Caregiver Resilience

An Individual, Family, and Global Health Imperative

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Objectives

Based on the resilience in caregiving literature, participants will be able to,

- Describe the scope of long-term caregiving_as an important global public health issue, associated health risks, health effects, and moral distress;
- Identify caregiver-targeted strategies and modalities, to promote caregiver resilience;
- Learn the vital shift from individual- to familycaregiving, involving the whole family in adapting and moving forward together.

Caregiver & Family Resilience: Significant personal interest

My mother—diagnosed at age 47 with Non-Hodgkins lymphoma

Caregiving integral to our family. How about yours?

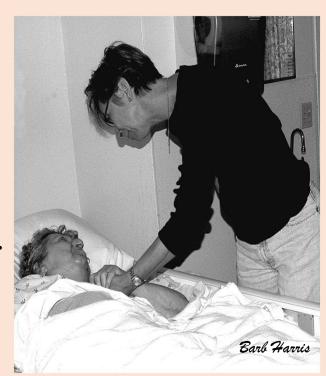
Individual resilience: capacity of an individual to adapt during hardship and ongoing significant life stressors (Bonanno, 2004)

Family resilience -- dynamic process involving whole families in <u>leveraging</u> strengths to adapt (Xu & Lin, 2015)



Long-term Caregiving: Global Health Issue

- 349 million "care-dependent"
- Caregiving informal, mostly unpaid
- **Mostly women:** >23.7 hrs./wk; 21% > 41 hrs.
- **Increasing:** 43.5 million –53 million in U.S. (National Alliance for Caregiving, 2020)
- 24% FCs dementia pts (assist > cg hrs./wk; > ADLs) (Dias et al. 2015)



Health Risks of Long-term Caregiving

36% rate their situation as "highly stressful"
23% report fair to poor health (National Caregiving Alliance, 2020)

- Negative impact on general health (James et al., 2020)
- Increased mortality and morbidity risk (Bom, Bakx, Schut et al., 2019)
- Stroke FCs: anxiety, depression, exhaustion, hopelessness, fatigue (Morais et al., 2012), social isolation (Yu et al., 2013); financial problems (Gok Ugur & Erci, 2019).

Health Effects of Long-term Caregiving

FCs -moderate to advanced dementia

- Moral distress and conflicting "moral obligation"
- Increasing burden of care
- *Chronic* psychological and physical **symptoms**:
 - a. Decrease in well-being and life satisfaction
 - b. Loss and grief (Acton & Kang,2001); progressive, ambiguous loss (Boss, 1999), disenfranchised grief

Long-term Caregiving Distress

Cancer Patient-FC Dyad
Distress, Unmet Needs

- Who's more distressed?
- Cancer context
- 10 or more Unmet Needs
 - a. Health services
 - b. Disease-related information
 - c. Emotional support re: fears

(Sklenarova et al., 2015)

Long-term Caregiving Moral Distress

FCs Advanced Cancer — High caregiver burden — substitute decision-making...lingering doubt and regret (related to decisional burden) months or even years after pt dies... (Hamano et al., 2018)

FCs Advanced Cancer – two paths of ethical distress:

- 1. Difficult decision-making
- 2. When no decision was to be made (no options)

(Ullrich et al., 2020)

Long-term Caregiving Moral Distress

1. Difficult decision-making

- differing needs
- interpreting pt's wishes (communication)
- unprepared for consequences
- intra-role conflicts

2. When no decision was to be made (no options)...

- moment of finality
- rapid disease progression
- FC left out of patient decision-making: a fait accompli
 - ...left them feeling powerless, overrun...

Long-term Caregiving: Averting Moral Distress

- Acceptance/finding closure prevented moral residue
 - * key: FC realizing -best effort
- External Preventive Factors: **time, information, social** and **physician support**

*empathy, acknowledgment, validation of emotions (Ullrich et al., 2020)

- Good communication skills (team)
- Involving ethicists (Orr et al., 1996)
- Accepting relationships (Bristowe, Marshall & Harding, 2016)

Speaking for the Dying: Ethnographic research—two years (urban hospital ICU) observing day-to-day decision-making by surrogates and family speaking for pts... (Shapiro, 2019)

- "Hold life and death in their hands"
- Improvising trajectories: rarely a single decision; learning as they decide –high stakes uncertainty

A. **Patient's diagnosis is uncertain-** clinical team is advocating for more interventions *against* family resistance, including concerns about cost

"But I think I would want her to have the chance." Sr. neurologist

Family asks, "At what cost?"

Q: Who pays what price for that chance? In what currency? (Frank, 2022)

Doctor responds: "Whatever Medicare paid for the first surgery..."

B. Sr. physician tells his residents: "Our job is to do the impossible."

What are the effects of magical thinking? (Shapiro, 2019)

- C. Case where surrogates appear indifferent to suffering "...go ahead and CODE her, she's dying anyway."
- When surrogates appear indifferent to suffering... Speculation on motives of surrogates risks saying more about the speculators.
- On the other side of these relationships—moral distress (Frank, 2022)

Speaking for the Dying (Shapiro, 2019)

D. "They're going to say I killed him." Niece POA caught in the middle

Epilogue:

Realistic: "...be realistic about (ICU...medicine) its promise." (Shapiro, 2019) (Shapiro) "It's a perfect storm. Too many people believe in miracles...and the claims of multiple costs...are too easily deferred, dismissed..."

"(Shapiro imagines) no prospects of preventing moral distress, only some mitigation..." (Frank, 2022)

Caregiver Moral Distress in Pediatric Illness

"Morally undesirable involvement..."

1) Intrapersonal

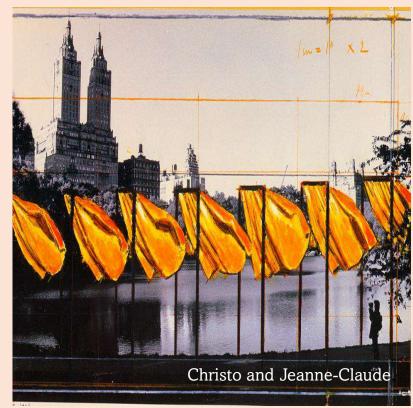
- Compromised
- Constrained
- Unable to shield their child...failing others; "no one is getting what they need"

2) Interpersonal

3) Spiritual/existential- - Religious, Spiritual, Life Philosophy (RSLP): antecedent or buffer; 60-80% FCs spiritually distressed

Unmet religious and spiritual needs-- poorer psychological QOL (Winkelman et al., 2011)

- Psychoeducation & Support Group
- Coaching
- Meditation
- Mindfulness-based interventions
- CBT-based interventions
- Spirituality



"FCs can demonstrate resilience in the face of care-giving related stressors and burden." (Chi et al., 2024)

Psychoeducation-Support Group (Inci & Temel, 2016)

- 10 sessions, 5 weeks; 5 education (90mins.), 5 social support (60 mins.) group; FCs of stroke patients
- **Education:** Introduction to stroke; FC burden; care of stroke patients; stress & coping; intrafamily interaction
- Support group: Socializing; sharing challenges, expressing feelings about caregiving; problemsolving

Results: > FCs resilience, > family resilience

Coaching (MacCourt et al., 2017)

• 6 (grief) sessions (1/1.5 hr), 6 weeks; FCs of dementia patients

Results: > FCs resilience, empowerment, coping; < grief

Meditation (Pandya, 2019)

RCT- FCs of Alzheimer patients; 5-year study,
 45 min. weekly class sessions & at-home practice



Results: > resilience, < perceived FC burden, > FC self-efficacy; (most effective for FCs Hindu; attended 75% classes & 75% at-home practice); need for addressing cultural, education, employment differences

Mindfulness-based Resiliency Training (MBRT) (Stonnington et al., 2016)

• Single-group, *six-week MBRT*, 6 weekly sessions, **FCs of organ transplant patients** - mindfulness training, yoga and education

Results: < stress, depression, anxiety; resilience increased -not statistically (from 0 to 6 weeks; and at 3 months post)

CBT-based intervention (McCann et al., 2017)

- 8-week RCT of guided self-help (cognitive behavioral bibliotherapy) for patients with depression (D) and FCs
 - 1) **D overview**, encouraging **physical activity** (PA)
 - 2) Social contact + PA
 - 3) Discerning thinking and feeling
 - 4) Changing neg thought patterns
 - 5) **Healthy living, social support + behavior change** help overcome D
 - 6) Equip improved sleep and sustainable favorable thoughts, behaviors, and emotions
 - 7) **PMR progressive muscle relaxation** to < stress
 - 8) Emphasizing learned skills in thought challenging to negotiate difficult events

Results: > patient & FCs resilience (at 8 weeks and 12-week follow-up)

"Addressing FCs spiritual needs is crucial for enhancing well-being..." (Uzun et al., 2024)

Spirituality ≠ religion – often conflated, like Palliative Care (PC) and Hospice

- dynamic, intrinsic aspect of humanity
- · meaning, purpose, and transcendence
- · relationship to self, family, others...nature, the significant or sacred
- beliefs, values, traditions, practices (Puchalski et al., 2014)
- **Pediatric Illness**—5 themes SR/E—(ages 5-17, parents, siblings) 1) fully living; 2) meaning and legacy; 3) uncertainty about future; 4) determination to survive; 5) accepting/fighting the future; role of religion.
- "Eliciting spiritual concerns may help to identify the things that can support a meaningful life." (Scott et al., 2023)

Spirituality in FCs PC Patients: Sense-making, belonging, beliefs, relationships to significant/sacred

Spiritual Needs (SNs) of FCs: love, positivity, meaning, hope, gratitude, relationship with God and others, transcendence, religious rituals, support, communication, processing guilt; guidance & preparation for death

Fulfillment SNs: helped FCs **progress through grief**...>life satisfaction, power and peace, *transforming the act of caregiving* -- rewarding and meaningful experience (Uzun, Basar, & Saritas, 2024)

Spirituality in Stroke Survivors & FCs: > Quality of Life (QOL); < anxiety and depression; belief Higher Power –better mental health (Ambrosca et al., 2024) (meta-analysis of 37 studies); emotionally protective (Johnstone et al., 2008).

Resilient Families – How They Cope

2.) Family belief system: buffer, protective in coping (Kuang et al., 2022) (14 studies, 8 countries, 11 illnesses)

2.1) Rational appraisal

'It is what it is, and I don't think it's a disaster. It's life.' (Reader et al., 2020)

'I used to wonder why I had cancer. Now I understand that since cancer is part of my body, I try to use this time to experience life, learn to be kind to people around me, and discover the beauty of life.' (Kuang et al., 2022)

Resilient Families – How They Cope

2.2) Family positive belief from spirituality...hope, security through faith (Kuang et al., 2022)

"I have something, someone other that what we can see or touch, that I can meditate, commune, pray with or to, that I derive some meaning from." (Jones et al., 2018)

... and belief from positive traits (optimist)

Then I tell myself, this is what is in front of us. We will try to find a solution... (Gauvin-Lepage, 2019)

2.3) Dyadic transmission of positive attitude: Patients and FCs report -- partner's attitude affected them.

"...I have to keep it going for him." (Reader et al., 2020)

Resilient Families – How They Cope

3.1.) Proactive coping in patients and FCs: Active learning (accumulate knowledge, experience + improved skills)

3.2) Family resources and practical mutual support

Stable economic support

Flexibly adjusting roles "My older kids help out when they need to, with baby sitting or whatever..." (Deist & Greeff, 2017)

Close family relationships

Family problem-solving efforts

Resilient Families –How They Cope

- **4.) External support --** extremely important (Kuang et al., 2022)
- 4.1) Substantive services—society and institutional support can reduce pressure
- **4.2) Sound emotional support network**: more social support—better they adapted

"Emotionally, it's a strain, and **there's no way you can do it alone.** My advice to anybody would be to **use whatever help you can get. Don't push anyone away**; the more hands, the better." (Deist & Greef, 2017)

4.3) **Information and skills training**: Per an RN, "If you don't have information about it, you don't know how to tackle it. You don't know how to deal with it." (Reader et al., 2020)

Family Resilient Adaptation Indicators

5.) Resilient adaptation indicators

5.1) Personal growth and value: *the disease made them grow,* discover who they truly were, accept the reality of the disease and actively cooperate with treatment.

"I sort of see, what happened to me, not as a negative event...a part of me...my life...that's what was destined for me in the story of my life. And I am trying to deal with it and live on with it." (Schembri Lia & Abela, 2016)

5.2) Family bonds, strength and positive expectancy

Relying on encouragement and inner strength,

families take action to start a new life by adjusting their direction and goals.

"We're determined that the (SCI's) not going to mess up our lives." (Jones et al., 2018)

Family Resilience: Summary Priorities

- 1) Relieve Secondary and Primary Stressors 1.1) caregiver physical burden; 1.2) dyadic negative emotion and stigma; 1.3) family relationship tension; 1.4) economic stress; 1.5) isolation (Kuang et al., 2022)
- 2) Provide Family Counseling –positive cognition, family belief system and function (Saltzman, 2016)
- 3) Strengthen Support Systems
- 4) Involve Ethicists (Orr et al., 1996)

Family Resilience: Summary Priorities

- 5) Engage Resilience-Enhancing Modalities CBT, Psychoeducation & Support Group, Meditation, Mindfulness (MBRT), Coaching for Grief, Spirituality
- 6) Provide Information, Empathy, Acknowledgment, Validation
- 7) Create Accepting Relationships
- 8) Communicate Skillfully
- 9) Address Spiritual Needs-- to engage what matters

"Emotionally, it's a strain...there's no way you can do it alone..."

Let's Do Our Part...

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