



Young Carers: How can professionals strengthen young carers by using/adopting a salutogenic approach?

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Background

Adult carers as well as young carers are often exposed to negative outcomes like physical and mental health problems. They are experiencing negative consequences are more likely to report a lower sense of coherence, the core concept of salutogenesis. It underlines the personal strengths rather than weakness or lack of resources. In international research, this focus regarding improvement of quality of life and well-being exists for adult carers, no study has applied Antonovsky's framework to the population of young carers.

Research Question / Aim

This presentation aims to answer the following question: How can professionals improve their support for young carers by applying a salutogenic framework? It aims to explore the young carers' and care recipients' support needs and their expectations for support provided by professionals focusing on their resources and strengths

Method / Procedure

Within a national study, 23 interviews were carried out with young carers and their care recipient. For the analysis of our interviews we applied Antonovsky's paradigm of salutogenesis (1987). The dimensions of manageability, comprehensibility and meaningfulness were adapted to categorise the data using the method of qualitative content analysis by Kuckartz (2014).

Results

Our research findings showed various needs for support. Professionals can strengthen young carers as well as their family within the dimensions of comprehensibility (informing on equal footing; helping to acquire new knowledge), manageability (enabling new competencies; helping to balance education and care; reducing barriers to recourse assistance; providing relief through talking; assisting with changing relationships; building reliable relationships;) and meaningfulness (enabling a normal life; assisting to shape one's own role). Throughout the thematic analysis of the interviews, the dimension manageability proved to be the central analysis category.

Discussion

Implications and benefits for a salutogenic approach for professionals' support for young carers are being discussed. The advantage of applying the salutogenic framework is to increase the well-being of the person supported, e.g. the young carers by building a sustainable network for their families. Therefore, an instrument to enhance professionals support has been developed that integrates the main findings of this study.



Conclusion

The salutogenic approach, as it has been applied for adult carers, seems to fit the dynamics and needs for support of young carers, too. The study provides a deeper understanding of the needs and expectations for support of young carers and their care recipient by combining both their perspectives. Professionals should acknowledge the caring role of the young carers and focus on their resources and how they manage their situation. Strengthening the sense of coherence of all family members should be a main focus of professionals' support.