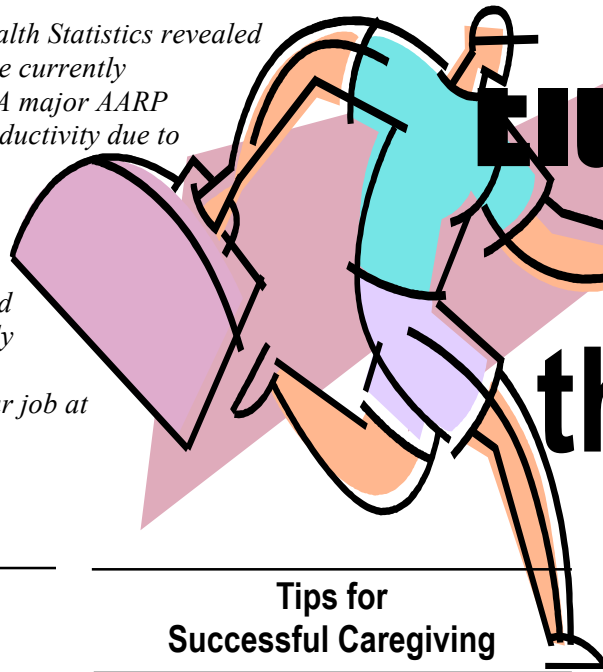


A report by the National Center for Health Statistics revealed that more than 70 million employees are currently confronting eldercare responsibilities. A major AARP survey revealed that the cost in lost productivity due to elder caregiving commitments exceeds 11 billion dollars each year.

Employees handling eldercare responsibilities from a distance contend with workday interruptions, acute family crises, excessive stress and frequent absenteeism. These factors may put your job at risk or cause added stress and anxiety, contributing to performance problems.



Eldercare Across the Miles

Impact of Distance Care on Employees

Distance eldercare is an increasing cause for concern among employees. Aging frequently involves many debilitating illnesses, often requiring specialized care. Roughly 50 percent of elders over the age of 85 develop some form of dementia, memory loss, or Alzheimer's. These age-related illnesses can impact short-term memory and physical ability. Families coping with loved ones that don't live nearby face even greater challenges. It is important that you locate resources for accessing care and ensuring the well-being of loved ones without adding to your stress, concern or responsibility.



Tips for Successful Caregiving

There are many steps you can take to help your loved ones, even when they are located far away.

- Talk with your loved ones frequently.
- Discuss eldercare before the need arises.
- Understand your loved one's thoughts and preferences on caregiving.
- Develop a plan of action that assigns each family member specific responsibilities for loved ones.
- Write down emergency contact information that is easily available in the event of an emergency.
- Make sure you have important documents, including Social Security and health insurance information, wills and information about power of attorney, if needed.

Mistakes and Missteps

There are many mistakes well-meaning family members make that can increase the stress associated with caring for elders. Avoid these common mistakes.

- Not establishing a network of relatives or neighbors that you can rely on to stop in and check on your loved ones in an emergency
- Failing to collect important documents that you may need to make health care or financial decisions from a distant location
- Not setting up easy access, for all concerned parties, to emergency contact information
- Allowing yourself to burn out while trying to shoulder all the responsibilities needed to care for loved ones

Avoid these mistakes by arranging for help from other family members when caring for loved ones. Caregiving often becomes too much for one person. When you have a network of people to help, you can support your loved ones while still caring for your own well-being.

Eldercare Do's

- Develop a network of people that you can rely on for support and understanding.
- Discuss all your concerns about your loved ones' care with their primary caregiver.
- Talk with your loved ones in a sensitive and caring way.
- Treat family members with the respect and dignity they deserve.
- Be honest about what you can do to help.

Resources

For more information about eldercare services throughout the nation, contact the U.S. Administration on Aging toll-free at 1-800-677-1116 or online at <http://www.eldercare.gov/>.

How the EAP Can Help

Your organization's employee assistance program can help you troubleshoot problems with caregiving issues by putting you in touch with valuable resources to help ease your concerns, offer support, and help you ensure that your loved ones' needs are met. Be sure, when talking with your EAP, to ask for information about available caregiving services across the United States.