

May/June 2023

THE GRAPEVINE

North Shore Caregivers Newsletter



'LIFE IN THE 'DELICATE CYCLE': CAREGIVERS AS HSPS (HIGHLY SENSITIVE PEOPLE)' PART TWO

Written by C.A. Bryson

A. The Situation:

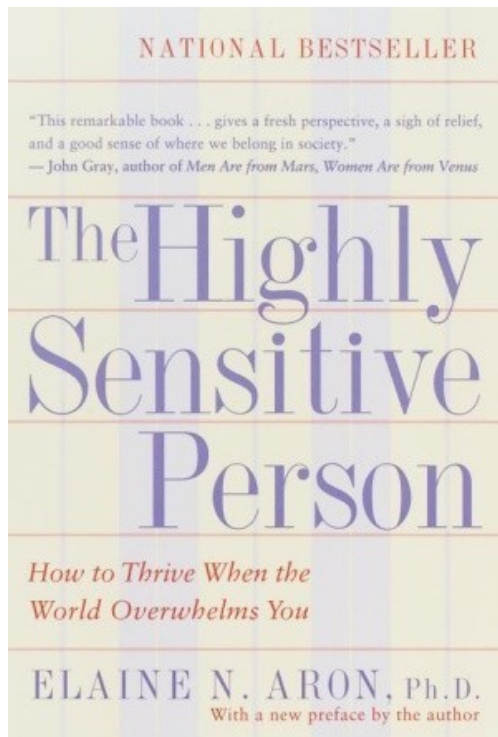
In the last Grapevine issue, we discussed Highly Sensitive People (HSP). Just to re-cap, some of the most prominent traits of HSPs are:

Highly sensitive person (continued)

- Empathy
- Creativity
- Sensory Intelligence
- Depth of processing
- Depth of emotion

Although estimates as to the percentage of HSPs who are caregivers (to date) is not available, one would think it would be quite high. HSPs, according to HSP expert Elaine Aron, comprise roughly 15-20% of the population (though I've heard as much as 30%). Given their high empathy and sensitivity to others, it should not be too surprising then, that many HSPs gravitate towards work as homemakers, housewives, or full-time parents (including caregivers). Keep in mind though, that society typically undervalues such work.

Judy Dyer, author of the book: 'The Highly Sensitive' (2018), suggests that should you be an HSP and find yourself in the role of caregiver, that you feel pride in 'meeting that responsibility.' However, she goes on to advise that 'keeping yourself healthy and in your right range of arousal is the first condition for helping others.' In other words: 'self-care, self-care, self-care' cannot be over-emphasized. For example, protect yourself against people that drain you (suggestions for self-care strategies are provided below.)



Even so, as an HSP, you might find yourself in a position similar to Jonah in the 'Jonah and the Whale' biblical story. In this story, Jonah is on a sea voyage and gets thrown overboard. He is swallowed by a whale and remains captive for three days and nights. Then the whale comes to shore and Jonah gets out and does what he is asked to do. It is definitely true that at times the caregiving role can be so overwhelming that you, too, can feel as if you had literally been 'swallowed by a whale.'

B. The Remedy:

The one condition that most often befalls HSPs as caregivers is, unfortunately, that of burnout or 'compassion fatigue.' (In fact, 50% of those in therapy

(continued on next page)

Highly sensitive person (continued)

are HSPs.) I would posit, however, that it would be better not to let yourself get to that state in the first place but, rather, to be proactive and prevent, rather than treat burnout. But how? Here are just a few recommendations for you:

- Give yourself more quiet time
- Avoid crowds
- Limit TV (especially the news)
- Consider a brief holiday or 'time away'
- Explore alternative forms of therapy such as art therapy or expressive writing; music can be soothing; or else, spending time in nature - what is called 'forest bathing' (all covered in the NSCR Caregivers Blog)
- Consider reaching out to a mental health professional, particularly in cases of grief or serious caregiver depression
- Remember to 'pace yourself'
- Learn to delegate (we all have unique strengths)

There can be twist in the plot though: what if the care receiver, not just you, is an HSP? Do you recall the 'DOES' acronym from Part I?

D-Depth of Processing

O-Overstimulation

E-Emotional Reactivity

S-Sensing the subtle

Terri Vaughn, who wrote 'Caregivers, Are You Caring for an HSP' (see resources below) explains: 'I believe that being a conscientious caregiver who focuses on the care receiver's strengths and understands their weaknesses enables the person receiving care to better utilize their physical and mental capabilities.'

I believe it is high time for someone (preferably, another HSP) to write a book on how HSPs can survive (and even thrive) on the caregiving journey. It is the logical 'next step' in the current HSP forum. Until that time, here are some resources, both print and online, that you can explore. (Currently this is a hot topic and what I've listed here is just a sample.)

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RESOURCES

Websites:

<https://www.caregiversalmanac.org/post/know-thyself-and-those-you-care-for>

<https://www.caregiversalmanac.org/caregivers-are-you-caring-for-a-highly-sensitive-person>

<https://highlysensitiverefuge.com/self-care-ideas-for-highly-sensitive-people>

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_superpowers_of_sensitive_people
(This web page is based on the article 'The Superpowers of Sensitive People' by Jill Suttie (2023))

Books:

(For those of you who take time out to read actual books. Besides, bibliotherapy is good for HSPs)

(A classic) 'The Highly Sensitive Person: How to Thrive When the World Overwhelms You' by Elaine Aron (1996)

'The Highly Sensitive' by Judy Dyer (2018)

(New book) 'Sensitive: The Hidden Power of the HSP in a Loud, Fast, Too-Much World' by Jenn Granneman and Andre Solo (2023)

'Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking' by Susan Cain. (2012)

I hope you found this article helpful to you. In the next issue of The Grapevine, I'll be focusing on how seeing the world from a more poetic, introverted mindset can be an asset; and accepting that neurodiversity, like cultural diversity, is something we actually need as a species to survive. Many great discoveries, including the Theory of Relativity, were made by those with atypical mindsets.

CAB 2023

5TH ANNUAL CAREGIVER SENIOR EXPO

SATURDAY MAY 13, 2023 • 12-4PM

SILVER HARBOUR CENTRE, 144 EAST 22ND ST, NORTH VAN

Self-care and support for unpaid caregivers is crucial to helping them navigate the difficulties of caring for loved ones.

North Shore Community Resources is proud to present the following speakers:



Amelia Gillies *Alzheimer Society of BC*
What is dementia? Learn how dementia affects an individual's brain and behaviour, as well as the disease's impact on family.



Stephanie Chan *Home to Home*
Senior care budgeting and finances - learn about how to access home care, different types of housing and care available, and costs for both public and private-pay sectors.



Nikki Brown *Vancouver Coastal Health*
Case Management and Long Term Care - Nikki will talk about the services that VCH provides as part of their Home and Community Care program, and how to access them.



Chantal Bourke *Registered Clinical Counsellor*
Being Your Loved One's Emotional Coach - the importance of being your loved one's 'emotion coach' while being in the difficult role of their caregiver.

Be sure to visit all of the expo booths and meet local business owners who offer products and services that can help you in your caregiving journey.



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MAY EVENTS

<p>TUES 02</p> <p>CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (ZOOM)</p> <p>TIME: 6:30 - 8:30 PM</p>	<p>THURS 04</p> <p>MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP MEETING W/ GUEST SPEAKER, NIKKI BROWN, VCH (IN PERSON)</p> <p>TIME: 10:30 AM -12:30 PM</p>	<p>TUES 9, 16, 23, 30</p> <p>POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS WORKSHOP (ZOOM)</p> <p>TIME: 3:00-4:30PM</p>
<p>WED 10</p> <p>KOREAN GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON)</p> <p>TIME: 2:00-4:00PM</p>	<p>SAT 13</p> <p>5TH ANNUAL CAREGIVER AND SENIOR EXPO (IN PERSON AT SILVER HARBOUR CENTRE)</p> <p>TIME: 12:00-4:00PM</p>	<p>MON 15</p> <p>PERSIAN GROUP MEETING (ZOOM)</p> <p>TIME: 6:00-8:00PM</p>
<p>TUES 30</p> <p>BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (ZOOM)</p> <p>TIME: 6:00-8:00PM</p>		

JUNE EVENTS

<p>THURS 01</p> <p>MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON)</p> <p>TIME: 10:30 AM -12:30 PM</p>	<p>TUES 06</p> <p>CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (ZOOM)</p> <p>TIME: 6:30 - 8:30 PM</p>	<p>TUES 6, 13</p> <p>POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS WORKSHOP (ZOOM)</p> <p>TIME: 3:00 - 4:30 PM</p>
<p>WED 14</p> <p>KOREAN GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON)</p> <p>TIME: 2:00-4:00PM</p>	<p>MON 19</p> <p>PERSIAN GROUP MEETING (ZOOM)</p> <p>TIME: 6:00-8:00PM</p>	

Caregiver Interview: Yasmin

What has been your journey into caregiving?

My full time Caregiving journey began ten years ago when my sister passed away. The greatest challenge of my life was trying to cope emotionally after her loss. I had to be strong for my mother's sake as her grief of losing a child was unimaginable.

For the first time I felt very alone but I had no time for self pity. I had to take care of mum, her home and the responsibilities of my household. From her doctor's appointments to paying bills, grocery shopping, preparing meals, bathing etc., I was pretty much exhausted.

Six years went by! To be honest I don't know how I managed. I, basically, did everything on my own and when I would get home I was mentally and physically exhausted.



There would be times when I would get a call from the alarm company at 2 a.m. (my mum had a Fall Alert necklace) saying there was an emergency. I would rush over and if the elevator wouldn't come fast enough, I would take the stairs to the 7th floor. When I got to her door, out of breath, the Paramedic told me, "We are going to end up taking you to the hospital if you are not careful!"

My mum finally agreed to move in with me. It was a great relief in one way, as I could watch over her. After a year I noticed my health was deteriorating. I had to figure something out. I think God answered my prayers. My mother is now at Assisted Living; she really likes it there and has settled in well, made friends, is involved in activities and loves her suite. What is amazing is that she looks better and is mentally alert. I have to attribute this to the care there and, I should add, the many activities (Crossword, Bingo, word games, music) that stimulate her mind.

If I was aware of NSCR at the time I felt alone it would have definitely been a great help.

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Caregiver Interview (continued)

What made you want to join a caregiver support group and how did you find out about the group at NSCR?

I was looking for volunteer opportunities on the internet as I know from my past experience as a volunteer how important it is for our mental state. I came across North Shore Community

Resources and started helping with grocery delivery and friendly phone visits for seniors at first, then I spotted a new group called the Caregiver Support group that was advertised on their website or in their newsletter, and that's how it started for me.

What do you believe are some benefits to the Peer 2 Peer support you volunteer for? And attending a caregiving support group?

In the Peer 2 Peer support I get a chance to get to know someone "one on one", sharing stories about their lives and their challenges. I put myself in their shoes and try to understand what they are going through – and at the same time I am learning from them as well.

The caregiving support group is very important and extremely beneficial as we are hearing about each other's journey and realizing we are not alone, plus we gain some valuable tools on how to cope in different scenarios that come our way.

How do you take care of yourself and what are some things you do to bring yourself joy?

I did not realize until much later in my caregiving journey how essential self care is because if you don't take care of yourself you really cannot be of help to your loved one. They can sense your exhaustion and it can become very unpleasant for all involved.

I started walking on a daily basis (rain or shine) which really helped my mental state and of course, meeting friends and family on a regular basis, which is always enjoyable. Listening to meditation at night and music in the daytime takes my mind off to a better place. For me, living in the moment and not getting ahead of myself is key. I try not to think of what tomorrow will bring and just enjoy the moment



MEN'S CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for male caregivers who support their spouses or partners – either living together or apart.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for men with the unique experience of caregiving for their partners.

Program participants are welcome to encourage other men they feel might benefit from joining the group to join us.

Monthly Meetings

We are back meeting in-person at the NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the first Thursday of each month, from 10:30am-12:30pm.

Next 2 meetings:

May 4 (w/ Guest Speaker Nikki Brown, Manager, North Shore Home & Community Care, Vancouver Coastal Health (pictured)) & June 1.



Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Vic Gailiunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca

Pat Dean (Group Leader) ~ pdean@telus.net



KOREAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Korean community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, learning, and connecting.

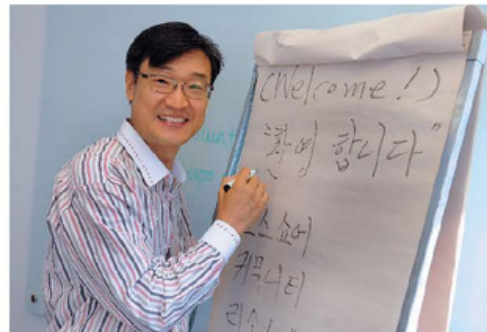
Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Korean, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and creative arts.

Monthly Meetings

Meetings are in person in our NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the second Wednesday of each month, from 2:00-4:00pm

Next Meetings: May 10 & June 14

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Yoonwon Lee (Group Leader) ~ infocwtc@gmail.com

Vic Gailunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca



CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a monthly support group specifically for family caregivers who support their loved ones – either living together or apart.

The group's goal is to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for anyone with the unique experience of caregiving for family members.

Program participants are welcome to encourage and invite others they feel might benefit from joining the group.

Monthly Meetings

Next meetings: Tuesday, May 2 & Tuesday June 6 (on Zoom)

Meetings are currently on the first Tuesday evening of each month from 6:30 – 8:30pm.

Currently we are meeting on Zoom. For the Zoom link, please contact NSCR directly.

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



Contact

For more information, details, or to find out more about NSCR's caregiver support programs, please contact:

Vic Gailunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca

Or Phone: 604-982-3320



PERSIAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Persian community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, learning, self-care and connecting.

Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Farsi, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and music.

Monthly Meetings

We are currently meeting on Zoom. Our meetings run on the third Monday of each month, from 6:00-8:00pm.

Next Meetings: May 15 & June 19.

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Noushin Beheshtipoor (Group Leader) ~ noushinbeheshtipoor@gmail.com

Vic Gailunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca



CAREGIVER BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for people experiencing grief in the loss of a loved one. The group is designed to create community and offer a time of sharing stories and resources, listening, and connecting with others with similar experiences.

Tuesday, May 30, 2023 on Zoom, 6:00-8:00PM



As we move through Spring and into Summer, things can seem more pronounced for those experiencing loss. It is a good time to consider our well-being, how to find meaning in grief, but also in hope, rejuvenation and renewal of spirit.

For more information, to register, and for details, please contact:

Vic Gallunas
Caregiver Support Program Coordinator
604.982.3320
vic.gallunas@nscr.ca