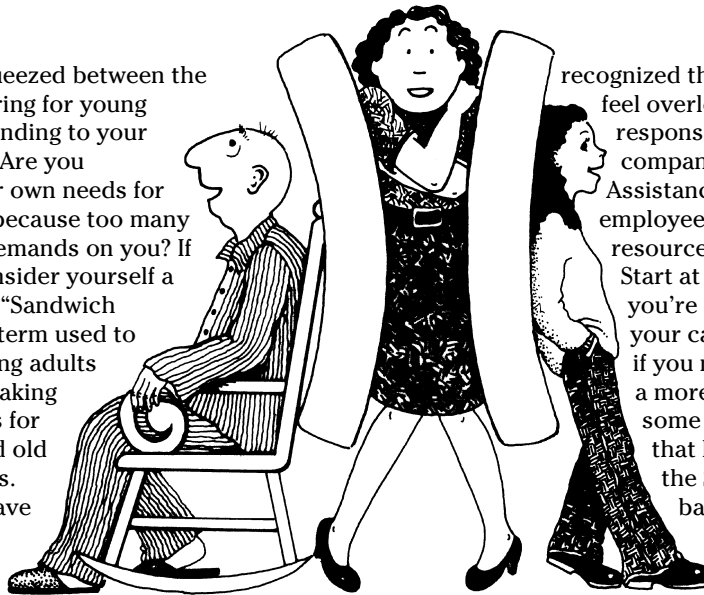




The Sandwich Generation

Do you feel squeezed between the demands of caring for young children and tending to your aging parents? Are you neglecting your own needs for personal time because too many people place demands on you? If so, you can consider yourself a member of the “Sandwich Generation,” a term used to describe working adults who bear caretaking responsibilities for both young and old family members.

Employers have



recognized that many of their workers feel overloaded by their caregiving responsibilities. Most large companies offer Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) to point employees toward community resources that can help them cope. Start at your company's EAP if you're searching for help with your caregiving responsibilities or if you need guidance on how to be a more effective parent. Here are some of the services and options that have helped members of the Sandwich Generation balance multiple demands:

Child Care and Parenting Resources

Most communities and some large employers offer a variety of child care services, ranging from home-based day care to larger day care centers. Child care centers are the most common alternatives outside the home. Family care homes are another option. Parents of older children and teens may benefit from learning more about child development and parenting skills. Your EAP representative may have books and videotapes on these subjects or referrals to community services that can help.

Elder Care Information

If you're caring for a parent or another elderly relative, your community probably offers a variety of resources. Home health services, including nursing care, housecleaning and home-delivered meals, allow seniors to remain in their own homes as long as possible. Elders who need supervision during the day may benefit from adult day care centers, while those with chronic medical problems may need residential nursing care. Start your research with your EAP or contact your local commission on aging for more information.

Alternative Work Options

Find out if your company promotes flextime and other alternative work options that allow you to arrange your work schedule around family obligations. Ask if part-time work, telecommuting or a compressed work week (40 hours in less than five days) are possibilities.

Financial Benefit Plans and Family Leave

Some employers offer workplace financial benefit plans that allow employees to deduct pretax dollars from an employee's paycheck and earmark the funds for dependent care expenses. Most employers are mandated by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to employees who need time off to take care of a family member or to tend to their own health problems.

Self-Care Resources

Don't forget to take care of yourself. Your EAP representative can direct you to stress management workshops and resources on relationships and communication skills. Your EAP program is also a good source of information about recreational activities and events for families in your community.