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Caregiver role #7:

IT Support

Caregiving takes a lot. Caregivers need support.

Holding down a regular job and working as an unpaid caregiver can cause physical and emotional fatigue, which can lead to mental health challenges and reduced job performance. That's why a workplace culture of full health includes valuing and supporting caregivers—recognizing the many roles they're playing, as well as the roles each of us can play to support them.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 1 in 5 Americans are caregivers, helping others (usually family members) with activities of daily living and medical tasks.¹

Suggestions for caregivers.

As an employee and a caregiver, it's practically a given that you're going to feel overwhelmed at times. What's important is that you have sound coping strategies, like the two suggested here, for dealing with these emotions.

Accept help.

Tapping friends or coworkers for support doesn't mean you're weak or not in control of the situation. The opposite is true. Recognizing that you cannot do this alone and you need a little time to refocus and recharge shows that you are self-aware and doing what you need to do—for yourself and your loved ones.

Sign on, to log off.

When you can't reach out to someone in person for emotional or mental health support, look for a virtual resource. Telehealth is great for connecting with licensed therapists in whatever way you choose to access care—from live audio and video chat to instant messaging. Digital mental health tools, such as stress and resilience apps, can also help you easily access care whenever you need it.

Supportive roles for coworkers.

The first step to supporting our caregiving coworkers is to simply let them know that we're here for them, even in ways they might not expect. We can deepen our support by embracing a number of helpful roles, including:

Personal Red Phone²

When your caregiving coworker is in the "red zone" (i.e., feeling maximum stress), they need to know there's someone they can call anytime. Be that someone. Just knowing someone is in their corner decreases the risk of depression by 40 percent, and of anxiety by 30 percent.³

Work Ally

Find a little time to sit down with your caregiving coworker and think through the week ahead together. Look for meetings they may be able to skip and work tasks they can delegate. This may not sound like too big of a deal, but it can actually be a huge help.

Don't take on the role of caregiver alone. Find support at [BlueCrossNC.com/MyMentalHealth](https://www.bluecrossnc.com/MyMentalHealth).

¹ AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving, *Caregiving in the U.S. 2020*, May 2020.

² As conceptualized and coined by ARCHANGELS. ARCHANGELS is a national movement and platform recognizing and honoring caregivers using a combination of data and stories, and is not affiliated with Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies.

³ 2020–2021 ARCHANGELS National Caregiver Survey; ARCHANGELS Book of Business Caregiver Insights.

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