

RESILIENCE IN OLDER ADULTHOOD

ARGEC
Arkansas Regional Geriatric Education Center

Objectives



- Define resilience and its common themes
- Identify and differentiate the biopsychosocial and spiritual characteristics associated with resilience
- Discuss how culture and diversity influence resilience
- Describe interventions used to promote resilience in older adults

Resilience Defined



- “The capability to cope successfully in the face of significant change, adversity, or risk. This capability changes over time and is enhanced by protective factors in the individual and environment.”
(Stewart et al., 1997)
- Resilient behaviors are positive outcomes when risks are present.
- Resilience is connected to successful aging.

Common Themes



- Resilience is:
 - Dynamic and depends on life context
 - A combination of risk factors stemming from multiple stressful life events and protective factors that decrease the negative influence of risk.
 - A balance between stress and the ability to cope
 - Developmental and being successful strengthens a person's competence
 - Most important in times of life transitions

Biopsychosocial/Spiritual Characteristics



Biological – innate behavioral characteristics of resilience

- *Motivation*
- *Positive temperament*
- *Problem Solving Skills*
- *Autonomy*
- *Social Competence*

*Biological factors can be influenced by the environment.

Psychological – personal traits

- *Self-esteem*
- *Self-efficacy*
- *Hope*
- *Personal control*
- *Self-understanding*
- *Learned optimism*
- *Positive attachments*

*These characteristics promote successful coping.

Biopsychosocial/Spiritual Characteristics



Social – positive socialization is key to developing resilience.

- Older adults can benefit from their social ties.
- Social resilience is associated with:
 - *Flexibility*
 - *Empathy*
 - *Effective communication*
 - *Problem solving*
 - *Planning and seeking help*

Spiritual – “how a person seeks to transcend the self in order to discover meaning, belonging, and relatedness to the infinite”

(Conrad, 1999, p. 63)

- Faith communities and traditions can promote resilience.

A Discussion About Resilience Among Holocaust Survivors



Dr. Roberta Greene

- This podcast features Dr. Roberta Greene, Professor Emeritus in the School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin.
- Dr. Greene will define resilience and its importance in later life.
- She will also share her experience exploring resilience among Holocaust survivors and the themes that were discovered.
- Click on or copy and paste the weblink below to listen to the podcast:
 - <https://gsu.sharestream.net/ssdems/i.do?u=3d0baeab0060411>

Resilience in Later Adulthood



High resilience is associated with:

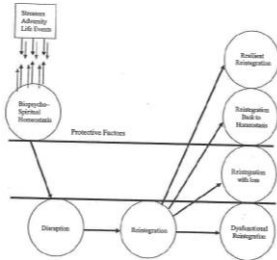
- Better mental and physical health (Wells, 2010).
- Lower perceived stress and higher life satisfaction and optimism (Wagnild & Collins, 2009).
- Higher fruit/vegetable consumption and more physical activity (Perna et al., 2012).

Diversity Aspects



- Power and privilege are protective factors that support resilience.
- Groups to consider when fostering resiliency in older adults include:
 - Lower economic status or social class
 - Female gender
 - Minority race/ethnicity
 - Homosexual orientation
 - Poor physical or mental health

The Resiliency Model



Richardson, G. E. (2002) The Metaphory of resilience and resiliency. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 58*, 307-321

Resilience-Enhancing Interventions



- Listen to the stories
- Identify the source of stress
- Acknowledge the loss, vulnerability, and future
- Stabilize/normalize the situation with empathy and affirmation
- Help find the benefits of the adverse event
- Help identify his/her strengths

(Greene & Cohen, 2005)

Resilience-Enhancing Interventions Cont.



- Talk about resilience
- Promote self-efficacy
- Strengthen his/her problem solving abilities
- Acknowledge spirituality in transcending the immediate situation
- Provide resources for change
- Help him/her take control
- Help build social networks (i.e. senior centers, churches)

(Greene & Cohen, 2005)

Resilience Scale



- Healthcare providers can use the resilience scale to screen older adults for resilience, help them recognize their resilience, and identify ways to strengthen it.
- Wagnild, G. M., & Young, H. M. (1993). Development and psychometric evaluation of the resilience scale. *Journal of Nursing Measurement, 1*, 165-178.
- Click on or copy and paste the weblink below to access the resilience scale:
 - http://www.resiliencescale.com/en/rstest/rstest_14_en.html

Case Study 1



- Living Alone In Community and Over 85 Years Old: A Case Study (Pierini & Volker, 2009)
 - http://www.resourcenter.net/images/SNRS/Files/SOJNR_articles2/Vol109Num01Art11.pdf

Case Study 1 Discussion Questions

- What biopsychosocial and spiritual characteristics did Mary display that are associated with resilience?
- What interventions could be utilized to further increase Mary's resilience?
- Why is it important to identify Mary's resilience?
- What life transitions might Mary be experiencing that could affect her resilience?
- What areas of Mary's life were not discussed by the interviewer that may also contribute to her resilience?

Case Study 2

Reflections on Hurricane Katrina by Older Adults: Three Case Studies in Resiliency and Survivorship


(Greene, 2012)

<http://www.utexas.edu/research/cswr/katrina/Documents/071018%20Greene.pdf>

Case Study 2 Discussion Questions

- What was the impetus in the cases of Katherine, Jerry, and Sally that forced them to display resilient behaviors?
- What type of resilience do Katherine, Jerry and Sally demonstrate ? (ie. dynamic and static)
- What responses of Katherine, Jerry, and Sally demonstrate that type of resilience ?
- Compare and contrast the protective factors of resilience for Katherine, Jerry, and Sally.

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