

UCSF Weill Institute for
Neurosciences

Department of
Psychiatry and
Behavioral Sciences

Resilience in Uncertain Times

Andreea Seritan, MD

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- No conflicts of interest
- Current support: Mount Zion Health Fund
- My patients
- Here to learn from you

Objectives

- Define resilience and identify your resilience-enhancing strategies
- Discuss social isolation vs. social distancing
- Identify value-based strategies to stay centered during COVID-19 pandemic and shelter in place

Self-reflection: Values exercise

- Write down your 3 most important values
- Write down 3 of your strengths
- Write down 3 behaviors which show that you “walk the walk”
(practice your values)

Ikigai (life's worth) = one's reason for being

Resilience

- The ability to recover from illness or adversity
- The ability to respond to stress in a healthy, **adaptive way** such that personal goals are achieved at minimal psychological and physical cost

Epstein & Krasner, 2013

Is resilience innate or learned?

- Optimism
- Cognitive flexibility
- Internal locus of control
- Sense of self
- Viewing obstacles as challenges (growth mindset)

Jackson et al., 2007

Environmental stressors and genetic predisposition

Depression
risk factors

Therapeutic
intervention

Resilience
protective factors

Cognitive/behavioral	Weak executive function: weak coping self-efficiency; negative attention bias; cognitive inflexibility	Cognitive behavioral therapy with cognitive reappraisal; positive emotion exercises, coping skill development, and training; well-being therapy	Strong executive function; high coping self-efficacy; positive emotions; realistic optimism; cognitive flexibility
Emotion regulation	Weak regulation (e.g., anhedonia; slow stress recovery)	Mindfulness; training; antidepressant medications	Strong regulation (e.g., delay gratification; rapid stress recovery)
Social	Weak social skills; minimal social network; no resilient role models	Social emotional training; network support treatment	Strong social skills; diverse social network; resilient role models
Physical health	Sleep deprivation; poor cardiovascular fitness; poor nutrition; obesity	Teach sleep hygiene; exercise regimen; improve diet	Strong sleep habits; physically fit; good nutrition
Neurobiology	Dysregulated HPA axis and SNS in response to stress; attenuated prefrontal cortical executive function and stress-induced limbic system hyperactivity	Neural circuit training; novel medications (corticotropin-releasing factor, NPY, GABA, glutamate)	Effective regulation of HPA axis and SNS in response to stress; robust prefrontal cortical executive function and capacity to regulate limbic reactivity to stress

Building resilience

- Positive emotion, optimism
- Loving family members, sturdy role models growing up
- History of mastering challenges
- Cognitive flexibility
- Ability to regulate emotions
- High coping self-efficacy
- Strong social support
- Disciplined focus on skill development
- Altruism
- Commitment to a valued cause or purpose
- Attention to health, cardiovascular fitness

Southwick & Charney, 2012

Building resilience – older adults

- Positive emotion, optimism
- Loving family members, sturdy role models growing up
- History of mastering challenges
- Cognitive flexibility
- Ability to regulate emotions
- High coping self-efficacy
- Strong social support
- Disciplined focus on skill development
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- Commitment to a valued cause or purpose
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Southwick & Charney, 2012

Resilience in older adults

- Older adults revisit previous life crises & apply similar coping skills to new challenges OR use creative problem-solving strategies
- Older adults more resilient than younger ones (emotional regulation, problem solving)
- 716 functionally intact older adults (mean age, 67.9 years) followed longitudinally (2.5 years): ↓ depression with age (plateau at 71 y.o.)

Perry, 2015; Gooding et al., 2012; Cotter et al., 2020

Self-care

Put on your
oxygen mask first!

Resilience-enhancing strategies

- Individual
- Institutional
- Community

Epstein & Krasner, 2013; Seritan, 2013

Individual strategies

1. Self-awareness & self-monitoring

- Meditation, mindfulness practices
- Spiritual practice
- Training in attention control (to selectively attend to positive as well as relevant negative information)

2. Cognitive-behavioral therapy with cognitive reappraisal (ability to reframe adverse events in a more positive light)

3. Enhancing self-efficacy

Epstein & Krasner, 2013; Southwick & Charney, 2012

Put \$ in the resilience bank when you can (not just in crisis)

Mindfulness

“...awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally”

Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD

Resilience during shelter in place

1. Maintain a daily routine
2. Start your day with a few stretches, yoga, or meditation
3. Eat breakfast, take stock
4. Exercise 15-20 minutes/day (walk pets, “virtual buddy”)
5. Use technology to stay connected to family & friends
6. Stay cognitively active (puzzles, Words with Friends, Sudoku, learn a new language, new recipes, play an instrument, Fromm Institute)
7. Creativity (gardening, art)
8. Maintain good sleep hygiene

<https://psychiatry.ucsf.edu/copingresources/olderadults>

For those with history of anxiety and/or depression

Do one (or both) of the following activities daily:

- **A pleasurable activity** (call a friend or family member, go out into the backyard, listen to the birds, take photos of a wonderful sunset)
- An activity that involves **mastery** (learn a new skill) and take a moment to celebrate the accomplishment

Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2013

Social isolation

- Social isolation = objective state of having few social relationships or infrequent social contact with others
- Loneliness = subjective feeling of being isolated
- 1/4 of community-dwelling Americans > 65 y.o. are socially isolated
- Social isolation: ↑ risk of heart disease, stroke, cognitive decline, anxiety, depression, mortality

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/the-health-and-medical-dimensions-of-social-isolation-and-loneliness-in-older-adults>; Steptoe et al. 2013; Read et al., 2020

Social connection

The extent to which an individual is socially connected depends on multiple factors, including:

1. Connections to others via the existence of relationships and their roles
2. A sense of connection that results from actual or perceived support or inclusion
3. The sense of connection to others that is based on positive and negative qualities

Structural

The existence of and interconnections among different social relationships and roles

- Marital status
- Social networks
- Social integration
- Living alone
- Social isolation

Functional

Functions provided by or perceived to be available because of social relationships

- Received support
- Perceptions of social support
- Perceived loneliness

Quality

The positive and negative aspects of social relationships

- Marital quality
- Relationship strain
- Social inclusion or exclusion

Holt-Lunstadt, 2018

Social isolation & loneliness

- English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) 2004-2005
- 6,500 men and women > 52 y.o.
- All-cause mortality up to March 2012
- Social isolation index: measure of relationships
- Loneliness: self-report measure

Step toe et al., 2013

Social isolation index

- 1 point: unmarried/living alone
 - 1 point: less than monthly contact (face-to-face, phone, written/email) with children, other family members, friends
 - 1 point: not participating in organizations
 - Scores: 1-5, higher = greater isolation
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- Social isolation associated with ↑ mortality, remained significant after adjusting for baseline health and demographic factors
 - Loneliness associated with ↑ mortality

Steptoe et al., 2013

Shelter in place: additional challenge

- Routine disruption in long-term care facilities
- Interruption of social/community activities
- Further decline in those with pre-existing major cognitive impairments
- Confusion, sundowning, psychotic symptoms

SOCIAL DISTANCING IS NOT SOCIAL ISOLATION!

Family/support networks

- Strong relationships between grandparents and their adult grandchildren reduce depression risk in both groups
- Grandparents who help care for their grandchildren or support others in their social network: better health, longevity vs. those who do not
- Neighbors helping older adults during COVID-19 pandemic

Moorman & Stokes, 2016; Hilbrand et al., 2017

SOCIAL DISTANCING IS NOT SOCIAL ISOLATION!

- Use technology (it's good for your brain)
- Focus on grandchildren's drawings/stories to stay engaged during video calls
- Birthday parties/celebrations on Zoom (international😊)
- Small outdoor gatherings with social distancing & masks
- Outdoor exercise

Coping with multiple concurrent challenges

- Stay mindful, tackle the problem at hand
- Try to stay in the present
- Break problems into smaller chunks & “check the box”
- What am I learning from this & can I use it in the future?
- Talk to others!

The “new normal”

- Expect the unexpected
- Control what you can control
- Stay positive (glass half full)

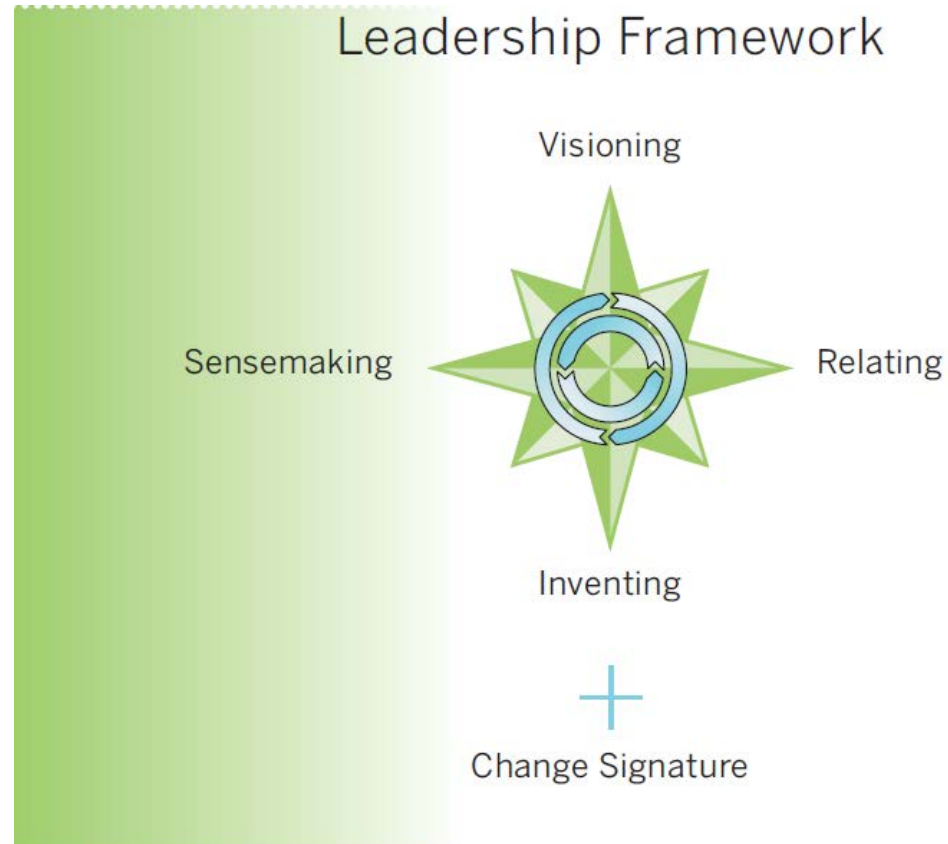
Epel, 2020

➤ <https://psych.ucsf.edu/copingresources/wildfires>

Leading under uncertainty

Under stress, we rely on the same coping skills that usually help

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP



Ancona, MIT Leadership Center 2005

Sensemaking = creating a map

- Seek many types and sources of data
- Involve others in your sensemaking
- Do not simply apply your existing frameworks
- Move beyond stereotypes
- Learn from small experiments
- Use images, metaphors, or stories to try to capture and communicate critical elements of your map

Ancona, 2005

Values = Compass

Summary

- Unprecedented times call for fast adaptation
- Relying on usual coping skills may not suffice
- Resilience-building strategies are important – refill when you can 😊

Questions?

THANK YOU!

andreea.seritan@ucsf.edu