — it shifts into caregiving. Having the right resources at hand can make the difference between feeling overwhelmed and feeling supported



“

Instead of spending a lunch hour frantically Googling, an employee can watch a 10-minute expert video that answers their exact question — and feel ready to make a confident decision.”



Molly Prues
Gerontologist and
Caregiving Subject Matter
Expert, LifeSpeak Inc.

“

I love having a job that offers these resources and values the needs of families beyond work!”

LifeSpeak member

ACTION STEP

Map it to your wellbeing strategy

Compare LifeSpeak's Parenting & Caregiving wellness track against your current offerings — and see where it can fill the gaps.

Checklist: Where to Start Supporting Your Caregivers

Quick wins you can put in
place today



- Listen first — ask employees about their caregiving challenges and needs.
- Build flexibility in — make it easier for people to adjust schedules or work remotely when care needs arise.
- Equip your managers — give them the tools to respond with empathy and offer practical solutions.
- Make support visible — share stories, highlight resources, and normalize caregiving conversations.
- Offer expert help and resources — from bite sized videos to care coordination and one-on-one advising, so employees get answers they can trust.
- Keep it easy to find — create one place where employees can access all your caregiving resources.
- Track the impact — measure retention, engagement, and healthcare costs to show the value of support.



What's Next

Caregivers are in your workforce. Let's make sure they're supported.

LifeSpeak's Parenting & Caregiving wellness track gives employees the tools, expert support, and confidence they need to manage care responsibilities without losing focus at work. The result? A healthier, more engaged team, and stronger retention for

“

I am beyond thankful for this support. I am a single mom with no family to support me.”

LifeSpeak member



Are you ready to support your caregivers with the tools to succeed at work and beyond?



Better support doesn't just improve wellbeing – it improves everything.

BOOK A DEMO

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