

Title of Intervention: Group Support Program and an Individual Support Program for Caregivers of Stroke Patients

Intervention Strategies: Group Education, Supportive Relationships

Purpose of the Intervention: To enhance caregivers' confidence in knowledge and active coping strategies, increase mental well-being and vitality, provide social support and reduce strain

Population: Caregivers of stroke patients

Setting: Four regions of the Netherlands; home-based, community-based

Partners: None mentioned

Intervention Description:

- **Group Education:** Caregivers participated in an 8-week program consisting of 16 hours of education. The program provided information about the causes of stroke, disabilities, recovery and prognosis. Participants were educated about lifting techniques, resources and facilities. Participants learned how to recognize and handle stress, including how to organize support groups, where to contact other caregivers and how to organize holidays for themselves. They also received information about time management and how to achieve a healthy lifestyle. Problem-solving strategies were discussed. All caregivers received informational material compiled by the Stroke Patients Association.
- **Supportive Relationships:** In group education sessions, participants were asked to discuss stroke incidents, the feelings they experienced and how becoming a caregiver affected their lives. The 8-10 week home visit program provided 8 hours of one-on-one education. Experiences of participants (regarding problem-solving) were discussed and advice was given on how to handle similar situations in the future.

Theory: Not mentioned

Resources Required:

- **Staff/Volunteers:** Health educators
- **Training:** Not mentioned
- **Technology:** Computer and printers
- **Space:** Classroom space
- **Budget:** Not mentioned
- **Intervention:** Educational materials, transportation for home visits
- **Evaluation:** Questionnaires

Evaluation:

- **Design:** Cohort
- **Methods and Measures:**
 - Coping strategies were measured with a short version of Utrecht Coping list
 - The Short Form-36 was used to measure physical well-being, mental well-being, and vitality
 - Strain was measured with the Caregiver Strain Index
 - Social Support List-Interaction and the Social Support List-Discrepancy were used to evaluate the amount of social support and satisfaction with social support
 - Assertiveness was measured with an 11-item questionnaire
 - Other independent variables were collected: caregiver's gender and age, patient's gender, income, time of stroke, SES, consequences of stroke, caregiver's health status

Outcomes:

- **Short Term Impact:** Participants' confidence in knowledge about patient care and self-efficacy increased significantly.
- **Long Term Impact:** Not measured

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: Evidence suggests that caregivers' situations can be improved by teaching them active coping strategies and by offering them information about the disease.

Citation(s):

Van den Heuvel, E. T., L. P. de Witte, et al. (2000). "Short-term effects of a group support program and an individual support program for caregivers of stroke patients." *Patient Educ Couns* 40(2): 109-20.