

# Working Family Caregivers Can Find the Right Balance



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AARP Meditations for Caregivers

# Overview

- What statistics tell us about working family caregivers
- The challenges of balancing work and family responsibilities
- What to expect from your employer
- Feeling tired but still joyful



# Statistics

- 1 in 6 working Americans also spend time caring for an aging or disabled family member or friend
- These working family caregivers put in an average of 35 hours a week at their paid jobs before their unpaid family duties

- 70% of working caregivers have to rearrange their work—decreasing hours, taking an unpaid leave
- May leave job altogether
- Loss of wages, benefits/insurance



- Those most affected live with care receiver—often family member with dementia
- More women (36%) than men (24%) engage in hands-on caregiving (e.g., bathing, dressing, toileting) and are therefore more likely to cut back or give up work



# Effects on Employers

- According to Caregiver Action Network:
- Cost of caregiving in lost productivity exceeds \$50 B a year
- Recruiting and retraining new workers to replace caregivers: \$6.6 B
- Absenteeism: \$5.1 B
- Shifts from full- to part-time work: \$5.1 B
- Workday interruptions: \$6.3 B
- Working caregivers have 8% higher healthcare costs

# Mary



- 46 y.o working full-time; husband also works full-time; 3 kids
- 1 kid with RA; another kid with heart problems
- Father in assisted living but is disoriented, calls frequently while she is at work

# Jane

- 42 y.o. woman
- Both she and husband work full-time
- 3 and 8 y.o. kids
- Grandmother lives with them
- Thought grandmother would baby-sit but...





# What Your Employer Should Do

- Train supervisors to be sensitive and open to caregiving concerns
- Flex time
- Easy access to FMLA benefits
- Dependent care flexible spending accounts
- Eldercare counseling (as part of Employee Assistance Programs)
- Stress management classes

# What You Can Do



- According to Family Caregiver Alliance:
- Ask to telecommute
- Ask to job share
- Create network of family and professional helpers; adult day care centers
- Be honest and forthright with your employer about your caregiving demands