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Mindfulness and compassion training for clinicians: a qualitative study

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Compassion is considered a key factor in providing quality care to patients in need (Adams et al., 2006; Figley, 1995, 2002; Kret, 2011). However, caregivers are currently amongst the professionals most vulnerable to compassion fatigue and stress overload (Raab, 2014).



We know that **ENCOURAGING CAREGIVERS TO DEVELOP A PATIENT-CENTRED CARE RELATIONSHIP HAS BENEFICIAL EFFECTS FOR BOTH THE PATIENTS AND THEIR CAREGIVERS** (Dobkin, 2016). The literature suggests that **CAREGIVERS' COMPASSION AND SELF-COMPASSION CAN BE INCREASED WITH THE PRACTICE OF MINDFULNESS**, more particularly through caregiving-focused mindfulness training programmes (Birnie et al., 2010; Hick & Bien, 2008; Neff, 2003). Those programmes are particularly relevant for caregivers, who have a greater risk for professional burnout due to the high level of involvement required.



We hypothesised that **A MINDFULNESS TRAINING PROGRAMME SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON SITUATIONS THAT ARE RELEVANT FOR CAREGIVERS COULD IMPROVE PATIENT-CAREGIVER RELATIONSHIPS, AND ULTIMATELY, THE CARE PROVIDED.**

INTRODUCTION

- The training had an **OVERALL POSITIVE IMPACT on the caregivers' ability to take care of themselves**, particularly through the ability to 'take a step back'.

- CARING LISTENING seemed to be one of the main skills that the programme helped the caregivers to develop.**



- Participants seemed to use mainly informal practices in their workplace (*i.e.*, taking time during the day to refocus on the present)

- EMOTIONS WERE BETTER ACCEPTED**—especially negative ones. Participants also seemed to be able to change their perspective. They were more attentive to their patients and their needs.

- The majority considered themselves MORE EMPATHETIC** and thought they could perceive their patients' suffering without feeling it.

- Participants were BETTER ABLE TO ACCEPT THE DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES** they encountered in the workplace or those reported to them by their patients.

RESULTS

- The MB CARE programme is an **AUTO-COMPASSION TRAINING PROGRAMME DEDICATED TO CAREGIVERS**. It integrates three themes : mindfulness, compassion and self-compassion. **IT DIRECTLY ADAPTS THE PRACTICE OF MINDFULNESS TO PROFESSIONAL SITUATIONS** that are relevant for caregivers.



METHOD

- We conducted interviews with **10 CAREGIVERS WHO HAD COMPLETED THE MB CARE PROGRAMME** to explore the perceived psychological consequences of such training programmes for caregivers who experience mindfulness training.



- Our objective was **TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF THIS TRAINING THROUGH THE STUDY OF THE CAPACITY OF CAREGIVERS TO APPLY ITS METHODS IN THEIR DAILY PRACTICE.**

- We used Kirkpatrick's model to assess the quality of the programme.

- We focused on (1) the experience of the training (*i.e.*, satisfaction and potential improvements); (2) how caregivers took care of themselves (*i.e.*, what were their stressors and support systems); and (3) how the programme had impacted their practice.

- Overall, the caregivers **considered the program to be a PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM THAT CAN HAVE POSITIVE INDIRECT CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CAREGIVER-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP.**



- The MB CARE program can **ENABLE CAREGIVERS TO BETTER COPE WITH THEIR PRACTICE AND PROTECT THEMSELVES** from problems related to personal exhaustion and lack of consideration for their limits.

- These results are very encouraging insofar as **caregivers are able to see the value of the program for their professional practice** and for the majority of them to use those teachings for the benefit of their caregiver-patient relationships.

- Future studies should assess if professional **mindfulness** and compassion training programs could effectively be **operational levers** for institutions aiming **to foster a more compassionate caregiver-patient relationship and improve care global efficiency.**



DISCUSSION