

# Reframing the 9-to-5: Creating Carer-Inclusive Workplaces

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# About CCOHS

How we serve

**We promote**

total well-being -- physical, psychosocial and mental health

**We provide**

credible and relevant information and guidance

**We support**

with practical, accessible tools, courses and resources





# Agenda

- Understanding who caregivers are
- The importance of this role
- How workplaces can provide support



## Take a Moment

If something we talk about today is a trigger for overwhelming feelings, feel free to take a moment





# Who are caregivers?





## Defining Caregivers

Carer (caregiver, working carer, carer employee)

- Family members and other significant people who provide **unpaid** care and assistance to individuals living with debilitating physical, mental or cognitive conditions

Family

- Same household, relationships between parents and children, marital, common law, in-laws
- Includes “chosen families”



## Who Are We Helping

For our scope today, we are focusing on:

- Adult care recipients (e.g., adults with disabilities, elderly dependents)
- Long-term childcare recipients (e.g., due to chronic illness or condition)



## About the Carers

35%

of the Canadian workforce are carer-employees

61%

are in their peak earning years (ages 45-64) with valuable skills and experience

19%

experience physical and emotional health challenges

McMaster University: Quick Start Implementation Guide:  
Carer-friendly Workplace standard



## Unpaid Care Takes Time

# 8-30 hours/week

spent by caregivers providing care or support

[More than half of women in Canada are caregivers - Statistics Canada 2023](#)

[Report: Caring in Canada – Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence \(no date\)](#)



# What Do We Mean by “Care”



## Direct - Women

feeding, bathing,  
giving medications



## Direct - Men

providing  
transportation,  
managing care  
services



## Intense

hands-on and  
involving direct  
physical and  
emotional care



## Brainstorm: Roles

When thinking about your roles at work and at home (or after paid work), what words come to mind?



# Why look at this role?





## Combination of Caregiving and Working

Can result in negative physical and mental health outcomes:

- increased stress
- higher depression
- anxiety



Caregiver's declining mental health can also have negative effects on the well-being of the care recipient



## Question: Caregiving Fatigue

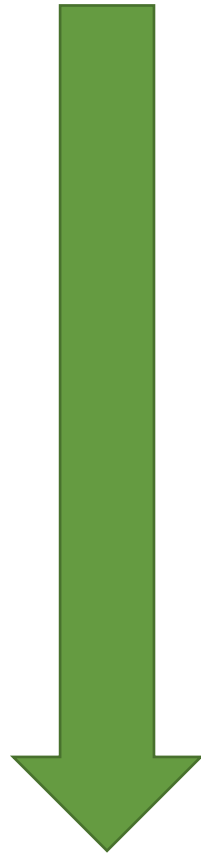
If you have been awake for 21 hours, it is equivalent to:

- blood alcohol content of 0.05%
- blood alcohol content of 0.08%  
(legal limit for driving in Canada)
- blood alcohol content of 0.10%
- there is no comparison to blood alcohol content



## Workplace Perspective

Fatigue



These skills are **reduced**:

- decision-making ability
- ability to do complex planning
- communication skills
- productivity or performance
- attention and vigilance
- ability to handle stress on the job
- reaction time – both speed and thought



## Why Workplaces Should Support Caregivers

Lack of workplace support can result in the carer:

- experiencing reduced productivity
- missing days of work
- leaving the workforce
- taking early retirement





# Balancing Work and Caregiving



15% reduce  
their working  
hours



10% turn  
down job  
opportunities



26% take a leave  
of absence from  
their job

McMaster University: Quick Start Implementation Guide:  
Carer-friendly Workplace standard



# How can workplaces help?





# Everyone Plays a Role



## Employers

- Identify and address hazards, communicate



## Workers

- Participate and provide feedback



## Health and Safety Committee or Representatives

- Shared responsibilities

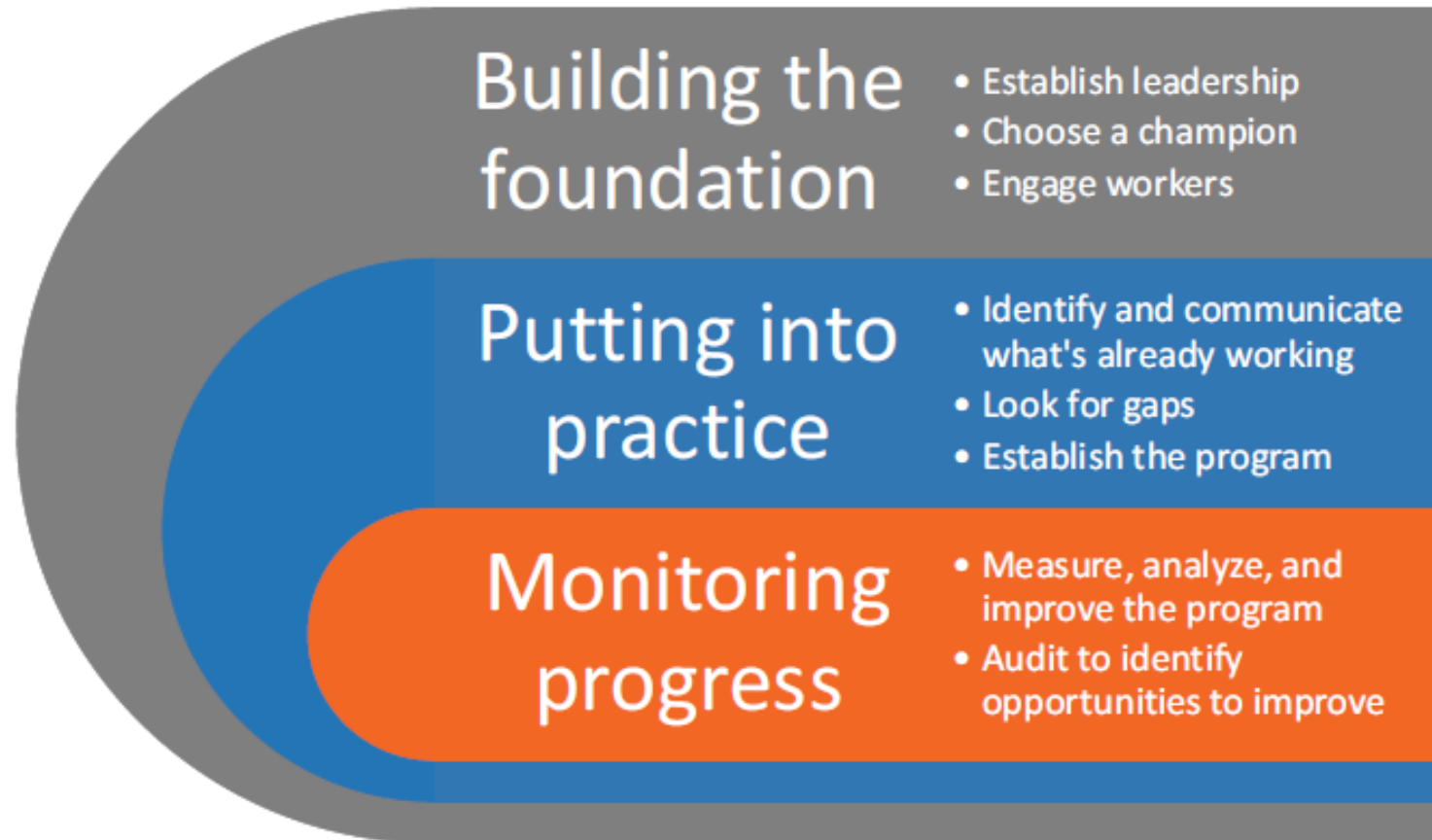


## CSA Standard

- B701-17 (R2021): Carer-inclusive and accommodating organizations
- Handbook (B701HB-18): Helping carer-employees in your organization



# Start Where You Are





## Building the Foundation

Establish organizational leadership, commitment and support

- Human and financial resources
- A leader to implement and monitor the program
- Make sure workers are involved



# Legal and Other Requirements

- Benefit programs
- Family-friendly organization programs
- Employee assistance programs (EAP)
- Union or professional association benefits
- Human resources policies and programs
- Other related programs



## Steps to Take



Review standards, legislation and resources



Conduct an audit. Is caregiving in existing policies?



Check in with managers and staff



What informal arrangements exist?





## Putting it into Practice

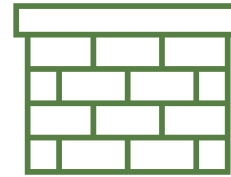




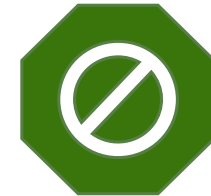
## Look for Gaps



Identify needs that have not been considered



Identify barriers



Workers may be reluctant to ask



## Proactive Solutions

- Support and educational services (workshops, counselling, mental health first aid)
- Flexible and customizable work arrangements (work from home, flex time, bank time)
- Financial assistance
- Leave from work and gradual return-to-work policies
- Benefit providers who extend coverage to dependents other than children



## Building Blocks

- Incorporate carer language into existing policies
- Job sharing or job shadowing opportunities
- Contingency planning so staff can step in for one another
- Provide awareness training to ensure support and understanding amongst co-workers



## Check-in

Does your organization have policies or procedures (formal or informal) that address or could address caregiving needs?



# Monitoring Progress





# Monitor

- Use by workers
- Satisfaction with
  - assistance or accommodations received
  - timeliness of response to expressed needs
  - perceived support from organizations, supervisors and co-workers
- Feedback (workers, managers, co-workers)



# Audit

- Develop a checklist
- Establish a team that represents key stakeholders, including the worker-carer
- Review use of programs, benefits
- Interview and inform all parties including senior management, workers, managers



# Continual Improvement



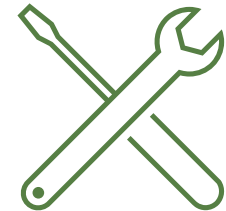
Results of  
the audit



Worker  
feedback



Legislative  
changes



Opportunities for  
improvement



**Before we go...**



# Be Inclusive

Involve persons with living or lived experience as a carer  
in policy and program development



## Other Ways the Workplace Can Help

Leverage health and safety training to include carers



Stress or time  
management



Lifting



Infection control



# Healthy Organizational Culture

- Treat workers with respect
- Listen to their ideas and concerns
- Demonstrate trust in your workers by encouraging and responding to their constructive feedback
- Recognize their hard work and successes
- Offer help when needed



## **Be Open, Reduce Stigma**

We may misread the signs of burnout as job burnout or dissatisfaction.

We may misread absences from work as vacation or favouritism.

**Inclusive caregiver policies create a culture of understanding and acceptance.**



## Positive Ways to Respond

“Thank you for sharing your experience. I understand and appreciate how much you are managing.”

“Your personal health and wellbeing are important as well, not just work or caregiving.”

“You’re doing a great job in a very difficult situation. What options might be helpful during this time?”





## How to Respond When Workers Ask for Help

- Thank them for coming forward and sharing
- Ask about the type of support that would be most useful to them
- Describe what options are available
- Assist with access to counselling, support services or other services (offered by workplace or within community)
- Follow up, be compassionate, be flexible and adapt as needed

# Thank You

Got a question? Get the Answer  
Safety InfoLine:



[ccohs.ca/safetyinfo.html](https://ccohs.ca/safetyinfo.html)

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