A PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR OLDER ADULT MALE CAREGIVERS: A GRANT PROPOSAL

Jazmin Jones
California University of Long Beach
May 2015
Providing care for a family member can cause a tremendous strain for the primary caregiver in many areas of his/her life including financial, physical, and psychological, which often results in both increased emotional needs and physical complications for the caregiver (Lee, DeDios, Fong, Simonette, & Lee, 2010).

As disabled older adults live longer lives, there is now an increasing need to rely on others to assist them with their day-to-day activities and activities of daily living (ADL), and that role often falls upon the spouses of the impaired or close family members (Barbosa, Figueiredo, Sousa, & Demain, 2010).

Research data provided by the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) estimated that there were approximately 44 million caregivers age 18 and over, with one third of those caregivers being male, many of whom were providing care to adults age 50 and above (National Alliance for Caregiving, 2015).

The caregivers reported performing daily tasks such as assisting with their loved one’s personal needs identified as ADLs such as bathing, dressing, and personal hygiene, as well as ancillary care identified as instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) such as helping the care recipient with transportation, shopping, and meal preparation among other activities (NAC, 2009).

For male caregivers, the role of caregiving can present new challenges. A study by Lopez, Copp, and Molassiotis (2012) found that men have a difficult time finding practical information about their partner’s diagnosis, expressing themselves emotionally, and maintaining social support within their lives.

Overarching Goals

To reduce caregiver-associated stress, increase personal coping methods, and increase knowledge about community-based resources to help them in the provision of care.
Social Work Relevance

- Social workers had a significant role in working with husbands (as they negotiated the changes in their relationships with their wives) and the roles they had within their greater family system after assuming a caregiving role (Coe & Neufeld, 1999; Siriopoulos, Brown, & Wright, 1999).

- By shifting the focus away from the female viewpoint of care and support, social workers can better assess and, thus, locate the unique services that best meet the needs of male caregivers (Sanders & Power, 2009).

- The social work profession, with its strength-based outlook, was available and able to advocate for the facilitation of care and support on behalf of family caregivers of older adults (NAC, 2009).

- Social workers were capable of empowering male caregivers to navigate their way through many of the difficulties linked with providing care to an individual with a variety of impeding health conditions (Sanders & Power, 2009).
Cross-Cultural Relevance

- The National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (2001) section 1.05 states that social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.

- This is a critical skill for social workers to possess to be able to adequately address the needs of clients from various cultures and, thus, properly connect them to services best suited for their culturally unique needs.
The target population identified for this support group was older adult male caregivers age 60 and above.

The caregivers participating in the support group were the primary informal care providers for a spouse or older adult loved one who resided within the greater Long Beach, California area or its surrounding communities.

Strategies used to identify and select a funding source included reviewing caregiver resource data through the Caregiver Resource Center and the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) in addition to a comprehensive literature review. Additional sources included conducting searches at the local, state, and federal levels.

Keywords such as older adults, support groups, caregiver, aging population and grants were used to assist in identifying possible sources.

As a result of these searches, the Archstone Foundation was selected as a source to be a potential funder for the Psycho-Educational Support Group for Older Adult Male Caregivers.
Sources used for the needs assessment were comprised of the National Alliance for Caregivers, a comprehensive literature review, and hearing from various healthcare providers and social workers who have worked with male caregivers and who have assisted with identifying a need for a male caregiver support group serving the greater Long Beach area.

Through the use of these resources, it was determined that the need for this program could be validated, showing that this unique type of support group would be beneficial in helping men to have improved coping with their personal caregiving needs enhancing overall quality of life.

The estimated projected budget range for the Sure Project All Male Caregiver Support Group is $141,940. The funding will include 1 MSW program administrator, 1 BSW administrative support staff, 3 guest speakers and both direct and indirect program costs. The support group was delivered eight times per year with three support groups running consecutively, and at different times to accommodate caregivers.
Program Summary and Description: The Sure Project All Male Caregiver Support Group will offer psycho-education in addition to stress reduction interventions to address the unique needs of older adult male caregivers. The two hour support group will be held at the Jewish Family and Children Services Center over a 6 week period eight times per year.

Population Served: The target population for this support group were older adult male caregivers aged 60 and above. These individuals were the primary informal caregivers for a spouse or loved one within the greater Long Beach, CA area and its surrounding communities.

Sustainability: The Sure Project All Male Caregiver Support Group will seek funding in the amount of $126,940 and the remaining $15,000 will be through in kind donations. This support group is a one year program that if successful, direct practice social workers will be able to continue to offer it as referral source in which they can directly refer individuals.
Grant Proposal II

- **Program Objectives:** The Sure Project All Male Caregiver Support Group will provide education related to caregiver stress and the various ways in which stress can negatively affect an individual’s overall health. Various interventions will be applied to reduce caregiver-associated stress. The objective is to address the caregiver’s emotional needs by reducing caregiver-associated stress, identifying and increasing personal coping methods, and increasing their awareness related to community-based resources to help them in the provision of care.

- **Program Evaluation:** Client attendance will be reviewed and questionnaires will be disseminated to gain client feedback post the completion of the six week support group. The questionnaires will determine if the caregiver’s were able to identify new coping skills to use when stressed and whether they were still integrating the skills learned during the duration of the support group. It is the goal of the support group that the participants will increase their coping skills and that 100% of the participants will be provided with resource information.
Upon the exploration of supportive literature, it was determined that there was, in fact, very limited information available that directly related to male caregivers, as the topic revealed to be more of a growing trend.

Other identified challenges included finding age appropriate, literature as many of the articles related to men were revealed to be outdated, and in locating literature that spoke to the unique difficulties that men face.

The Sure Project coincides with the NASW values in social work of which it is the mission of professional social workers to increase the quality of life for those who are disenfranchised providing care (NASW, 2001).

A psycho-educational support group for older adult male caregivers would educate professional social workers on strategies to help men in reducing caregiver stress by way of various intervention techniques.

Lessons Learned
References


