



**Family caregivers in the workplace
Workplace Webinar**

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/2



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Agenda

1. Caregiving in Canada
2. Definitions & scope
3. Impacts: psychological & physical, financial, employment
4. Supporting caregivers
5. Creating more flexible workplaces
6. A caregiver's personal experience

*Please ask questions throughout the presentation by typing
in the chat box on the right of your screen.*

/ 3



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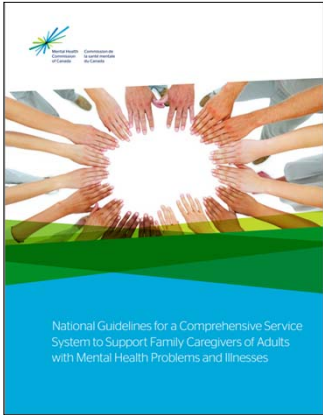
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Caregiving in Canada

Caregivers are significant assets

The [Mental Health Strategy for Canada](#) calls for more support and recognition for caregivers in order to help caregivers:

1. provide care for and foster recovery in people living with mental illness
2. to meet their own needs in handling challenges such as stress and loss.



Caregiver Guidelines:
<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/node/8601/>

/ 4



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Caregivers & the 2014 federal budget

- Budget 2014 announced an Employers for Caregivers Plan to engage with employers on cost-effective workplace solutions to help maximize caregivers' labour market participation
- The Plan is to include the creation of an employer panel that would identify promising workplace practices to support caregivers



/ 5



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Creating more flexible workplaces

- Family caregiver-friendly workplaces benefit not only family caregivers but also employers and society
- What can employers do?
 - Adopt the National Standard
 - Become familiar with the Family Caregiver Guidelines and its recommendations
 - Adopt family-friendly workplace policies (e.g., caregiver leaves, flexible hours) to reduce the likelihood of loss of income due to caregiving responsibilities
 - Offer flexibility at work (e.g. reduce hours or adjust responsibilities)
 - Provide information (EFAP, etc.), give assistance, provide emotional and other supports


/ 6



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Family caregiver

Unlike paid caregivers, family caregivers provide care and assistance for: spouses, children, parents, extended family members and friends, who are in need of support because of age, disabling medical conditions, chronic injury, long term illness or disability.


Caregivers often provide support in many ways including help with:




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graph TD
    A[Navigating the mental health system]
    B[Accessing services]
    C[Transportation]
    D[Advocating for services]
    E[Providing social, financial and emotional support]
  
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/ 7



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Scope

- Over **8 million** caregivers and growing
 - Age related (caregiving) – 28%
 - Cancer – 11%
 - Cardio-vascular – 9%
 - Mental illness – 7%
- Most aged 45 to 64 (44%), caring for their parents (39%), and the slight majority women (54%)
- 9% are looking after the needs of parents-in-law, 8% for spouses and 5% for children

Source: Statistics Canada, 2012; Canadians 15+ who provided care to a family member or friend with a long-term health condition, disability or aging needs in 2012

/ 8



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Not if but when

- Smaller families and more dispersed
- More women in the formal workforce
- Marriage and childbearing later
- Retirement delayed
- Aging population
- Increased life expectancy, increased rate of disability
- Human resource issues in the paid sector



/ 9




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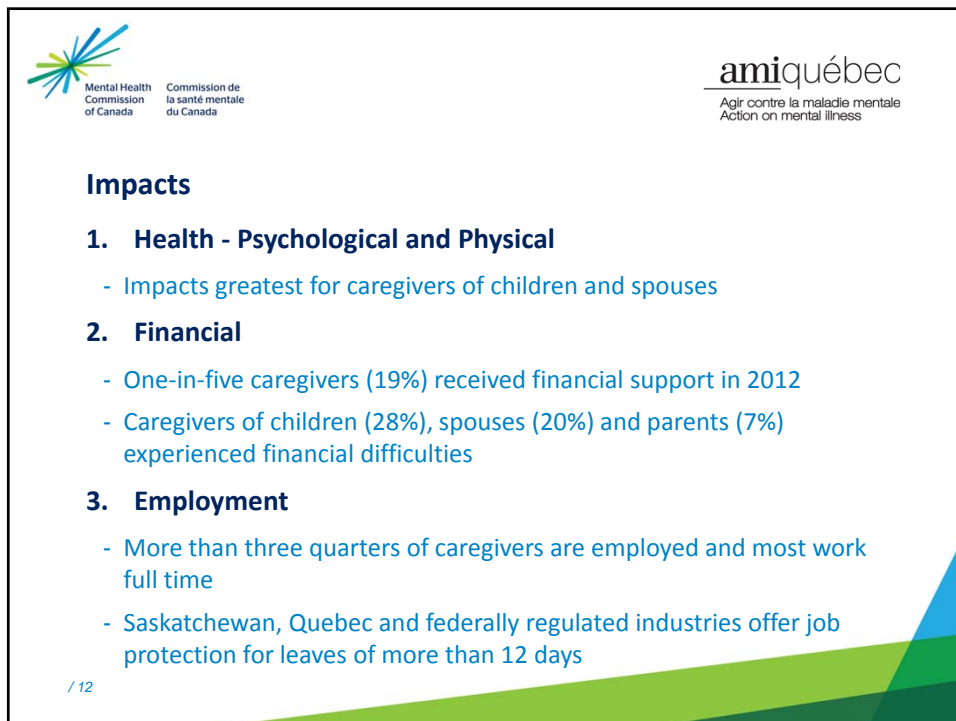
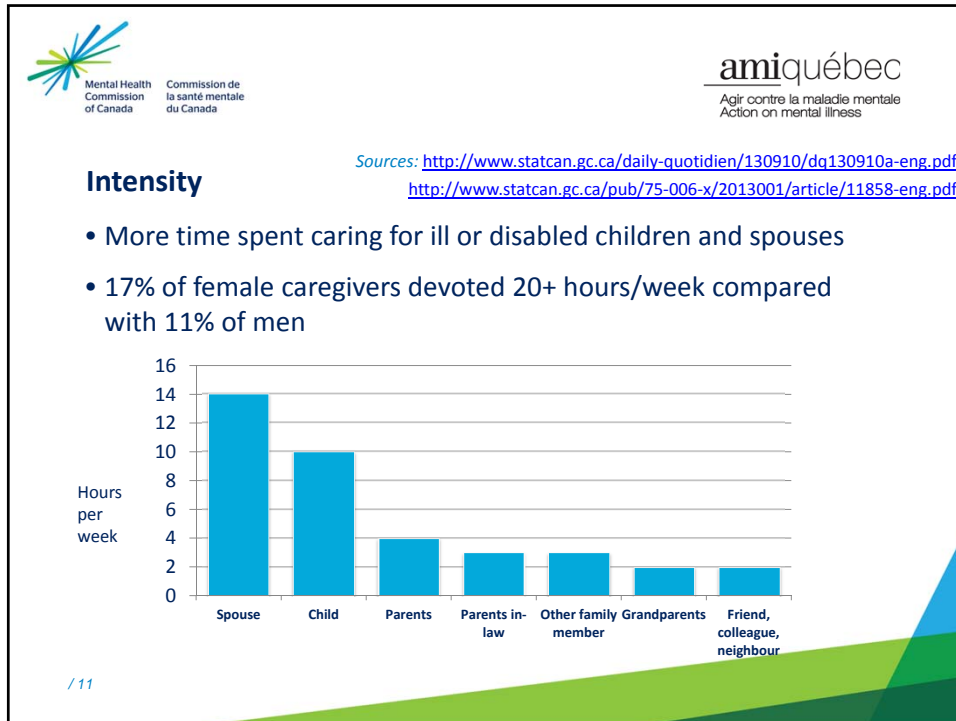
Caregivers:


- Contribute up to half of the overall costs of home care
- Provide \$5+ billion/year in unpaid care
- The economic contribution of family caregivers was estimated at \$25 billion+ for 2009
- Enable individuals to remain at home longer; support the services provided in facilities



Sources: Fast et al., 2011; Chappell et al., 2004; Hollander et al., 2009; CHPCA The Way Forward, 2013


/ 10





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Different caregivers, different burdens

- Impacts and caregiving demands vary
- Experiences are difficult to quantify
- Objective vs. subjective burden



Examples:

Dementia


- At least 46 hours/week assisting with activities of daily living; high levels of depression

Mental illness

- More likely to assume long-term, often life-long, caregiving responsibilities; added stigma contributes to caregiving challenges

Sources: Schultz et al., 2003; Veltman et al., 2002

/ 13



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Why is it important to support caregivers?

- Caregivers can play a facilitative role in the recovery journey, in improvement to quality of life and in all aspects of community life.
- Adequate support can mitigate the stressors often associated with caregiving.
- The unpaid care and support provided by family caregivers makes a major contribution to the health and social service system, which would be very costly to replace with paid formal services.

Source: National Guidelines for a Comprehensive Service System to Support Family Caregivers of Adults with Mental Health Problems and Illnesses, MHCC, 2013

/ 14

The rewards of caregiving

- Proper supports can do more than minimize risks; they can enhance the rewards associated with this role
- About **9** in 10 caregivers felt providing care was rewarding
- About **7** in 10 also expressed that their relationship strengthened



Adequate supports are vital

/ 15

Carol's work profile

- Works full-time, approx. 7,000 employees
- Needs to be replaced if absent
- Belongs to union
- Contract provides 5 days emergency leave
- Somewhat flexible vacation days

/ 16

Carol's caregiving profile

- Sole caregiver to two adults:
 - Adult son with schizophrenia, drug addiction
 - Elderly mother with dementia



/ 17

Work/caregiving interaction

- The day-to-day
- Appointments
- Court order problems
- Emergency hospitalizations
- Lengthy hospitalizations
- Unpredictable crises due to psychosis



/ 18

Employer strengths & ideas for improvement

- Flexibility with use of vacation time
- Focus on teamwork in our unit
- Empathetic approach
- Can work from home if necessary to do 'catch up'

/ 19

Definite room for improvement

- Strengths are dependent on the supervisor of the unit
- Flexibility in working hours needed
- Greater emphasis on teamwork in administrative units is needed
- More processes should be put in place to assist caregivers (**hence the employer**)
- Attitudinal changes are needed to reflect the "normality" of the needs of caregivers (**Remember it's most of us are or will be caregivers at some point in our lives!**)

/ 20

Employers should consider caregivers when implementing the Standard in the Workplace

- All parts of society including the public and private sectors must work together to help achieve the vision for family caregiving in Canada
- The Standard is a guide and resource for employers
- It will assist employers to support individuals who balance work and the responsibility of caring for elderly family members and/or friends who needed assistance

Benefits: employees' physical and mental health is likely to improve; job satisfaction and performance will likely increase and job retention rates will likely rise

/ 21

Join the Conversation

Communicate. Contribute. Collaborate.



COLLABORATIVE SPACES is an online repository and conversation place for mental health in Canada. Share mental health information with others and learn from others as they post.

The more you contribute, the more robust a resource it will be!

<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/spaces>

TWITTER: @MHCC_ #workplaceMH #StandardCda

/ 22



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