

# Caregiver Burnout Scenario

Sue, an 87-year-old woman, has a history of COPD, HF, anxiety, and dementia. Sue also has a history of uncooperative behaviour. Sue's daughter Kelly (56 years old) is the only caregiver. Kelly is a full-time worker and does not have training to care for individuals with complex needs. Kelly is feeling overwhelmed and burnt out from providing care daily. She senses that she can not take care of her mother anymore. Sue falls at home, breaks her hip, and ends up in hospital. Kelly told the healthcare professional that she would be away until further notice because she needs a break.

## Population

In British Columbia, 26.2% of the population accounts for caregivers and provides over 80% of the care at home 1. Caregivers are becoming burnt out partially due to lack of training as well as not being able to take a break as most are the primary caregiver. This results in them using the medical system to have those needed breaks

## Complexity

- Constantly Emerging
- Unpredictable
- Has fuzzy boundaries 2

### Traditional Thinking

- Linear
- Isolated view of cause and effect 3,4

### Systemic View

- Emphasis on whole & Uncertainty
- Different perspective 3,4

## Interrelationships

### Informal Caregiver

- Increased family caregiver workload
- Decreased perceived social support
- Increased family caregiver emotional empathy
- Decreased personal accomplishment
- Increased emotional exhaustion
- Increased depression and decreased life satisfaction 6

### Nurse Caregiver

- Patient's increasing frailty
- Improper coping from increased work stress
- Increased turnover rate
- Burnouts
- More responsibility for the nurse-> increasing workload
- Decreased motivation
- Nurses leaving practice which increases turnover 7, 8

## Perspective

### Informal Caregiver

- Lack of proper training leads to burnout leading to poor physical and mental health
- Feelings of being unable to continue as an informal caregiver 9

### Patient

- Decrease in patient's health status
- Increased Hospitalization 10

### Nurse Caregiver

- High workloads or patient assignments
- Lack of quality care
- Burnouts
- Further decrease in patients' status 11

## Boundaries

### Informal Caregiver

- High rates of stress, anxiety, and burden
- Emotionally and physically fatigued
- Social isolation, disruption to work and life
- Inadequate support from the healthcare system 12
- Relationship and co-residing, the complexity of care and needs, amount of care, and amount of time required for care 13

### Nurse Caregiver

- Lack of respect for staff
- Insufficient funding
- Increase patient/workload
- Lack of employer engagement 14
- Pre-pandemic burnout, mandatory overtime and nurse attendance for shifts 15
- Workplace violence, increased risk of poor mental health 16

## System Stressors

- Increased ER visits due to caregivers needing a break
- The medical system is used as a form of respite
- True respite is not covered under medical
- Financial burden
- Barriers to success: fatigue, negative effects on mood, decreased personal health, and happiness 17
- Patients with dementia have increased hospital stays due to caregiver stress.
- Increased levels of care at home resulted in increased hospital stays 18

## Solutions

### Informal Caregiver

- Increased services and education provided
- Adult day services for a day reprieve
- How to better care for seniors
- How to better manage chronic illness in those you care for
- Keeping seniors more independent 1
- Plan caregiver self-care
- Caregiver education
- Increase in organizations to support patients with chronic disease
- Caregiver intervention programs
- Increase in caregiver and social awareness of chronic disease and its effects 12

### Nurse Caregiver

- Increase attractiveness to profession: tax incentives, pay increase, student loan forgiveness
- Mental health support, time off
- Increased access to education for LPNs to transition to RNs
- Unfettered access to PPE
- Increased public/nursing education that COVID-19 spreads via aerosols
- More staff, better pay, better recognition
- More government funding
- Better retention of nurses 14

## Summary

Caregiver burnout is an important topic that needs to be addressed. Using the IPB framework, we identify that informal caregivers' burnouts directly affect nurses and cause nurses' burnouts. Solutions should be generated at an organizational level while including the other interprofessional team members to better address informal caregiver burnout.