

WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS FOR THE EMPLOYED CAREGIVER

Cathy Brady, MSW, CSW (Brady Counseling Services)
Paula Jacobsen, RN, CCM (HHS, Health Options)

Employed caregivers are often burdened with balancing both job and caregiving obligations. Whether you are a primary caregiver, or needed for transportation, meals or assisting with doctor's appointments, you are still considered a caregiver. This role can create much stress if you are also employed.

Businesses lose \$36.5 billion a year from employee absenteeism, and lost productivity including coming late, leaving early, longer lunches, increased personal phone calls, time off, depression, anxiety.

Here are ten tips to help alleviate caregiver stress both at home and at work:

1. Develop a back-up plan for contingencies, for example a phone list of neighbors, friends or paid caregivers to call if necessary.
2. Delegate some household chores to family members or others
3. Spend 15 minutes each day taking of yourself. Consider yoga, meditation, exercise, walking, etc.
4. Set a specific time when you will call home to check on things.
5. Set limits on when you can be interrupted at work.
6. Use voice mail, a secretary, or some other means to screen calls.
7. Access assistance your employer may provide, such as an Employee Assistance Program; ask your employer for job site education and support
8. Seek out support groups.
9. Plan ahead, if possible, for your care recipient's scheduled doctor's appointment or surgery.
10. Try to arrange to share a job with a co-worker, work at home or go from full-time to part-time hours. Ask your employer for job flexibility.

Local Resources:

Brady Counseling Services provides on- site “Lunch and Learn” educational opportunities to businesses as well as on-site consultation with employees to assist in alleviating caregiver concerns. Call Cathy at 616/560-6467 or email at cabrady@ameritech.net for more information.

HHS, Health Options provides a telephonic helpline benefit to employer groups to assist their employees who balance caregiving with their work-site duties. For more information, call Paula at 954-1504 or email at paulaj@hhs-inc.com.

Provided as a public service of the Caregiver Resource Network. The **Caregiver Resource Network** is a collaboration of West Michigan organizations dedicated to providing for the needs and welfare of family and professional caregivers within the community. Funded by the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan with Older American's Act Title III-E, Family Caregiver Support funds.

For more information consult our website at www.CaregiverResource.net or call toll free at 1-888-456-5664.