

Caged

Concepts and skills introduced

- Emotion management.
- Self-esteem, self-control and self-confidence.

Situation & Exercise

My name is Mario and I am 50 years old, my wife Paola has been diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis 2 years ago. We discovered it by accident, initially we didn't give importance to cramps and falls, but then when they started to become more frequent, we decided to do some checks and this is how we learned about our destiny. Right from the start it was not easy for me or my wife to accept the disease and I still haven't succeeded. Even for the sons it was not easy, but they have their life, their families and it is not right that they should be sacrificed for us. So, I stayed at home with my wife and my mother.

Having my mother at home at first was fortunate because at least she helped me with housework and took care of Paola. However, one year after my wife's illness was discovered, my mother started to not be the same, she started to forget things. At first, I believed that it depended on the situation we were experiencing and the related stress and fatigue, but over time her condition was getting worse so a few months ago I took my mother to take tests that resulted in the onset of senile dementia. For me this was the straw that broke the camel's back: I feel helpless and I don't think I can take care of both.

As if all this were not enough I also lost my job and therefore I can't even afford to hire a caregiver to help me in assistance activities. This makes me feel like a loser, a good for nothing. It seems to me that my life is over and I don't know what to do anymore: the only emotions I can feel are anger, fear, despair, sadness, resignation. I feel completely absorbed by the situation, as if it were drying me up, taking away all my hopes. Sometimes I would like to escape as far as possible and forget about everything, but I know it is not possible, that I am in a cage and that there is nothing and no one who can help me.

Debate

Now that you have read about this case, try to reflect on what happened within the framework of the emotional intelligence skills you have acquired through PeerCare.

Imagine you were in Mario's shoes;

- How would you feel if you were in the same situation as Mario lives?
- What techniques would you recommend to take to manage what/how he feels?
- Do you think Mario has good levels of self-esteem, self-confidence and self-control?
- What should Mario do to improve his situation?