



2024 Employee Leave Trends:

# What Employers Need to Know



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# Introduction

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In 2024, we know that nearly every employee is a caregiver,<sup>1</sup> and their responsibilities continue to mount. This is true of any caregiver, regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender, or for whom they care. This is especially true—and challenging—for those in the sandwich generation who are supporting older adults as they live longer, while also caring for children or younger adults who are remaining financially dependent for longer periods of time in an uncertain economy.

We also know that caregiving responsibilities can lead to increased leaves of absence, absenteeism, and turnover<sup>2</sup>—factors that poke holes in an organization’s bottom line. This is true for every organization, regardless of their industry.

With these well-established findings in mind, our latest survey research looked at the still unanswered questions around caregiving. Questions like: Who is taking leaves of absence to care for loved ones? How often are they taking time away, and how much time are they taking? Are leaves sufficient for their needs? And what else can be done to support caregivers in reducing or avoiding time away—and ensure they return?

We inquired about their experiences to uncover the answers to these questions—and much more. Keep reading to learn what our research revealed.

1. Henderson and Johal, ["Supporting Employee Caregivers Starts with Better Data"](#)  
2. Goldstein, ["5 Things Employers Get Wrong About Caregivers at Work"](#)



## METHODOLOGY

Grayce partnered with market research company Talker Research to survey 2,000 nationally representative Americans who are employed full-time and have taken time away from work as a result of care (for themselves or a loved one). Care is defined as unpaid, non-professional support provided across any or all of the following: physical or medical needs; logistical or daily needs; financial needs; legal needs; emotional or spiritual guidance. The survey took place April 25 - May 1, 2024.

# Executive summary

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Our latest research confirms: **Despite having more flexible work arrangements, employees continue to express the need for extended leave.**

Our survey results highlight that leaves of absence, while a necessary benefits offering, should be just one of the myriad ways organizations support caregivers and meet their needs. Our research also shows that access to resources—like professional help with logistics and planning, as well as community support—could effectively reduce the duration of their leave.



## 4 KEY FINDINGS

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- 01 Nearly all employees have caregiving responsibilities, and **45% of employees take several days off from work per month** for those responsibilities.
- 02 More than half of caregivers consider quitting during their leave. In fact, **caregivers are 3.4X more likely to consider quitting during their time away** versus before their leave.
- 03 Caregivers take leave for one of two primary reasons: needing time and needing help. **49% of caregivers said that time away was to take care of a loved one**; many also took time away to get organized or make a plan.
- 04 **71% of caregivers said support for their care needs would have helped avoid or reduce time away from work.** Among other things, support interventions include managing the time-consuming processes of researching, planning, and unraveling problems. This is true across all population segments and workforce industries.

# Nearly half of caregivers take several days off every month

Year after year, our research shows that nearly every employee has caregiving responsibilities that they're balancing with full-time jobs. And our most recent study found that those responsibilities often require employees to take time away from work.

In fact, nearly half of employees surveyed (45%) took several days off from work per month for caregiving. Nearly as many (40%) said **several days a month is what they need**—even if they weren't able to take that amount of time away. And 42% of caregivers said that the amount of leave a co-worker or manager took influenced the amount of time they spent away—for better, or worse.

This shows that employees are struggling to juggle their dual roles; caregiving is necessitating (often unplanned) time away from work, and employees are responding by taking ad hoc days off, instead of an official leave of absence.

A potential reason why? Employers are increasing childcare support, **but caring for a parent was actually the top type of care among those taking time away**. Nearly half (46%) of respondents said this. And, as average life expectancy increases, some respondents even reported that they are now also caring for grandparents.

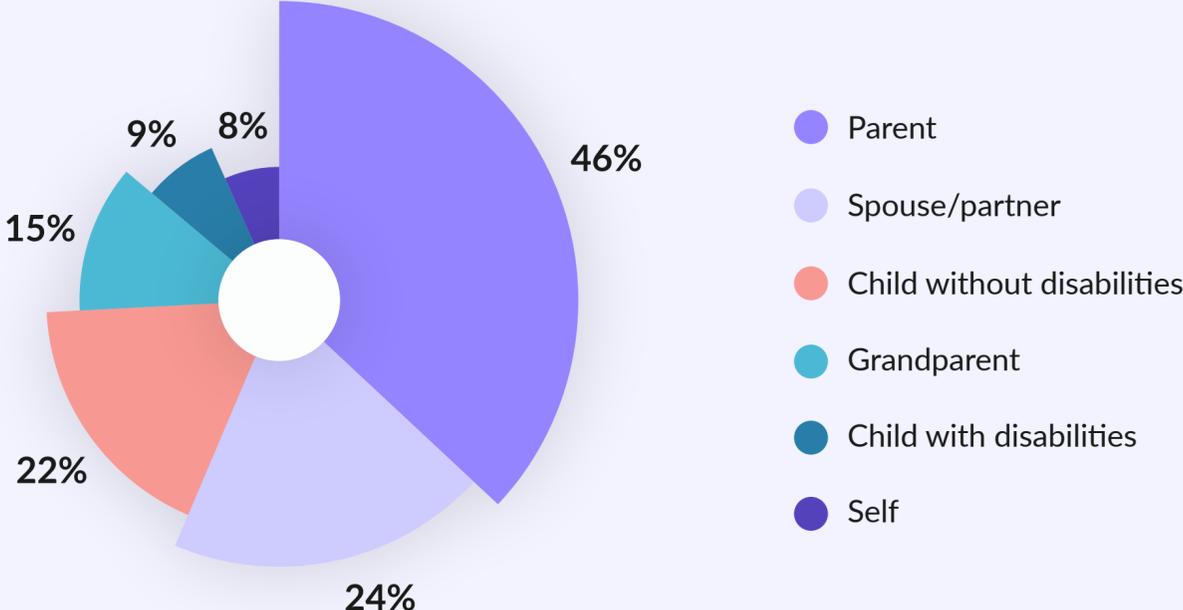
Of those who took time away to care for a parent, 54% were Gen Xers—the most of the three generations surveyed. Of those who took time away to care for a spouse/partner, more than a quarter (27%) were baby boomers—again, the majority of the three. And of those who took time away to help a child without disabilities, millennials provided the most care; 28% said this.

Interestingly, when it comes to who provides care, women reported (46%) and men reported (47%) care for parents nearly equally. However, our research showed men care for spouses more than women (27% vs 22%), but women provide care for children without disabilities more than men (25% vs 15%).

## How many days do employees take off for caregiving?



## Who do employees care for?

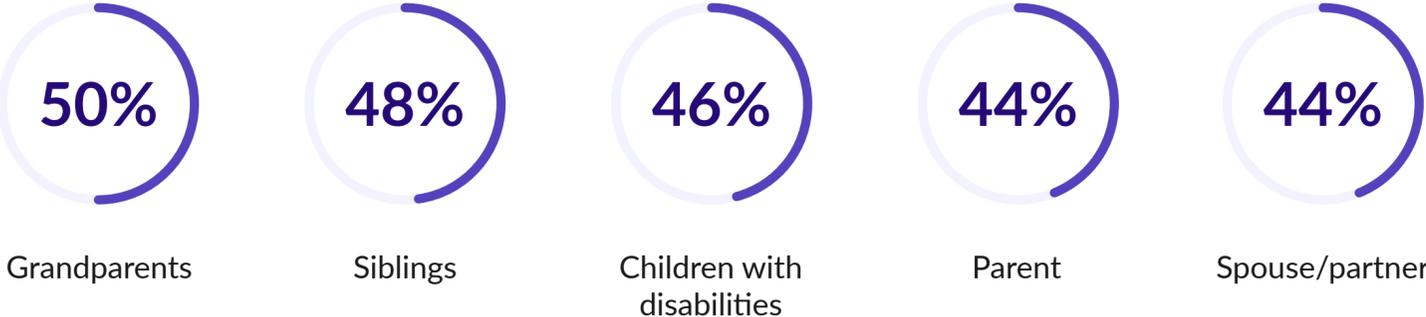


# More than half of caregivers consider quitting during leave

According to our data, 57% of caregivers considered leaving the workforce. In fact, caregivers who consider leaving their jobs are 3.4X as likely to do so during their time away versus before their leave.

### Who is most at risk of quitting during leave?

Employees caring for:



Employees at both the precipice of leave and while on leave are at risk for turnover. **This is a call to action for employers to support caregivers**—before they go on leave—with high-touch concierge service. That is, providing caregivers with the benefits and support they need to navigate their caregiving responsibilities as full-time employees.

It's also a call for employers—and HR and benefits leaders, in particular—to carefully consider their leave optimization strategies. In many cases, leave alone isn't sufficient; employees need support. And that support could make or break their decision to remain in the workforce.

### When are employee caregivers most at risk of quitting?



of caregivers have considered leaving the workforce



the increased likelihood of quitting during a leave of absence



# Employees need time away to care, plan, and recover

According to our research, caregivers take leave for one of two primary reasons: needing time and needing help. In the throes of balancing work and caregiving, many are overwhelmed, have nowhere else to turn, and don't have a back-up plan.

Nearly half of caregivers said that time away was to take care of a loved one, but one in five also took time away to get organized or make a plan.

Our data also reveals some inequities in those taking time away. For example, of those taking time to recover from stress or address their mental health, **women were 58% more likely to do so** than men—likely due to women often carrying more of the mental load of organizing or planning.

Compared to all respondents, **Black and African American caregivers were the most likely to take time away to get organized** (23%), recover from stress or address their mental health (18%), help someone else recover or address their mental health (18%), and recover from surgery (11%).

In some cases, caregivers took less time away than what adequately covered their needs or responsibilities. Of those who took less time, most (51%) said they had concerns about their financial stability, followed by concerns about job security (49%), and worries about what managers or co-workers thought about their time away (34%).

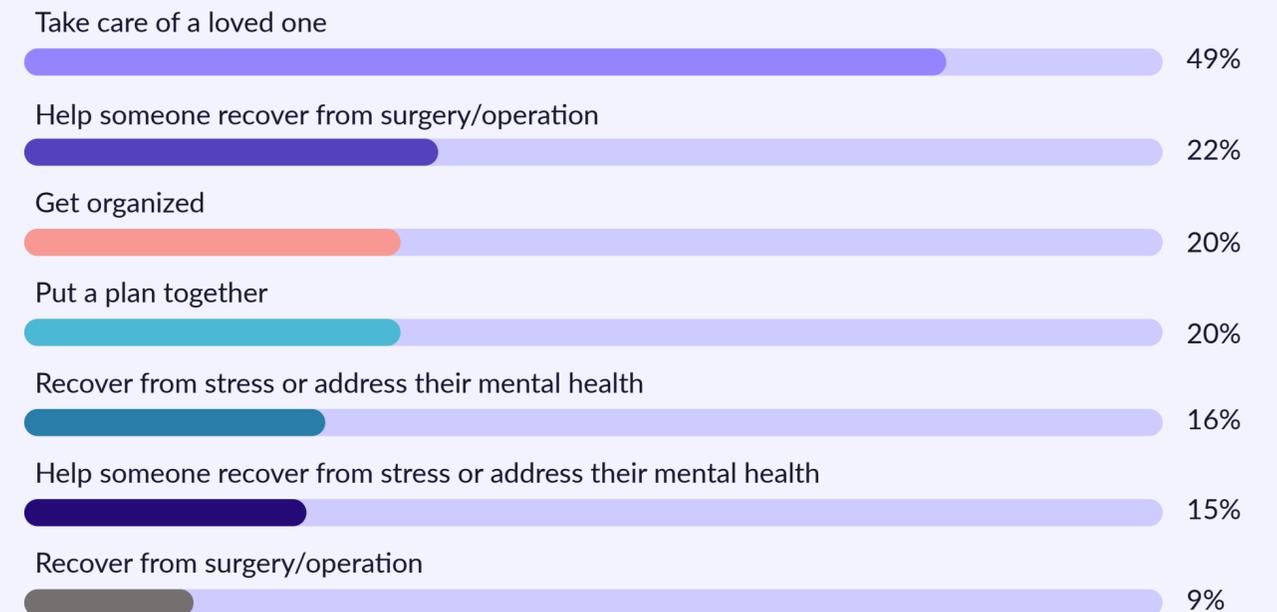
And while 73% of caregivers said that taking time away resolved their need—nearly 10% more men said this versus women—**71% of caregivers said support for their care needs would have helped avoid or reduce time away from work**. Black and African American caregivers were the most likely to say this (78%). Among all ethnicities surveyed, there were no other statistically significant findings when asked if time away resolved their need.

# 71%

of caregivers could avoid or reduce leave with support



## Why do caregivers take time away from work?



# Addressing root causes can help reduce leaves and close caregiver gaps

So, what does caregiver support look like? It's more than flexibility. According to our research, **even with more flexible policies, 77% of caregivers would still have taken time away from work.**

Instead, caregivers need benefits and programs that address the cost of care, facilitate the logistics of needing a physical caretaker, relieve emotional distress and isolation through community, and manage the time-consuming processes of researching, planning, and unraveling problems.

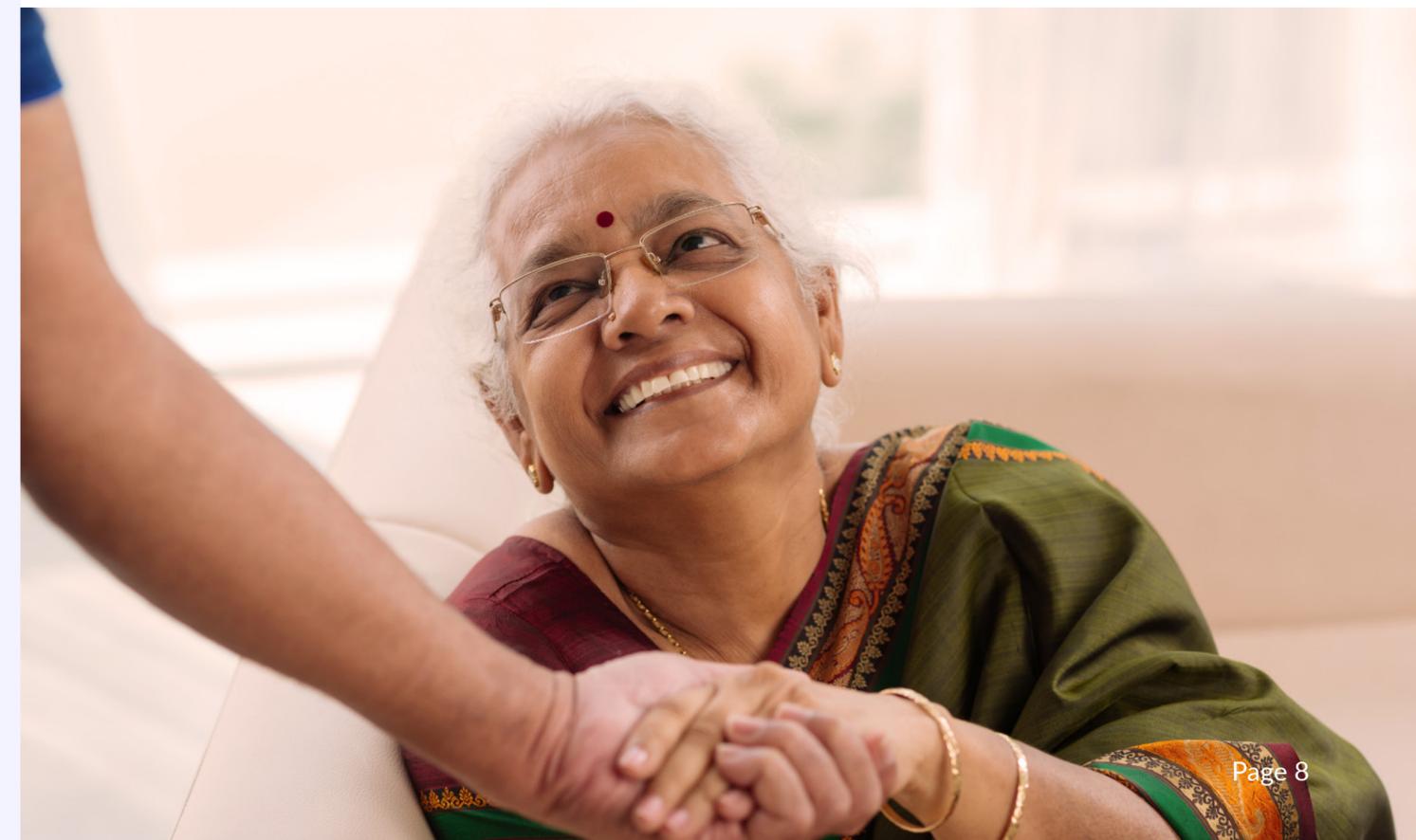
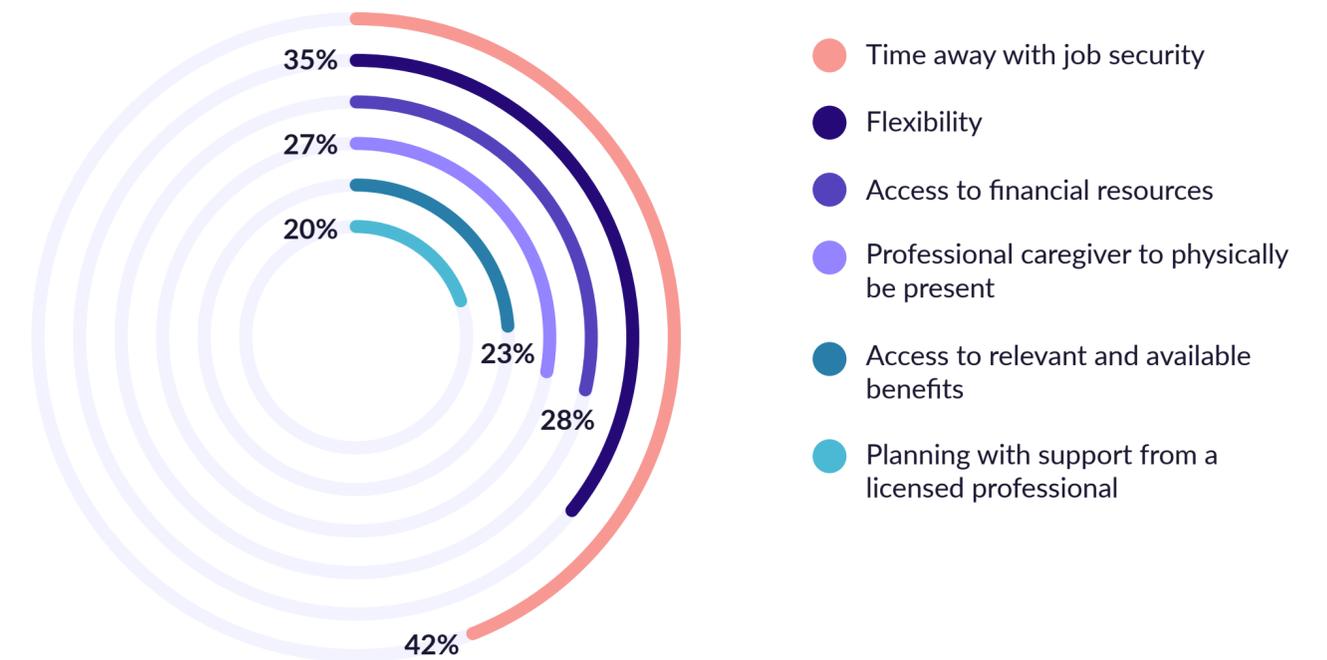
And why should organizations invest in this type of support? According to our research, interventions that address the root causes of time away would help reduce leaves.

For example, our research shows that those caring for parents (73%), grandparents (76%), spouses/partners (75%), and child(ren) with disabilities (72%) said **getting support for their care needs would have helped them avoid or shorten time away from work.**

Interventions would also help close the gaps between caregiving populations.

Baby boomers, for example, were the most likely to say they'd benefit from time away with job security (48% vs 45% of Gen Xers and 40% of millennials). On the other hand, millennials—the **largest segment in today's workforce**—said they'd most benefit from a licensed professional helping them come up with a plan (22% vs 18% of Gen Xers and 13% of baby boomers).

## Caregivers' top needs



# Support for caregivers should be tailored to the needs of employee populations

Support needs also vary by industry: at least a quarter of retail employees said they'd benefit from resources to find answers relevant to their specific situation that are easy to digest (27%), someone to be physically present (25%), and access to relevant and available benefits (25%). These varied from healthcare workers who reported they'd benefit from a licensed professional helping them come up with a plan (22%) over access to relevant and available benefits (19%) or resources to find answers (17%).

These differences highlight the critical importance of understanding your employees' caregiving responsibilities—and addressing the diversity of their needs. Forward-thinking organizations will lead with proactive family care support, addressing the root cause stressors with community, personalized care plans, and hands-on support from experts.

At Grayce, we support employees by developing long-term solutions through strategic care planning. We do the legwork, and we employ the most skilled, most knowledgeable, and most efficient people, who are ready and willing to share the responsibility of what comes next.

Together, we can help you support employees in navigating and resolving care challenges—while also achieving your business goals, like increased employee retention, improved benefits utilization, and better returns on your (people) investments.



# 16%

more women than men say that someone to be physically present would be beneficial



Support your employees while increasing retention, engagement, and productivity with end-to-end family care from Grayce.

[www.withgrayce.com](http://www.withgrayce.com)



54%

of employees report that Grayce has helped them avoid or reduce leave