Psychodrama for Self-Care: Taking Care of the Carer

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, July 2020   **Mihaela Bucuță & Raluca Sassu**

Abstract

This module will address **the needs** of caregivers working with and of life patients in order **to empower** them **with self-care** – meeting their own needs:

- *physical*,
- *communication*,
- and *emotional*.

Working with dying people may be stressful, particularly if staff/caregivers experience personal bereavement and loss.

Such work can put staff in touch with personal **anxiety** about loss and death.
Psychodrama may offer for these professionals instruments and technics *to process and cope* with their own experience.
Psychodrama can be a way for handling stressful situation in their personal life and their relationship with

- patients,
- colleagues
- and managers at work settings.

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Competencies

- Identify their own needs in taking care of end of life patients;
- Explain strategies for working with stress for self-care;
- Design activities using psychodrama technics for self-care, constructive communication and stress management at work;
- Demonstrate/implement these activities using psychodrama technics;

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Theoretical framework of quality for professional life (Stamm, 2010)

Quality of professional life

Compassion fatigue

Satisfaction from compassion

Burn-out

Secondary traumatic stress

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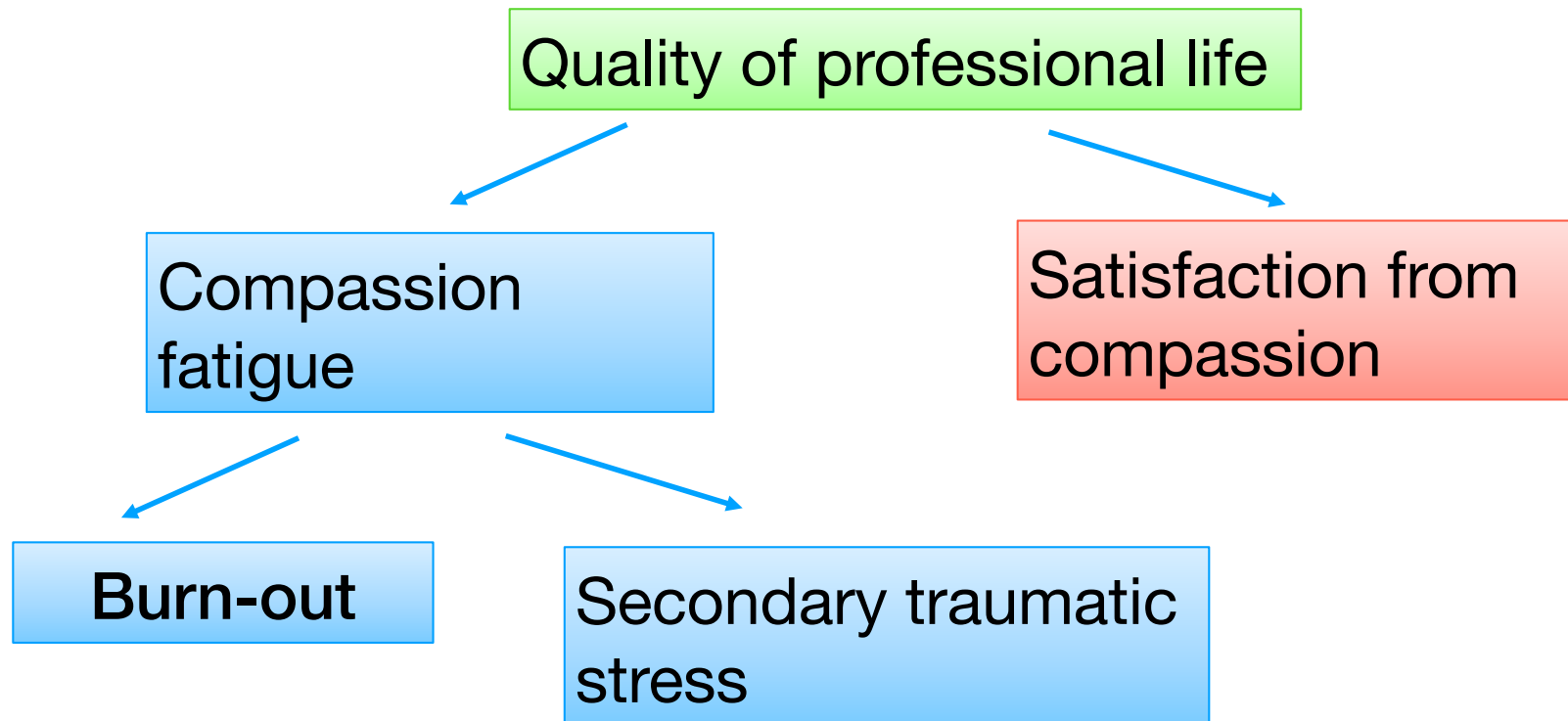
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Compassion fatigue

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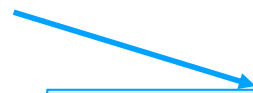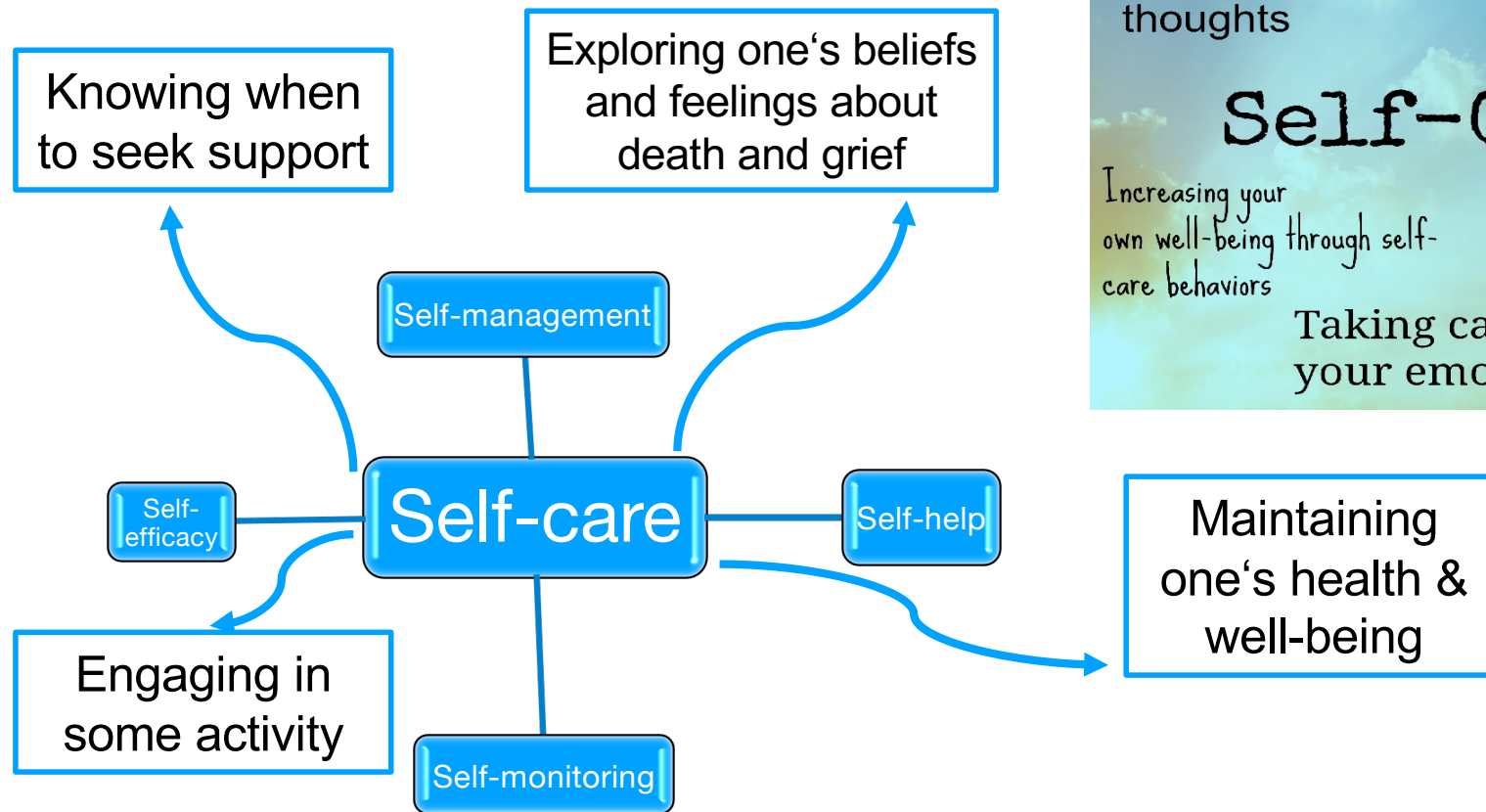
- *feelings of helplessness*
- *excessive exhaustion*
- *depressive symptoms*

- *avoidance*
- *intrusive thoughts*
- *sleep disorders*

- *increased resilience*
- *job satisfaction*
- *well-being*
- *feeling of self-efficacy*
- *high level of perceived social support*

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Theoretical framework

Knowing when to seek support

Exploring one's beliefs and feelings about death and grief

Taking care of your mind & thoughts
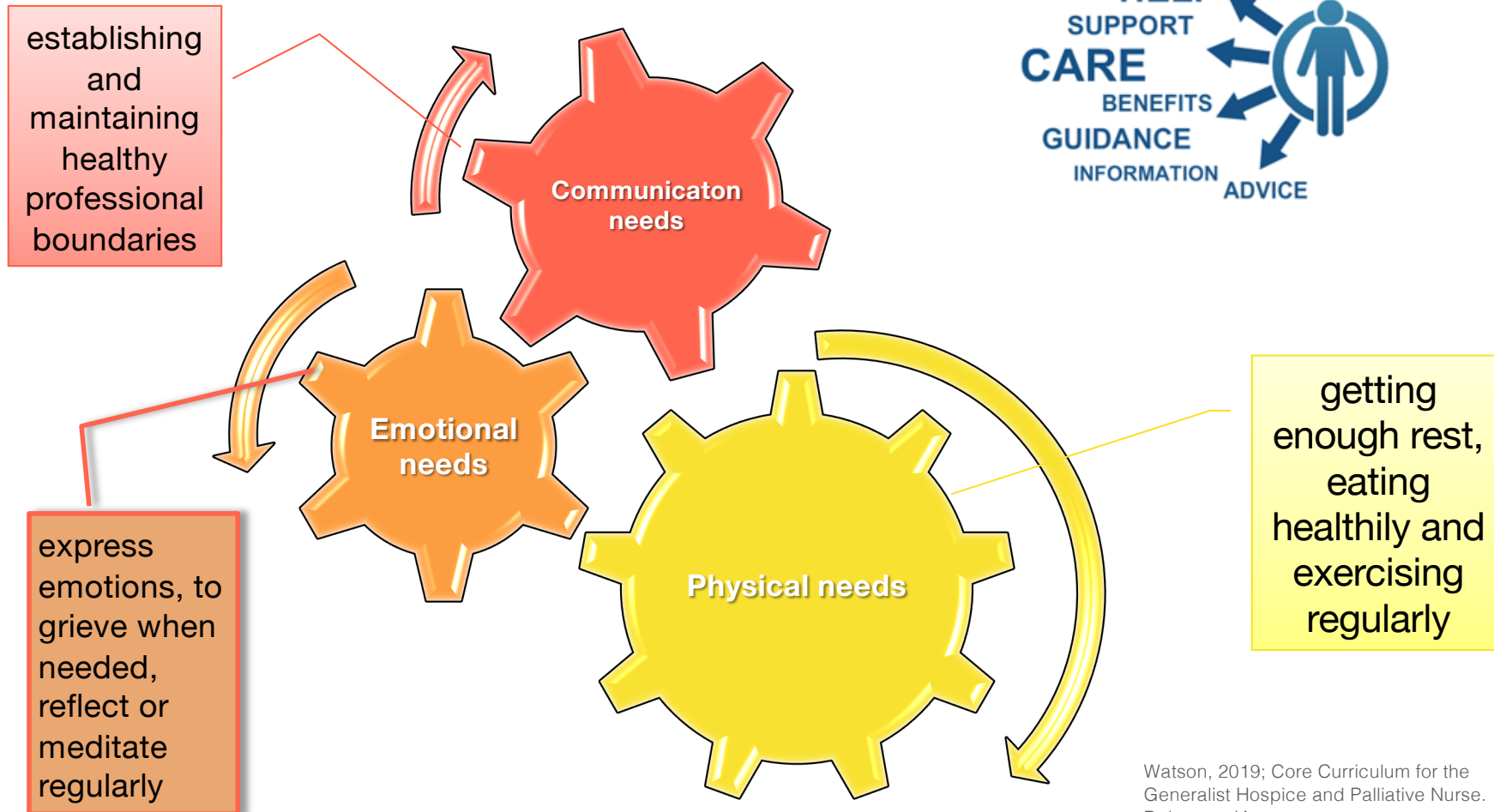
Taking care of your physical health & body

Self-Care

Increasing your own well-being through self-care behaviors

Taking care of your spiritual health

Taking care of your emotions

Self-management

Self-efficacy

Self-care

Self-help

Maintaining one's health & well-being

Engaging in some activity

Self-monitoring

Wilde M, Garvin S (2007); Curtin R et al (2005)

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Theoretical framework

establishing and maintaining healthy professional boundaries

express emotions, to grieve when needed, reflect or meditate regularly

Communicaton needs

Emotional needs

Physical needs

TIME OFF
HELP
SUPPORT
CARE
BENEFITS
GUIDANCE
INFORMATION
ADVICE

getting enough rest, eating healthily and exercising regularly

Watson, 2019; Core Curriculum for the Generalist Hospice and Palliative Nurse. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company; 2005.

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Theoretical framework

It is understood that **constructive communication** requires:

- a higher level of interaction involving understanding of the other;

- positive self-disclosure;

- and a willingness to consider different opinions.

Constructive communication also requires comfortable feelings towards others while interacting.

(Yahya, F., & Antigonos, S. 2013)

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Practical applications – strategies for working with stress for self-care

Organizational strategies

• developing a supportive culture within the

organization

• opportunities to express work-related feelings and

discuss problems in the workplace

• regular team meetings

• mandatory clinical supervision

• provision of a counselling service for staff

• support in developing competencies for working in palliative care

• robust education programs for staff that include developing insight into

individual/personal potential areas of difficulty, avoiding excessive involvement with

particular clients, handling emotions, advanced communication skills, etc.

(Watson, 2019)

empower the self-care

reduce stress

encourage constructive
communication

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Practical applications – strategies for working with stress for self-care

Personal coping strategies:

• having a sense of competence, control,

and satisfaction in working in palliative care

• having control over workload

• taking time off

• having non-job-related outside activities

• engaging in physical activities and diversions

• ensuring adequate sleep and nutrition

• using relaxation techniques, e.g. physical activity, yoga, meditation, complementary therapies

• developing a personal philosophy regarding death that may or may not relate to individual religious or spiritual beliefs

(Watson, 2019)

Death Education For Palliative Psychology

Psychodrama for Self-Care: Taking Care of the Carer

- Psychodrama is a **group format** of psychotherapy with deep roots in theater, psychology and sociology.
- it focuses on the **particularities of the individual** (in a group format) as the intersection of various relational roles, and roles related to difficulties and potentialities (Cruz et al. 2018).

- As a multidimensional method, Psychodrama facilitates **internal changes**, resulting in **greater insight**, **personal growth**, **enhanced emotional intelligence** and **integration on cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels** (Sahebalzamani et.al, 2014).

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Psychodrama for Self-Care: Taking Care of the Carer
Psychodrama technics

Psychodrama technics	Explanation – how it can be used
Double	It is used to assist the protagonist in the **expression** (both verbally and bodily) **of thoughts and feelings** that, for some reason, s/he does not perceive or avoid. This technic may be used with carers in activities that explores the self and self-changes (needs – *physical, communication, emotional*; fear – fear of death, of loss; desires)
Mirror	The purpose of this technique is **to promote the awareness of the protagonist and his/her behavior in different situations.** It is used when the protagonist does not perceive his/her behavior, and the image s/he transmits to others differs substantially from the image s/he has of him/her self (internal and external image). It can be used in activities to empower the self-care and to explore the self and self-changes
Role-playing/ Role-training	The main objective is to create situations for **the development and training of a certain role** in conditions very close to the real situation yet in a protected way. It might be used for e better representation of the carer role – a role that faces death, loss, for activating internal and external resources.
Role-reversal	This technique allows the protagonist to obtain **a more accurate perception of the individuality of the complementary role** (López, 2005), as well as the possibility of **perceiving the other's view about him/herself** (Kellerman, 1994), and **about the world** (Holmes, 1992). This technic can be used in various and diverse situations and can help in exploring the self, the self-changes, activating internal and external resources, for a better representation of the life line and resilience, for the connection to safety and security

Psychodrama for Self-Care: Taking Care of the Carer
Psychodrama technics

Psychodrama technics	Explanation – how it can be used
Professional atom/ Resources atom/ Needs/atom	The professional atom is a particular social atom and can be also designed, up to the objectives, as a resources atom or needs atom. Therefore, the professional atom represents **the professional interpersonal pattern** of the social universe of the organization. It can be used for a better understanding of the professional role of the carer, for the exploration of the professional relations, exploring the self and self-changes in the professional context. The professional atom provides an overview of the protagonist's interpersonal professional structure, revealing conflicts with significant people and providing themes for dramatization.
Sociometry	Its purpose is to **help the elements of a group, to provide mutual feedback on various issues –** in this particular topic on issues regarding death, loss. As a technique, it is used to measure interpersonal relationships, and can be for the empower of the carer in order to a better understanding of her/his needs, fears, emotions, resources, etc.
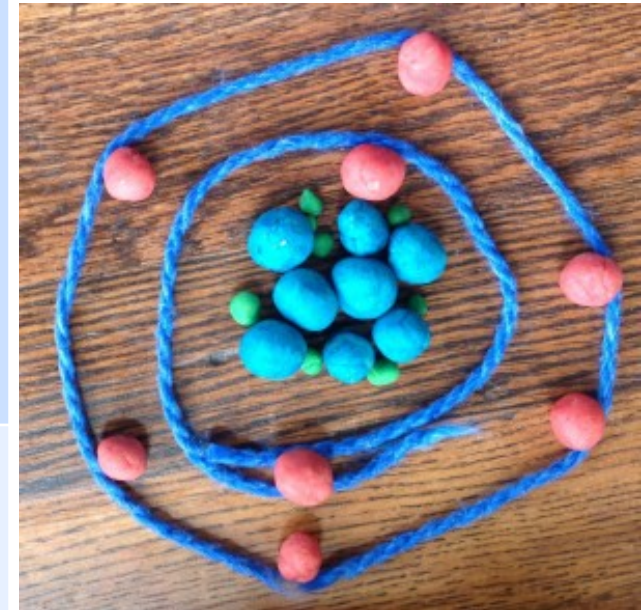
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Conclusions

Self-care practices include maintaining one's health and well-being, exploring one's beliefs and feelings about death and grief, knowing when to seek support and engaging in some activity apart from the caregiving situation.

Psychodrama employs guided dramatic action to examine problems or issues raised by an individual by using experiential methods, sociometry, role theory, and group dynamics (Beauvais, 2019).

Psychodrama allows health professionals to increase self-awareness, develop communication skills, enhance their ability to cope with communication problems, and establish positive interpersonal relations (Oflaz et.al, 2011)

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Key References

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