



# COMPASSION

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF SUPPORT NEEDS

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It goes without saying that managers and employees are also citizens, mothers, fathers, grand-parents, sons and daughters, and sometimes have to take on family responsibilities in addition to their professional duties.

With the many changes to the workplace, including the increase in the number of women and the presence of five generations (from *baby-boomers* to millenials), the balance between an employee's private life events and the requirements of their professional life can sometimes be disrupted. This conflict of priorities often causes personal problems (feeling of being abandoned, conflict of values, etc.) and organizational problems (absenteeism, presenteeism, loss of time, etc.).

Today, people are increasingly asked to balance the professional and private aspects of their lives. This document explains the reasons for fostering better balance between work and private life.

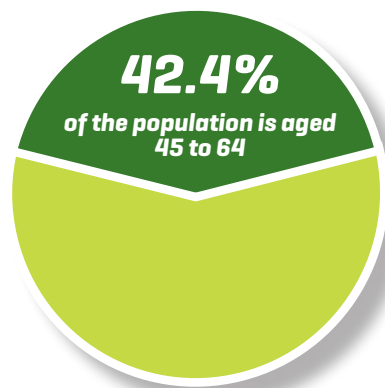
### ***In this document, we will show that:***

- 1** **42.4%** of the population is in the situation of having to care for a child and a parent simultaneously.
- 2** The well-being of employees has a direct impact on their productivity.
- 3** **28%** of the population is a family caregiver.
- 4** Taking care of a loved one has a direct impact on the health of the persons who support.
- 5** Taking care of a loved one can have professional consequences.

# 1 TAKING CARE OF A CHILD AND A PARENT SIMULTANEOUSLY: A SITUATION THAT AFFECTS MORE AND MORE PEOPLE

In 2011 in Canada, the percentage of people between the ages of 45 and 64 reached 42.4% of the population, a record high.<sup>1</sup> This generation, called the «sandwich» generation, has seen its family obligations increase significantly because of the higher life expectancy. Nowadays, there are more seniors than young people.<sup>2</sup>

Workers are now obligated to care for their children and their parents at the same time.



## More women in the workforce

The percentage of women who have a job reached 59.3% in 2008.<sup>3</sup> Family responsibilities are therefore increasingly taken on by women who also have a job. Conflicts between professional life and private life will undoubtedly increase as well.

## Lack of resources in the health network

Costs related to health care, budget deficits and a lack of resources have resulted in governments being forced to redirect patients to community resources and encouraging family members to provide care.<sup>4</sup>

# 2 THE WELL-BEING OF EMPLOYEES HAS A DIRECT IMPACT ON PRODUCTIVITY

## More flexibility at work

Balance between professional life and private life is becoming more and more important to younger generations, but also to generation Xers and baby-boomers. For family caregivers, conflicts between work and private life are increasingly common because taking care of a loved one can require a lot of time.

The main problems identified are:

- The work schedule
- The workload
- Lack of communication and understanding from colleagues
- Lack of an internal company policy regarding arrangements<sup>5,6</sup>

Flexibility at work is an asset for employees, and also for employers in terms of attracting and retaining employees. E.g.: deferred leave, flexible schedules and the possibility of telecommuting. These measures are more frequently requested by women.<sup>7</sup>

## Willingness to better support employees

7 out of 10 U.S. employers wish to develop the relationship between well-being and productivity at work. Employers are more open to developing financial incentives for their employees to take better care of their health.<sup>8</sup>

## 3 THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY CAREGIVERS

# 28%

**of the active population  
is a family caregiver**

In 2012, eight million Canadians, that is, 28% of the population aged 15 or over, provided care to a loved one who had a long-term health problem, an incapacity or problems related to aging.

Of these family caregivers, 39% were mainly caring for their parents, 8% were caring for a spouse and 5% were caring for a child. Others (48%) were providing care to other members of their family or friends.<sup>9</sup>

### Very little financial support for family caregivers

In 2012, 30% of people who were caring for a child received financial aid from the government, compared with 14% of those who were caring for a spouse and 5% of those who were caring for a parent.<sup>9</sup>

### Family caregivers want more support

52% of those who were caring for a child, 42% for a spouse and 28% for a parent would have wanted to get more aid than they received.<sup>9</sup>

## 4 TAKING CARE OF A SICK RELATIVE: A COMMITMENT WITH A DIRECT IMPACT ON THE HEALTH OF THOSE PROVIDING SUPPORT

More than a quarter of all regular caregivers reported five or more symptoms of psychological distress.<sup>9</sup> It has been shown that psychological distress is closely related to absenteeism from work. We estimate that 50% of workers with symptoms of depression have been absent about two weeks per year, and a quarter of them have been absent for more than 60 days.<sup>10</sup> When the workplace is not flexible in accommodating family caregivers, there is a higher incidence of symptoms of depression.<sup>11</sup>

### Deterioration in physical health

Family caregivers are also more vulnerable to developing health problems. In addition to distress, these people also have sleeping problems, decreased attention to their own health (back aches, diabetes, etc.), poor diets and lack of exercise.<sup>12</sup>

**More than 25%  
of all caregivers reported  
5 or more symptoms of  
psychological distress.**

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# 5 TAKING CARE OF A SICK LOVED ONE CAN HAVE PROFESSIONAL CONSEQUENCES

## Change to working conditions

According to Statistics Canada, 20% of the “sandwich” generation has had to change its work schedule and 10% have noticed a decrease in income. Some have seen an important position slip through their fingers, while others have had to push back their retirement for financial reasons.<sup>13</sup>

## Relationship with absenteeism

In the United States, family caregivers are absent from work an average of 6.6 days per year to take care of a loved one. Costs are estimated to be 25 billion dollars per year.<sup>14</sup>

Our experience has also shown that these absences are considered to be disability for psychological distress, because in most companies this is the only option. This has the effect of stigmatizing family caregivers and falsifying absence data in relation to psychological distress.

## Relationship with presenteeism

You can't care for a loved one only on evenings and weekends. Almost all health and social service networks are only open during the daytime. Family caregivers also spend time at work caring for their loved ones.

### **Employees who are caring for a loved one are at work, but...<sup>15</sup>**

<b>87%</b> make phone calls	<b>54%</b> arrive later	<b>70%</b> take additional leave	<b>20%</b> request a lighter schedule	<b>16%</b> quit their jobs
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In another study, family caregivers said that their performance at work decreased due to their fatigue and that they have even had to give up career advancement opportunities (promotion, training, etc.). The study also revealed that a quarter of family caregivers miss one day of work per 15 days.<sup>16</sup> This also has an impact on the number of accidents at work and the employee turnover rate.<sup>17</sup> In terms of productivity, a scientific study on family caregivers who are supporting people with cancer shows that family caregivers are 85% productive and the loss of productivity is approximately 22.88%.<sup>18</sup>

## More information

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