

Good essay about caregiver burnoutname:instituti onal affiliation

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It takes a special person to be a caregiver. Whether they make a decision to care for a family member or decide to dedicate their education to learning how to care for others, giving one's time to take care of those who cannot is a significant act. These people are caring, selfless, and kind. They have big hearts that are filled with love and compassion for everybody that they meet. Unfortunately, it is a common misconception that caregivers never experience burnout. It is expected by many that an individual making the choice to care for others will never tire of the work, emotionally exhausted, or need a break. This is simply not true. Many people choose professions that are mentally, emotionally, and psychologically draining. Police officers, firefighters, psychiatrists, and even prison guards all choose their professions. They go to school, educate themselves, and fulfill their professional dreams. Still, many of these individuals experience burnout, and because compassion and kindness are not the primary characteristics associated with these professions, burnout is not only expected but most are sympathetic toward the condition. The fact of the matter is, burnout is inevitable in any stressful job. Though nurses are compassionate, kind, loving individuals who choose to care for others, it is time that the population accepts caregiver burnout. Nurses should be treated with the same courtesy they are kind enough to afford everybody else. It needs to be taken seriously.

Caregiver burnout is a serious issue, especially in the nursing profession. According to "Clarifying Misconceptions about Compassionate Care", published in Journal of Advanced Nursing, most people are acutely unaware of what caregiver burnout is; typically they think it is just a case

hypochondriasis . When polled, over half of the people questioned believed that the term “ caregiver burnout” was a fancy term for exhaustion. It is much more than that. Caregiver burnout affects the emotional, mental, and physical state of the individual, often leaving all three capacities in total exhaustion. The exhaustion is sometimes coupled with a change in mood. For example, a typically caring, gentle nurse may become moody or unconcerned with the needs of patients (2013). Burnout occurs when caregivers take on more responsibility or work than they are able to handle. This can refer to physical or financial demands but in the nursing field it usually applies to physical and emotional strains. Burnout can also occur if the caregiver does not get the help that they need. While these symptoms may not sound sufficiently serious, they can lead to many mental and physical experiences that take a toll on the individual. The stresses on the individual inevitably take a toll on the nurse’s work as well as the patients and the care administered, which is why is it so important to take caregiver burnout seriously.

Caregivers experience many ailments, both physical and mental, with the onset of burnout. In an article entitled “ Burnout and Compassion Fatigue Among Hospice Caregivers”, published in American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Care, studies show that caregivers will experience fatigue, anxiety, stress, and depression. Their ability to sympathize with patient’s and genuinely help may also decrease significantly if burnout continues . An important part of overcoming burnout is to take care of oneself. The article suggests that in order to regain one’s sense of compassion and ability to feel kindness and a desire to help, one must take time away. Treating yourself

and taking care of yourself is the key to avoiding caregiver burnout.

However, due to the lack of public support, as well as the general lack of belief in caregiver burnout as a serious issue, support is scarce. Support is also key to overcoming caregiver burnout but because of the stigmatization that caregivers chose to be caregivers and are, therefore, selfless and above the weariness of “ normal” humans, caregivers often find themselves feeling guilty for getting burnt out . They also find themselves feeling guilty for trying to remedy their burnout. Their lives begin to revolve around taking care of the sick, ill, and dying; it can be disillusioning to take care of oneself after this routine is established . While many may not believe that caregiver burnout is a real thing it is important to remember that nurses are of no use to anybody else if they do not take care of themselves. In order to that, they require support and understanding.

There are many causes of caregiver burnout; some can be avoided while another cannot, very perpetuating the idea that burnout is almost entirely unavoidable. According to an article published in Clinical Journal of Oncology, the causes of caregiver burnout include but are not limited to a lack of control, unreasonable demands, and unrealistic expectations (Potter et al., 2010). The lack of control is the primary cause of caregiver burnout in the nursing profession, according to the article. Though there are many procedures a nurse can perform, as well as many resources at their disposal, ultimately the nurse is not in control. A doctor may prescribe something even if the nurse does not agree. A resource that is vital to a patient’s life may not be available. The nurse may feel inadequate when unable to meet certain needs for the patient as well (2010). Nurses also place unreasonable

expectations on themselves, which may result in burnout. Expecting to save every patient, perform every action precisely right, or to keep the patient happy is unrealistic. Unrealistic expectations are also to blame for burnout. Many nurses expect their work to immediately, or eventually, improve the quality of life or health of the patient. Though will sometimes happen, other times the patient will become unhealthier and eventually, die. While the nurse may be performing all of the proper actions, as many nurses in the oncology ward do, it is just as likely that the patient will live as the patient will die. Knowing that they are performing the correct duties while still witnessing the patients worsen can be confusing and take a physical, as well as a psychological toll on the caregiver (Potter et al., 2010).

There is no question that caregiver burnout effects caregivers and nurses dramatically. The physical and psychological toll may appear so drastically and quickly that the individual may not even be evident of the burnout until they cease to function as they normally did, according to an article published in Health Affairs. One day they may find themselves acutely aware that they are indifferent to the needs of their patients, or that they are unable to care as compassionately as they once did for the needs of others. The article went on to express the dissatisfaction nurses experiencing burnout might begin to feel toward their jobs. A once fulfilling career eventually begins to feel like a prison. Nurses feeling burnout do not feel like they are helping anybody. The patients, once a source of inspiration and energy, are now something that makes the nurse irritable and moody (2011). The nurse may begin to dislike their job if burnout is allowed to persist. More troubling still was the article's mention of how a nurse's burnout can impact the patient. A

nurse experiencing burnout is of no use to a patient or their needs. Nurse's experiencing burnout do not service patient's as adequately as nurses who are managing to take care of themselves better. According to "Nurses' Widespread Job Dissatisfaction, Burnout, And Frustration With Health Benefits Signal Problems For Patient Care", patient's being cared for by nurse's who were experiencing burnout began to experience declining health. Some experienced missed doses of medicine doses, incorrect dosages, incorrect medicines, as well as unfriendly visits from nurses suffering from burnout. The nurses were no longer able to assess all of the patient's needs accurately and, therefore, were unable to do their job sufficiently. It is unfortunate that nurse's needs are often overlooked, but the fact that caregiver burnout can also impact that patient creates an ethical issue. When the health and wellbeing of the patient begin to suffer, it is more than just "exhaustion" on the part of the nurse or caregiver. Burnout can disrupt the lives of nurses and, by extension, cause health problems for patients, which is the ultimate reason it should be taken more seriously and addressed as a legitimate health issue.

In sum, caregiver burnout is not a simple case of exhaustion. Nurses are not hypochondriacs. They are not acting out of a need for attention. Due to the overwhelming guilt surrounding the idea of taking care of themselves when they are expected to take care of everyone else, burnout arguably stems from not acting out of a need for attention. The public suppress any idea of caregiver burnout because caregivers are thought to be compassionate and immune to the normal exhaustion suffered by other humans. If this misconception is not changed, nurses will continue to be faced with burnout

that they do not know how to cope. Their well-being will persistently be in danger, as will the well-being and health of their patients. Caregiver burnout puts too many lives at risk to be ignored; it is becoming an ethical issue that must be addressed immediately for the sake of nurses and patients everywhere.

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