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Mindfulness and compassion training for clinicians: a qualitative study

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Background:

Encouraging caregivers to develop a patient-centred care relationship has beneficial effects for both patients and 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 programs. We hypothesized that a mindfulness training program specifically focused on situations that are relevant for caregivers could improve patient-caregiver relationships, and the care provided by the latter.

Methods:

We conducted 10 interviews with caregivers who had completed a mindfulness compassion-based program, the MB CARE program. Our goal was to evaluate the impact of the MB CARE training, through the study of the capacity of caregivers to mobilise its methods in their daily practice. We used King's template analysis method.

Findings:

Our content analysis showed that the training seemed to have had a positive impact on the ability of caregivers to feel compassion toward their patients and themselves. Caregivers showed more caring listening. The program also appears to have enhanced participants' ability to recognize the presence of their emotions. Those were better accepted, especially negative ones. Participants also seemed to be able to change their perspective, especially in order to understand their patients. Overall, participants were now able to accept more sympathetically the difficult experiences they might encounter in the workplace, or those reported by their patients.

Discussion:

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.