



5 SIGNS YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS A HIDDEN CAREGIVING CRISIS

A Diagnostic Checklist for HR Leaders and Aging Professionals

73 %

of the workforce will be managing
caregiving responsibilities by 2030

The Reality: Most organizations are unaware of the crisis already unfolding within their teams. Use this comprehensive checklist to diagnose if your organization is experiencing a hidden caregiving crisis. Each checkmark reveals a symptom— together, they paint a complete picture of organizational health.

Unexplained Performance Patterns Among Mid-Career Employees

What to Look For:

- Productivity dips between 11 am-2pm (typical eldercare appointment windows)
- Increased last-minute PTO requests from employees ages 40-60
- Morning lateness clusters (8:15-9am arrivals instead of 8am starts)
- Declining participation in after-hours meetings or social events
- Email response gaps during traditional work hours with catch-up activity late evenings/weekends
- Quality inconsistencies from previously reliable high-performers
- Withdrawal from stretch assignments or leadership opportunities despite qualifications

Red Flags in Your Data:

- FMLA claim trending upward for 'parent care' vs. maternity/paternity
- Short-term disability claims for stress, anxiety, or burnout in 45-65 age bracket
- Increased healthcare utilization for mental health services among sandwich generation employees

■ **What This Really Means:** Employees are silently juggling care coordination calls, medical appointments, and crisis management during work hours. They're maintaining appearances while running on fumes.

2

The 'Proximity Resignation' Pattern

What to Look For:

- Resignations citing 'family reasons' without elaboration
- Talented employees relocating to be near aging parents (losing local institutional knowledge)
- Requests for remote work framed around 'personal circumstances'
- Part-time or consulting transition requests from full-time high-performers
- Exit interviews revealing 'I need more flexibility' as primary driver
- Geographic clustering of departures to specific regions (following parents)
- Boomerang interest ('I'd come back if circumstances change')

Red Flags in Your Data:

- Turnover rates 15-30% higher in 45-60 age group vs. other demographics
- Regrettable attrition concentrated among women in senior management
- Knowledge drain in succession pipeline (directors/VPs leaving before C-suite readiness)

■ **What This Really Means:** Your organization is losing institutional knowledge and leadership bench strength because caregiving demands are incompatible with current workplace structures. The 'great resignation' for mid-career professionals is often a caregiving crisis in disguise.

3

Benefits Underutilization Despite High Stress Indicators

What to Look For:

- EAP utilization under 5% despite high-stress environment
- Backup care benefits unused (<2% adoption)
- Employee surveys showing high stress but low awareness of support resources
- Flex time policies exist but informal culture discourages use
- Caregiving resource library/portal has minimal traffic
- Low enrollment in voluntary benefits (hospital indemnity, critical illness)
- Lunchtime personal calls observed regularly (employees hiding caregiving coordination)

Cultural Indicators:

- Managers express surprise when learning about employee caregiving situations
- No visible role models using caregiving benefits without career penalty
- 'Martyr mentality' praised ('She never misses a deadline despite her situation')
- Caregiving mentioned only in crisis (funeral leave, emergency FMLA)

■ **What This Really Means:** Employees don't trust that using benefits is truly acceptable. The psychological safety to be a caregiver at work doesn't exist, so benefits become performative rather than functional.

4

The Meeting Attendance Paradox

What to Look For:

- Cameras-off patterns in virtual meetings (multitasking caregiving)
- Recurring declines for early morning or late afternoon meetings
- 'Sorry, can you repeat that?' responses indicating divided attention
- Meeting recordings viewed significantly more than live attendance
- Lunch meetings avoided by specific demographic groups
- All-hands or town halls showing attendance drop-off for 45-60 age bracket
- Professional development sessions attended by younger employees disproportionately

Communication Pattern Shifts:

- Increased requests for asynchronous communication options
- Slack/Teams messages timestamped late evening or early morning
- 'Catch me offline' becoming common deflection
- Calendar blocking without specifics ('Personal appointment')

■ **What This Really Means:** Caregiving responsibilities don't respect 9-5 boundaries. Employees are present but not fully engaged because they're managing a parallel full-time job—and they're exhausted.

5

Healthcare Cost Inflation Beyond Industry Benchmarks

What to Look For:

- Medical claims trending 12%+ above industry for your sector/size
- Prescription costs rising particularly for antidepressants, sleep aids, cardiovascular medications
- Preventive care gaps (employees skipping their own annual exams/screenings)
- ER utilization increasing vs. primary care (crisis management vs. prevention)
- Chronic condition progression faster than expected (diabetes, hypertension poorly controlled)
- Mental health claims doubling year-over-year for specific age cohorts
- Workers' comp claims with stress/fatigue contributing factors

Spillover Health Indicators:

- Employees mentioning they're 'too busy' for doctor appointments
- Increased presenteeism (at work but unwell)
- Weight gain, sleep deprivation visible in wellness screenings
- Comments like 'I can't get sick, I have too many people depending on me'

■ **What This Really Means:** When employees prioritize everyone else's health over their own, your organization pays the price in healthcare costs, disability claims, and eventual catastrophic health events. The sandwich generation caregiver is your highest healthcare risk profile.

SCORING YOUR ORGANIZATION

Count your checkmarks across all five signs:

0-10	Early Warning Signs	Act now before crisis emerges
11-25	Hidden Crisis Confirmed	Immediate strategic response needed
26-40	Advanced Caregiving Crisis	Organizational performance impact measurable
41+	Critical Situation	Retention, productivity, healthcare costs severely compromised

WHAT ELITE ORGANIZATIONS DO DIFFERENTLY

If you identified a hidden caregiving crisis, your next steps:

- 1** Conduct a caregiving census (anonymous survey revealing true scope)
- 2** Calculate the hidden costs (turnover, productivity loss, health spend)
- 3** Build the business case (for comprehensive eldercare support)
- 4** Design a caregiving strategy (addressing all five sign categories)
- 5** Create cultural permission (for visible caregiving at leadership levels)

THE BOTTOM LINE

By 2030, 73% of the workforce will be managing caregiving responsibilities. Organizations that treat this as an HR checkbox rather than a strategic workforce issue will lose their most experienced talent to competitors who understand that supporting caregivers isn't altruism—it's essential business strategy.

This checklist is designed for immediate action. The caregiving crisis in your organization isn't coming—it's already here. The only question is whether you're measuring it.