

Home health care workers report inadequate support from employers

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Home health care work is not only physically demanding, but also emotionally taxing. Home care workers do an enormous amount of emotional labor to keep clients feeling safe, calm and happy. This work can be rewarding but also very stressful. The stressful aspects often go unrecognized and are not reflected in job descriptions, training, or pay.

CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy researchers Emily Franzosa, a graduate of the doctoral program, and Assistant Professor Emma Tsui led a study examining home health workers' perceptions of the emotional effects of caring work, how they cope and how they would like to be supported by their employers. The findings were published in *The Gerontologist*.

The health care aides responded that more connection with their supervisors and the care team, as well as structural supports like paid time off, more control over their schedules, and access

to counseling and mental health benefits would help them better cope with job-related stress.

Workers of all kinds are more likely to flourish on the job and stay productive when they are well-supported, Franzosa recently told Home Health Care News. Agencies should make this a priority, she said, especially as funding becomes more dependent on quality of care and patient satisfaction.

"Overwhelmingly, aides told us that they loved their [jobs](#) and their clients, but they needed more support. If we're going to retain a skilled, qualified workforce that can meet the needs of our aging population, we need to acknowledge aides' emotional labor, and build that into the way we train workers and supervisors, design care plans, and pay for care," Franzosa says.

More information: Emily Franzosa et al. "Who's Caring for Us?": Understanding and Addressing the Effects of Emotional Labor on Home Health Aides' Well-being, *The Gerontologist* (2018). [DOI: 10.1093/geront/gny099](https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gny099)

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