

Positive Aging Quotient, 2021

Examining the Mindset
of Caregivers in America

LifeStation



About the Positive Aging Quotient

Caring for the safety and well-being of an aging loved one can feel like a weight of responsibility, whether you are the primary caregiver or help alongside family members. While we all want the best for an aging loved one, the role is complex. In fact, in many caregivers' journeys there comes a point where an aging loved one's need for support intersects with a caregiver's own well-being.

Our first-ever Positive Aging Quotient sheds light on this important topic and examines the impacts of caregiving responsibilities on everyday life from work to financial burdens, mental health, and even distance to those they care for. The report reflects responses from a survey of more than 900 Americans, age 55+, who are current or future caregivers of an older adult. Our hope is that this report raises awareness of the critical role that caregivers play in the management of a loved one's care.

Our research
found that
nearly **8 in 10**
current caregivers
report feeling stressed.

Survey Methodology

From July 20-30, 2021 a survey was conducted by Age of Majority, receiving participation from 903 respondents, all age 55+. This included 500 current caregivers of an older adult and 403 self-identified future caregivers based on the possibility of becoming a caregiver within 5 years.

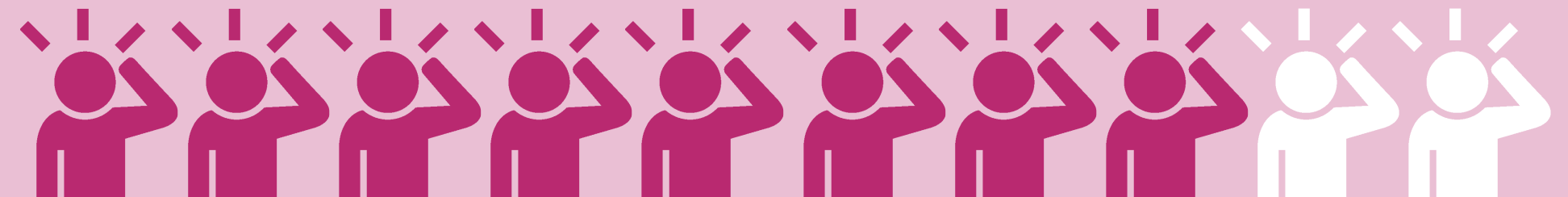


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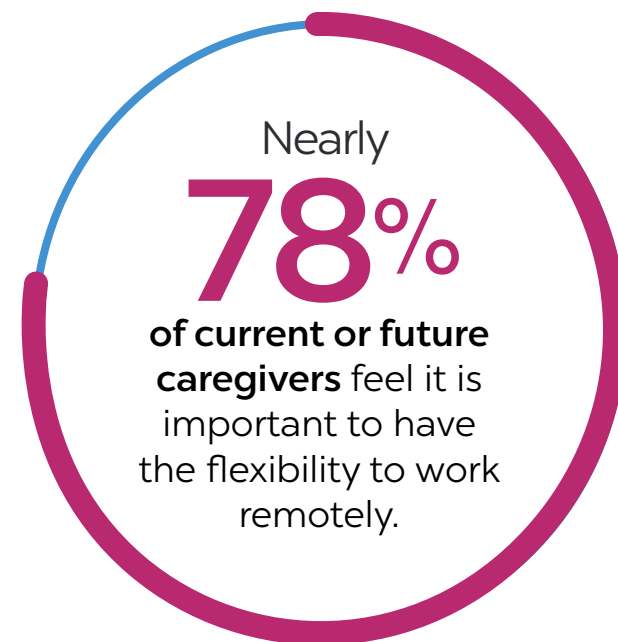
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The Work Download

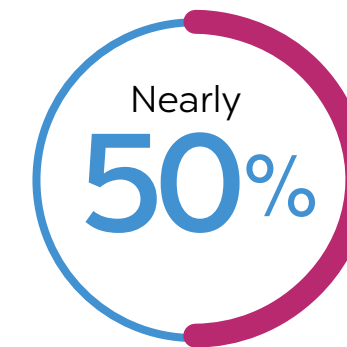


The pandemic was the catalyst for change that otherwise may have been years coming, with many companies now considering the long-term concept of “work from home” flexibility. For those caring for an older adult, the ability to work remotely is invaluable.

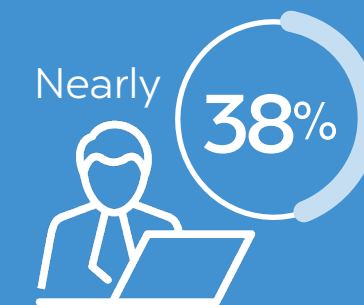
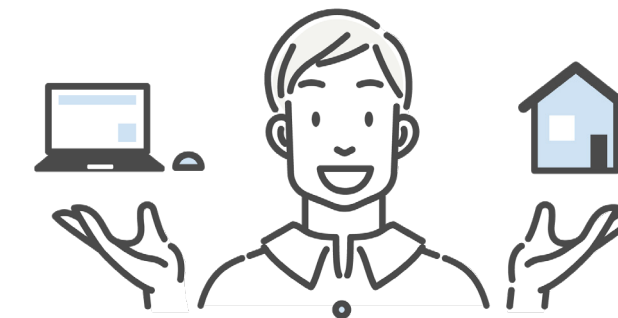
While caregivers look for more flexibility in where they do their jobs, employers get good marks when it comes to employee need to balance work and their caregiver responsibilities. It is important to note that gender and current caregiver status play a role in the level of understanding felt by an employee.



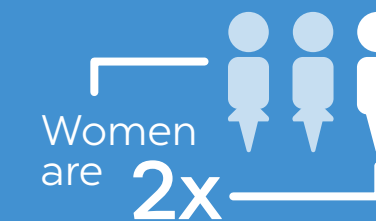
The Balance Breakdown



of respondents feel their employers are understanding of the need to balance work with caregiving responsibilities.

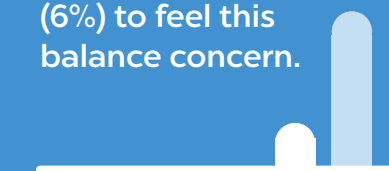


of future caregivers were far less likely to feel their employer is or would be understanding, suggesting the unknown plays a factor.



as likely than men to feel their employer would not be understanding of the need to balance these responsibilities.

Full-Time vs. Part-Time
Those working full-time (19%) are more likely than part-time workers (6%) to feel this balance concern.



The Financial Impacts of Caregiving

While finances are never a topic for the dinner table, current and future caregivers have money on the mind. Rising healthcare costs and expensive long-term care facilities likely add to this feeling of concern, especially for those with more limited household incomes.



Financial issues rank as the second toughest conversation to have.



Nearly 

6 in 10

current and future caregivers are concerned about the financial responsibility of having to care for an aging adult, with the concern higher among future caregivers.

The Family Factor

Nearly **50%**

of current or future caregivers who have children under 13 at home are extremely or very concerned.



Relationships & Mental Health



Caregivers are stressed and seeking resources to help navigate their mental health and relationship with those they care for, including professional guidance. And even though they face difficult conversations, the outcome has a positive effect on the overall bond.

1 in 4

Caregivers have turned to professional support services like a therapist or family counselor to help navigate conversations and situations.

Toughest Conversations to Have According to Current and Future Caregivers:

1 - Living arrangements

2 - Financial issues

3 - Long-term care planning

‘Increased stress and anxiety’ and ‘having less time for themselves’ topped the list for

83%



of current caregivers who feel caregiving has had an impact on their mental health and relationships.

Positive Effect:
Despite these stressors,

39%



of current caregivers feel their bond with the aging adult in their life has been strengthened.

Q How are caregivers splitting responsibilities?



More than **6 in 10** handle or expect to handle the majority of caregiving responsibilities.

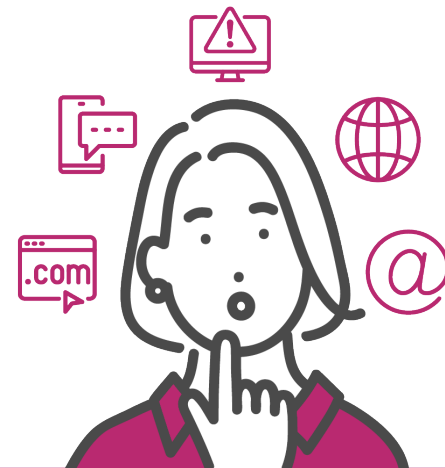
Those with children under 17 at home were more likely to split caregiving responsibilities.

Senior Comfort with Technology & Support



Over half of current caregivers are being contacted at least once a day with needs or questions from those they provide care for. And those in lower income households (\$50,000 and under) and those living in rural communities were more likely to say they are contacted at least daily.

With caregivers in constant contact, technology can play a large role and caregivers acknowledge that support is needed as a way for an aging adult to connect with others and as a buffer in their care management.



While conversations around finances prove more difficult to have, current and future caregivers find that **discussing health tracking technology is easier.**

48% of current caregivers acknowledge that the aging adult they care for could use some way of connecting to others.

Nearly **two-thirds**



feel a buffer like a video monitoring system or medical alert device would be helpful in care management.



2-3 hours:



the distance of caregivers from the aging adult they care for who were more likely to say they need a buffer.

The rapid evolution of the space means tech adoption is not always easy for seniors:

of the aging adults in their life are not completely comfortable with the latest technology.

70%



What Worries Caregivers

Caregivers get nervous when they do not hear from their aging loved one. Here's what goes through their minds.



"Something might happen to them that would not have happened if I were present."

"I fear that a fall has occurred or something bad has happened."

"She occasionally goes out on her own and I worry if she doesn't get back when expected."

"Sometimes he won't answer the phone which is a concern. Other times he has gotten lost. Sometimes he can't remember even in his own home and gets scared. You never know what is coming next so it's hard to prepare."

"She tends to hold back from divulging health issues as she is trying to be more independent."

"I contact her daily and would go over if she didn't answer."

"I imagine that they are incapacitated and I can't help."

"I fear another stroke."

"Did something go wrong? Should I have taken them to the appointment?"

A Professional Caregiving Perspective



Denise Brown, a professional caregiving coach, certified caregiving advocate and the founder of Caregiving.com shares these tips for those balancing everyday life and care of an older adult:

Check your employee benefits:

Check your benefits package to learn about support available to you through an Employee Assistance Program or a caregiving benefit. Your EAP may help by referring you to resources that can help you and your caree. Free counseling sessions also may be available to help you create coping strategies and stress-management techniques.

Conduct regular check-ins:

Use check-in call services – such as WellChecks from LifeStation – which can call your caree on days you designate, so that you can focus on work. You can explain to your caree, “My work schedule is inconsistent and it’s important to me that we have a consistent check-in to make sure you’re okay. The service will call daily, and I’ll check in with you after dinner.” If your caree pushes back, then suggest a trial period of a month to see how you both like the service. During the trial period, regularly ask for feedback from your caree about the service so you better understand how to create buy-in so your caree agrees to continue to use the service.

Prioritize self-care:

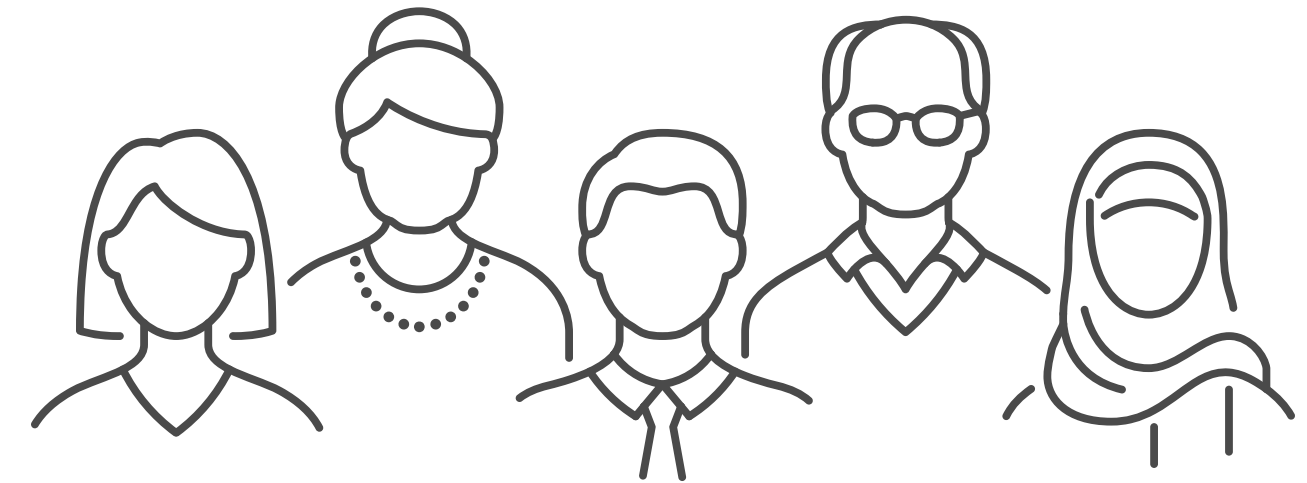
Self-care during a caregiving experience is different because the experience impacts our life so dramatically. Our self-care is really about our peace of mind, so cultivate a daily activity or a perspective that gives you peace of mind. Whether it be giving daily thanks for relationships that provide love and support, or saying “yes” to new opportunities, reflect on what gives you peace of mind and then focus on creating opportunities to receive it.

Provide protection while ensuring independence:

Consider how you can put protections in place while ensuring your caree remains as independent, active, and safe as possible. Many medical alert devices, such as LifeStation, are now lightweight and discreet and go wherever your caree goes, including into the shower. During an emergency, your caree can press the button on the device and it connects with the monitoring center, which assesses the situation and then notifies you. In addition, the device can detect a fall and alert you of your caree’s location. Also make sure to have extra keys for your caree’s home so you can access it in case of emergency, and contact the local Fire Department and senior center in your caree’s area to learn about any services offered which can help during an emergency.

Find support communities:

The caregiving experience can feel isolating and be the cause of less time and energy. The world feels smaller because of caregiving; our caree’s world gets smaller because of declines and health issues. Even worse, friends may not understand the level of stress if they aren’t managing caregiving responsibilities. Loneliness feels worse when you feel disconnected from others who understand. Research local and virtual support group options for yourself and check out options, including virtual, for your caree with the local senior center and other social service organizations. The pandemic made our lives harder, but it also created more virtual opportunities for connecting.



How **LifeStation** Can Provide Support



LifeStation is one of the leading providers of medical alert monitoring and telehealth technology services in the United States. Our mission is to leverage innovative technology and services to transform the lives of seniors and help them live safely and independently. Of equal importance is the well-being of caregivers and providing them with the peace of mind they need.

LifeStation medical alert devices offer 24/7 US-based monitoring and emergency help in the case of a fall or medical event.

To learn how our medical alert monitoring systems and connected health solutions can help you care for an aging loved one, **visit www.lifestation.com**.

For additional assistance, call us at **(800) 446-3300**.