

# **“I Just Didn’t See What Her Big Problem Was”**

## **The Gendered Logic of Dependency In Nursing Student Attitudes Towards Family Caregiving**

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# Overview

- Research Aim
- Background
  - Context - Family Dementia Caregiving
  - The C.A.R.E. Tool
  - Timing of the C.A.R.E. Tool Study - Objective 2
- Theoretical Framework
- Methodology & Analysis
- Findings/Discussion

# Overarching Aim of Analysis:

- Understand attitudinal barriers to recognizing family caregivers as partners in care, by examining nursing students' tacit assumptions about caregiving



## Material Analyzed:

- Semi-structured journal reflections following administration of the C.A.R.E. Tool caregiver assessment with family dementia caregivers

**Context...**

**The Difference Dementia Makes**

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# The C.A.R.E. Tool

(Guberman, Keefe, Fancey, Barylak, 2006)

- An assessment of Caregivers' Aspirations, Realities and Expectations
- A multi-dimensional psycho-social assessment instrument
- Designed to collect information from the caregivers' perspective on the many different aspects of his/her situation
- Looking to pinpoint the key areas of difficulty being experienced by the caregivers
- Specific difficulties can then be matched with supports that would assist the caregiver

# Study Objective 2

Approach: Time 1 - Nurse trainees completed questionnaire.

Trainees completed a reflective journal of experience for each completed assessment.

Time 2 - Similar questionnaire and additional questions.

Sample: 12 nurse trainees from two Schools of Nursing in NS and PEI.

They had some knowledge and skill in assessing various client and family health challenges, such as dementia.

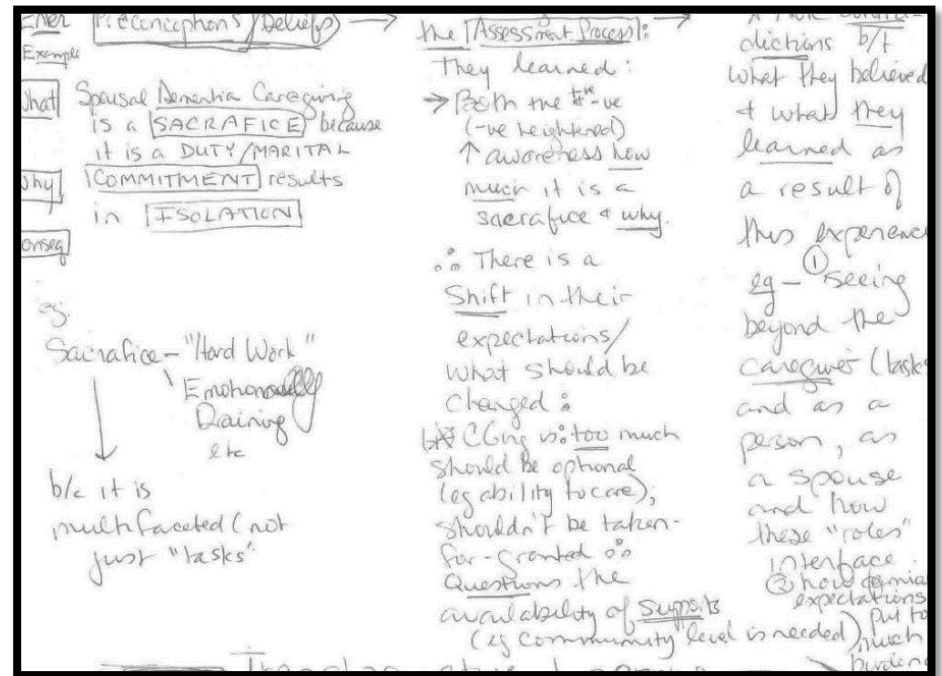
Status: 10 of the 12 nursing trainees involved participated.

Journals were coded and thematic analysis conducted.

# Methodology & Analysis

- Semi-structured Reflective Journaling
- Coded Using Themes from Guiding Questions
- Concept Mapping
- Critical Discourse Analysis
- Interpreted from Feminist Disability Studies Perspective

## Concept Mapping



# Nursing Students' Perceptions of Family Dementia Caregiving

## Themes





# Gendered Logic of Dependency

- recognition of the **complexity of caregiving** and **enhanced empathy** for caregivers
- family caregiving a **job** for both men and women, but also a **domestic duty** for women
  - male caregivers go ‘above and beyond’ call of duty
- presumed **loss of normalcy** in dementia caregiving (“giving up”)
  - labour grievable for men
  - labour characteristic for woman

Caregiving requires a lot of patience, love and dedication, which this man clearly has. **It's a requirement to care give (on top of giving up a social life, and their previous 'normal' life).** (Jane)

I come from a family with very strong 'maternalistic' mothers that care for the family, the husband, do the housework etc. I know that this isn't always the case and that things have changed over the years so much, but I suppose my **assumption that a spouse would automatically 'give up' their freedom** to care for their spouse comes from my own family... (Margaret)

... like he had no cognitive impairment, no physical impairment, just a little bit of extra care that comes along with normal aging processes, so it was **different talking to her**. She was just **caring for her aging husband** as opposed to the **person I interviewed before her who was caring for a severely disabled spouse with advanced Alzheimer's**. I guess, **I just didn't see what her big problem was**.

Informally assessing caregivers' deservingness of support based on how they should think and feel about their work.

In one assessment when a husband was caring for his wife with advanced Alzheimer's it was just a really, it was really sad. **It was sad for him. I could see, I knew** all the positives with him being able to talk about it but it was a lot emotionally to deal with **knowing that this man is going through this and you felt so, you just felt for him.** I guess it was emotional challenges, trying to get it out of your mind when you're falling asleep at night, I guess.

# Acknowledgements

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# Questions? Comments?

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Thanks For your time!