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Article title-

Exploring coping strategies of carers looking after people with intellectual disabilities and dementia

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Structured abstract:

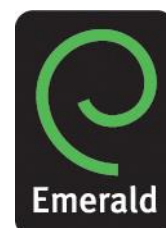
Purpose

Carers play a vital role in looking after people with intellectual disabilities (ID). Caring role can be stressful and challenging in nature. Carers use various coping strategies to deal with stressors. This paper aims to explore coping strategies of carers looking after people with intellectual disability and dementia.

Design

Qualitative methodology was used to explore coping strategies. Focus groups and face to face interviews were carried out. These interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis.

Findings



Nine interviews with carers (six paid carers and three family carers) and two focus groups with nursing staff looking after people with ID were carried out. Three key themes of 'Narrative', 'Strategy toolbox' and 'Compartmentalisation' emerged from analysis. Narrative and strategy toolbox were further sub themed. Carers had narratives about them and the person they look after. These 'narratives' helped them to deal with day to day stressors. They also carried a 'strategy toolbox', which they used when they were in stressful situations. Compartmentalisation helped them to separate their personal life from work life as a carer.

Value

Understanding carers' coping strategies is important when planning services to help carers who play an important role in our society. Professionals can support carers to understand and improve their existing coping skills and help them to thrive in their role as carers.

Key words- carers, coping strategies, dementia, intellectual disability, learning disability, narrative

Article classification:

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Running Heads: