

5 Ways Managers Can Support Employees Who Are Caregivers

With an estimated 1 in 5 working adults currently in caregiving roles, chances are at least one member of your team is a caregiver. One challenge managers face is how to best support their team members who are juggling work and family caregiving responsibilities. Here are 5 tips for how you, as a manager, can help create a supportive environment that empowers caregiving employees to thrive in their roles.

1

Communicate openly and be vulnerable

Trust and open communication are key for helping employees feel comfortable sharing their situation and needs. Ask employees how they're doing, get to know them on a personal level, and be open about your own struggles — this will all build trust and help employees feel like they can show up at work as their authentic selves.

2

Educate yourself about caregiving roles

Caring for aging loved ones can require everything from bathing and feeding, to handling complex financial matters. Caring for children requires managing schedules, appointments, and school issues. Do what you can to learn more about the specific challenges your employees are experiencing. You'll gain more understanding and empathy for what they're going through.

3

Build flexibility into your team's environment

While most flexible work policies are dictated at the company level, there are a few things you can do on your own team. Set reasonable expectations around meetings — which are necessary and who truly needs to be there? Make it a practice to record meetings in case someone has to miss. Ask employees to help determine deadlines, rather than assigning arbitrary due dates. Champion and model any company-wide flexible work policies to show your team it's okay for them to take advantage too.

4

Look for ways to prevent burnout

Rather than waiting for burnout to occur, managers play an important role in helping to prevent and mitigate burnout before it's happened. One way to get in front of burnout is to communicate priorities — when employees know what work they should prioritize it's easier for them to say no to unimportant things. Once you've established priorities, trust people to get their work done. Micromanaging adds stress and pressure that may lead to burnout.

5

Understand the 'why' to address burnout

If members of your team are experiencing burnout, it's important to understand what's driving it so that you can help combat it. There are three types of burnout. **Exhaustion:** struggling with the basics of self-care. **Cynicism:** feeling fed up and a sense that tasks or projects are pointless. **Inefficacy:** lack of self-esteem and a sense that nothing one does is right.

