

Caregivers Connecting after ABI (CCABI): Enhancing Caregiver Support, Coping, and Knowledge

BACKGROUND

- Caregivers experience burden and family stress following their child's acquired brain injury (ABI).¹
- Caregivers' needs (e.g., ABI Information, coping skills, peer support) are often unmet despite them enhancing family functioning.²
- There is limited research on caregiver peer-support groups during inpatient rehabilitation.³
- Clinicians and family leaders at Holland Bloorview created an educational and psychosocial group for caregivers, Caregivers Connecting after ABI (CCABI) to address this gap.

OBJECTIVE



To evaluate the clinical utility of **CCABI** during families' inpatient phase of rehabilitation.

INTERVENTION

- **CCABI** is co-facilitated by clinical neuropsychologists and a social worker.
- It is informed by research highlighting the necessity of caregiver support to ensure a healthy future for children with ABI.⁴
- Common **CCABI** topics include: Brain Education, Rehabilitation Journey, Nutrition, Back to School, Transitions.
- **CCABI** is a weekly drop-in group (1 hour sessions).

PARTICIPANTS

- 10 caregivers of children with ABI (children age range: 4-15 years).
- Type of ABI includes: brain tumour, stroke, multiple sclerosis and traumatic brain injury.
- Length of inpatient stay (range): 5-12 weeks.
- On average, caregiver participants attended five **CCABI** sessions.



"I think just that an hour aside for us to talk without anybody judging or not understanding what we are going through .. somehow we are all kind of on the same boat."

CCABI is an inpatient group that provides education and psychosocial support to promote the well-being of caregivers of children and youth with acquired brain injury.

"It was helpful to get a sense of the breadth of brain injury and how no journey is linear.. It was comforting for us to hear different experiences, but then learn about our commonalities."



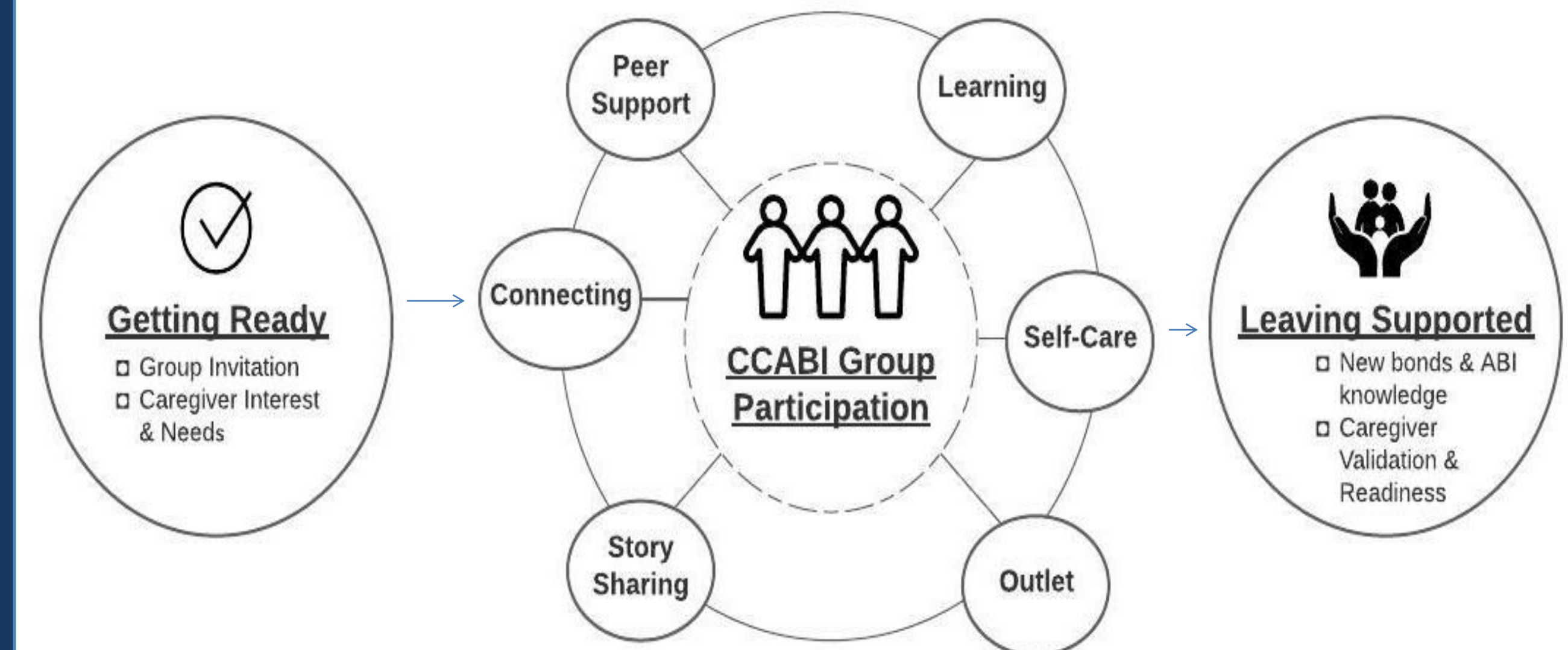
METHODS

- Semi-structured interviews were conducted. Qualitative content analysis is utilized to identify themes from the data.



RESULTS

- Participants joined CCABI due to personal interest, recommendation from other caregivers, and for support.
- CCABI is a valuable group for caregivers to receive information and social support from facilitators and other caregivers with similar lived experience.
- CCABI was described as an outlet to share stories in a safe space.
- Feelings of validation and confidence were reported following CCABI participation.



Participants offered suggestions for program improvement:

- Increase the frequency and duration of CCABI group sessions.
- Enhance program advertisement.
- Ensure CCABI topics are relevant to caregivers.

IMPLICATIONS & RELEVANCE TO FAMILIES

- Integrating family needs into clinical rehabilitation helps to improve caregiver functioning.
- The study sheds light on supportive strategies to improve the well-being of families following a child's brain injury.



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