



Your Wellness Is Our Business



FOUR DIMENSIONS
Consulting Limited
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Caring for Working Caregivers: Building a Supportive Workplace



Hong Kong is facing serious challenge of an aging population. Many employees, while working hard, also shoulder the responsibility of caring for family members, often experiencing double pressure between work and family.

Physical and Mental Crisis of Caregivers

A study by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (2021) estimated that there are about 860,000 elderly caregivers in Hong Kong, with 30% being employees - working during the day and caring for elders at night, averaging 37 hours of caregiving per week, equivalent to holding two jobs. Unsurprisingly, working caregivers often face health problems, mental fatigue, and burnout. Another survey revealed that 80% of employed caregivers experience extreme stress, over half show symptoms of depression, 60% have had to take sudden leave, arrive late, or leave early due to caregiving duties, and 20% even considered resigning to become full-time caregivers.

Long-Term Economic Impact

The difficulties of working caregivers are not just personal or family issues but also social and economic challenges. A report by HKU, the Women's Foundation, and HSBC Life (2019) pointed out that the indirect costs of elder care for Hong Kong employers will rise from HK\$1.8 billion in 2018 to about HK\$8.4 billion in 2060, an increase of 3.7 times. These costs include filling staff vacancies, reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher medical and insurance expenses for employers. When capable workers leave the labor market due to caregiving responsibilities, government tax revenue decreases, placing heavy pressure on Hong Kong's future productivity and economy.

Comprehensive Caregiver Support

A study by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (2022) noted that caregiving is a form of "multi-tasking", involving both physical labor (e.g. daily living care) and emotional labor (e.g. soothing the emotions of the family members receiving care). Current community support services mainly focus on physical labor, while emotional labor is often overlooked. Therefore, implementing measures such as strengthening caregiver support policies and resources, promoting caregiver-friendly workplace policies, establishing public education platforms, and improving caregiver-supporter matching can provide more comprehensive support for caregivers.

Conclusion

Providing support for working caregivers is both an act of compassionate care and a wise corporate strategy. It helps build a healthier, more efficient, and more attractive work environment, ensuring sustainable operations. Only by all stakeholders in society working together to build a caring and supportive caregiver-friendly community can we reduce caregivers' burdens, enhance employee wellbeing and productivity, and enable Hong Kong to remain resilient and competitive in the face of aging challenges.

Love and Beginnings

Personal Level

Here are four specific self-care practices caregivers can use to sustain themselves while balancing work and family:

1 Movement and Stress Release

Schedule "micro-workouts" such as 15-20 minutes of yoga, a brisk walk, or desk stretches. Practice quick stress resets like box breathing (inhale 4, hold 4, exhale 4, hold 4).

2 Nutrition and Hydration Habits

Aim for a mix of protein, whole grains, and colorful vegetables to maintain stable energy. Keep healthy snacks (fruit, nuts) on hand and a water bottle nearby to stay hydrated regularly.

3 Mental Recharge and Boundaries

Schedule at least one joyful personal activity per week (movie, painting, music, or a hobby). Protect mental space by declining non-essential commitments.

4 Use of Community Support

Make use of services such as home-based or designated respite care, caregiver support groups, and hotlines. Creating breathing space and engaging in relaxing activities can effectively relieve stress.

Organization Level

How to better support employees in balancing work contributions and fulfilling family responsibilities:

1 Information Sharing

Make information on community resources for carers more visible to employees in need so that they may have more professional support for their family needs.

2 Management Training

Raise awareness of managerial staff to support and accommodate employees with caregiving roles.

3 Flexible Arrangements

Offer flexible working hour arrangement (for a certain period of time) for employees with special family needs.

4 Health Care

Offer wellness programmes and counseling services during office hours, making it easier for employees to access company support.



To promote inclusive and supportive workplace environments and enhance caregiver wellbeing, the Employee Development Service of Hong Kong Christian Service will soon launch the “**HKEX Foundation Care for Caregivers Programme**” funded by the HKEX Foundation. This programme targets working caregivers and provides four core services:



Creating Caregiver-Friendly Workplaces

Through staff activities and management training, raise awareness of working caregivers and their needs.



Wellness Promotion Activities

Strengthen caregivers' physical and mental health through wellness initiatives.



Online Navigation and Referral

Provide online resources and referrals to help caregivers find suitable support.



Counseling and Emotional Support

Offer counseling for employees with needs for emotional support and caregiving planning.

If your company is interested in joining this programme, please scan the QR code and leave your contact details. Our designated staff will soon be in touch with you.



Company Information

Four Dimensions Consulting Limited (FDC) is a private limited company set up by Hong Kong Christian Service (HKCS) in 2005. Employee Development Service (EDS) of HKCS is the first EAP provider in Hong Kong since 1991. We offer total solutions to assist employees with work/life issues, develop strengths/potentials, increase work engagement and positivity at work, which ultimately enhance organizational excellence and sustainability.



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