



Finding Meaning and Well-Being with Late Life Adaption

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COVID-19 AND RISK FOR OLDER PERSONS

- Vulnerability to death:
 - Multi-morbidity
 - Decreased immunity
 - Residence in long-term care facilities
- Disparities
- Impact on health care utilization
- Disconnection and fear
- Consequences and prospects

Sands, Albert, and Sutor, 2020





Key Questions

- What are the possible consequences of social distancing on the lives of older persons?
- How do older persons adapt to change?
- How is well-being and meaning developed, maintained, and sustained?
- What are theoretical insights from adult development and aging concepts that can assist in understanding?
- What are clinical implications and interventions that may be responsive to lack of social engagement in late life?

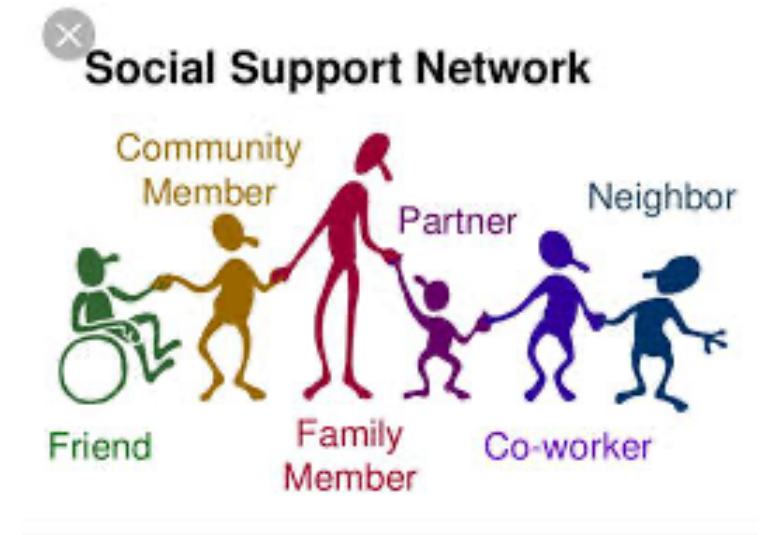




SOCIAL SUPPORTS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS



- Network size; decrease in support and diversity
- Types of support:
 - instrumental
 - informational
 - emotional
 - appraisal
- Benefits and Detriments
- Moderating role



Gleason and Iide (2015); Pietromonaco and Collins (2017); Umberson and Montez (2010)



SOCIAL ISOLATION

- Predictors
 - Developmental
 - Situational
 - Cataclysmic
- Depression and anxiety; memory
- Smaller social networks and life transition events
- Survival and Mortality
 - Network size, social disintegration
 - Resilience and self-esteem



Read, Comas-Herrera, and Grundy (2020); Domenech-Abella, Mundo, Haro, and Rubio-Valera (2019).



LONELINESS IN LATE LIFE: “The discrepancy between an individual’s desired and achieved levels of social relationships.”



- Loneliness has an impact on:
 - Co-morbidity, self-efficacy, social support
 - worsening mental health, cognition, quality of life, survival
- Risk factors
 - Demographics: Age, SES, Education, Gender, Marital Status
 - Chronic health, low function, depression, low social support, **psychological distress**
- Protective factors
 - Diversity
 - Relationship quality
 - Family
 - Friends

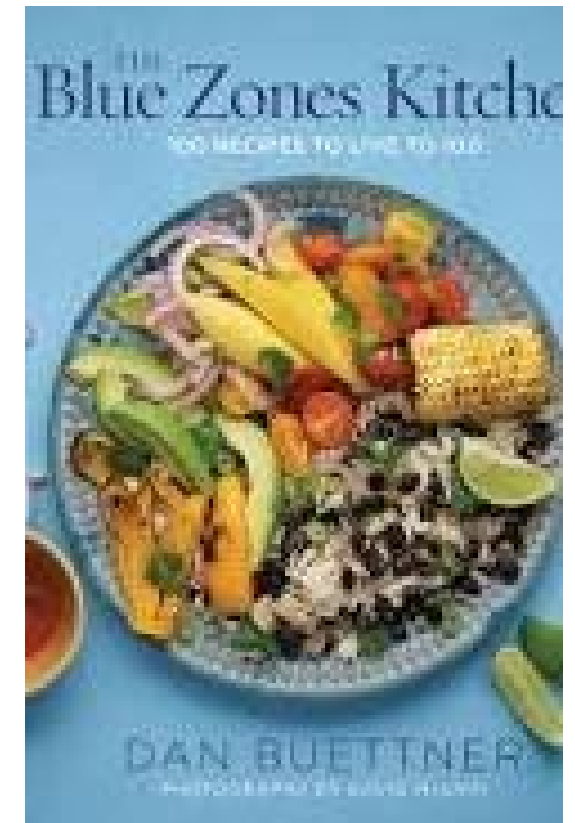
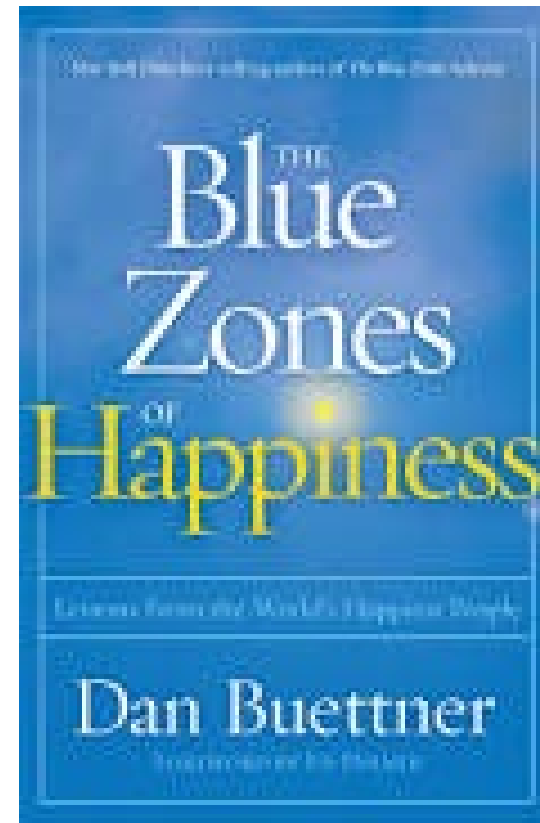
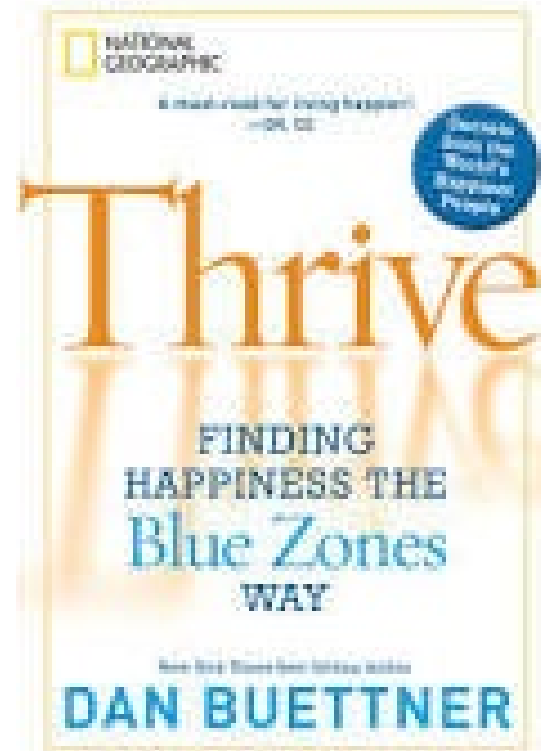
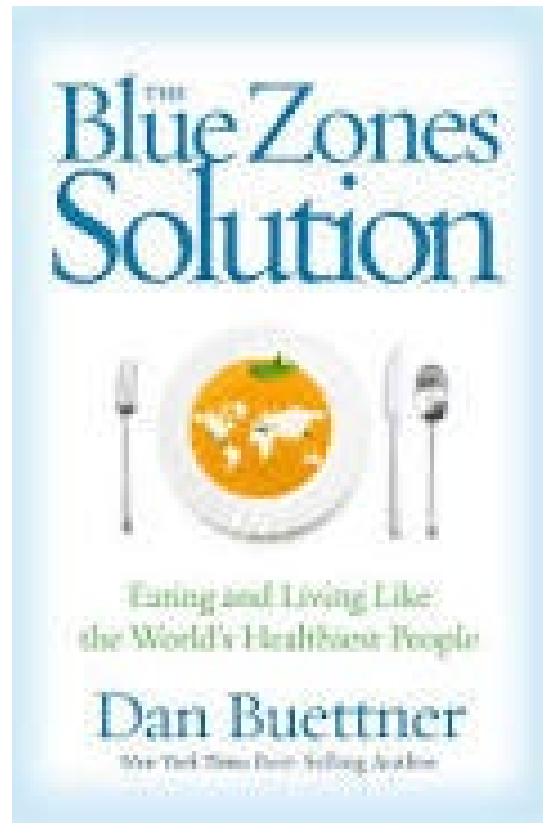


Perlman, Peplea (1981), Fingerman et al.(2020), Thomas (2012); Santini et al. (2016)



HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS.

If You're Not in The Obit
Eat Breakfast
OFFICIAL TRAILER





Blue-Zone Messages

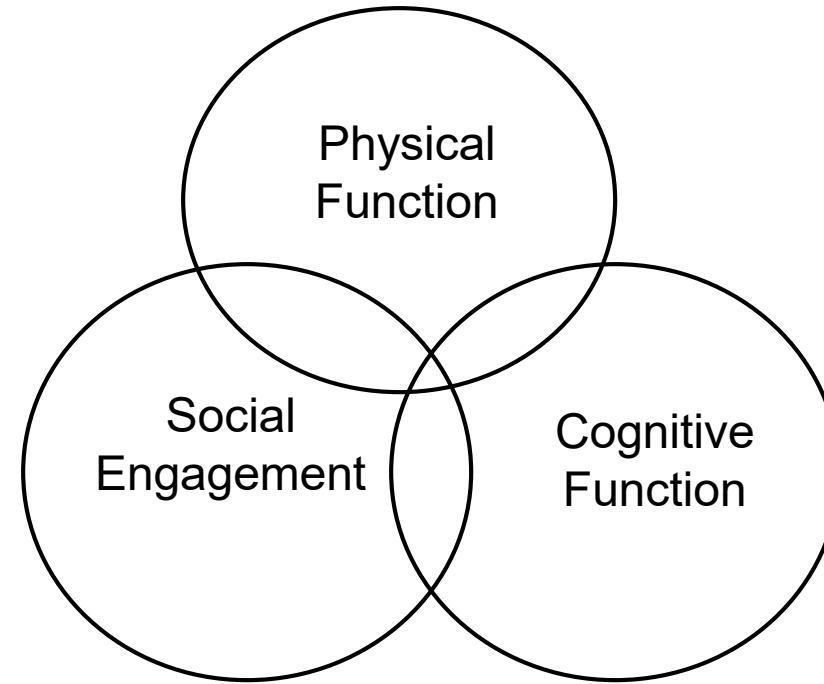
- The secret of longevity is staying vital. “Vitality” is the intersection of long *life and active life*. It is not just living a long time; you actively enjoy life and adjust to it. (*Adaptation*)
- The happiest people in the world have face-to-face interactions 6-7 hours per day (Teo article research and prevention of depression). There is joy in collaborating and interacting. (*Quality of Life*)
- In these cultures, the older one gets, the more celebrated one is. You are expected, even in very old age, to **enjoy life** AND contribute (*well-being*).
- If you feel like you are needed, you will rise to the occasion and feel engaged (*social engagement/meaning*).
- 40% of longevity is genes/heredity; 15% comes from life circumstances; Rest is up to you! (*self- efficacy; control*).
- The environment around you is important: you shape environment to stack the deck for a better life.



Successful Aging Definition

- “Successful aging is multidimensional, encompassing the avoidance of disease and disability, the maintenance of high physical and cognitive function, and sustained engagement in social and productive activities.”

- Rowe JW. Kahn RL. Successful aging *Gerontologist*. 37(4):433-40, 1997.





What is Healthy Aging?



- Optimal Health - “Be your Best”- “Add Life to Years”
 - Prevent illness
 - *Fundamentally important*
 - Achieve maximal function
 - *Physical*
 - *Mental*
 - *Social* (*Active Engagement In Life*)



Multi-Dimensional Definitions



- Reaching potential; arriving at physical, social, psychological *well-being* (Gibson, 1995).
- Longevity, lack of disability, *happiness* (Palmore, 1995)
- *Resilience, satisfaction, meaning* even with disability (see definitions by Jeste, Vaillant, Gwyther)
- Include *subjective appraisals* of older people (Pruchno et al., 2010)
- “The process of *adaptation* of an individual to the changes that are inherent in aging.” (Huijg et al., 2017; Moore et al., 2015)



Various criteria for successful aging

- Positive coping/adaptation, mastery of stress
- Life Satisfaction/Perceived quality of life
- Solid relationships (*confidant*)
- Absence of depressive symptoms
- Greater *quality and complexity* of one's social network with *diverse* social encounters
- Physical activity, creative activity, continued learning
- Ability to take life's ups and downs in stride
- Supportive environment (social, physical)

Feng et al., 2015; Strawbridge et al., 1996; Fingerman et al., 2020



Who Succeeded Over the Life Span? (Resilience)

- Those who not only survived, but thrived.
- Those who overcame excessive hardships
- Those who not only adapted but transcended (positive coping)
- Those who are able to finally achieve a sense of life satisfaction, morale, self-esteem (perceived quality of life)



KEY MESSAGE



We are, in large part, responsible for our own age. We can and should take some responsibility for the way in which we grow older (*control*).

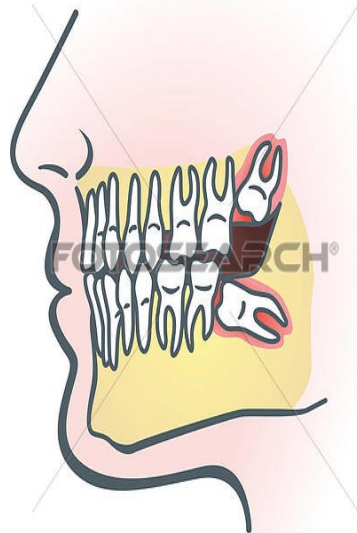


ADULT DEVELOPMENT AND AGING: CONCEPTS

- Well-Being
- Adaptation
- Wisdom



Five ways to
wellbeing



k8578406 www.fotosearch.com



Downloaded from
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+ Well-Being



- Well-Being = State of Being Happy
- Quality of Life = Degree of Well-Being
- Self-Efficacy = Belief in one's ability to manage daily affairs
- Well-being associated with longevity, life-satisfaction, morale, self-esteem, SA
- There can be well-being in the presence of pathology and psychopathology
- Meaningful, mutually-rewarding interpersonal relationships essential.

(Vaillant, 1978; Harding et al., 1987; Auslander and Jeste, 2004; Kivnik et al., 2020)



Subjective Well-Being



- A life is going well if the individual who lives this life evaluates it positively (*Douma et al., 2017*)
- Dependent upon:
 - autonomy
 - competence
 - relatedness
- There is a need to strive for control until the end of life (*Neubauer et al., 2017*)



Adaptation



- Adaptation to circumstances and having a positive attitude toward life is more important to older persons than the absence of disease and physical disability
- *Resilience means the personal and community qualities that enable us to rebound from adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or other stresses --- and to go on with life with a sense of mastery, competence, and hope.*
- Resilience/optimism essential to adaptation:
 - lower risk of mortality and less illness distress
 - Decreased pain, appreciate life, personal *strength*
 - Close relationships, re-engagement, coming to terms with present and future

(Jeste et al., 2015; Giltay et al., 2004; Stewart and Yuen, 2011)



Factors That Enhance Resilience



- *Resolution and fortitude*: the ability to take life's ups and downs in stride (looking for the silver lining, making lemonade out of lemons)
- *Gratitude, forgiveness, optimism*: need to see the glass as half full, not half empty
- *Altruism*: the ability to reach out (doing things with people, not to people); not taking oneself too seriously (humor)
- *Empathy*: the ability to imagine the world as it seems to other people
- *Orientation towards the future*: the ability to anticipate, plan, and hope
- *Perspective*: as one gets older, it is important to continue to develop, to know oneself better, to accept limitations, and to understand what matters in life

+ Adapt: Mastery, SOC, Goals

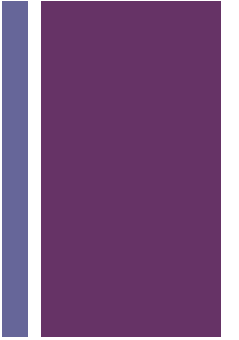
- Effectiveness despite on-going stress
- Coping with challenges
- Perception of health, well-being
- Selection, Optimization, Compensation: choosing goals and means
- Predictive of Quality of Life
- The more goals, more flexibility to adapt
- “Vitality” = reaching goals, life satisfaction
- Engagement with life

(Haijg et al., 2017; Westendorp and Schalkwijk, 2014; Carpentieri et al., 2017; Baltes and Baltes, 1990; Hammer, 2012; Mueller et al., 2007; Kahana et al., 2012; Wokowitz et al., 2011)





Wisdom and Meaning



- Aging as development, not decline; integrity vs. despair; realization of one's mortality; care for next generation
- Informed and detached concern with life itself in the face of death itself
- Being involved with life, not clinging to it
- Accepting death and nearness of death with equanimity and without despair over losses

(Erikson, 1950; Forrest and Cote, 2002; Vaillant, 2002; Ardel and Edwards, 2016)




Wisdom and Meaning (*cont'd*)

- Older adults who learned earlier in life how to deal with crises and hardships have wisdom to cope with adverse life condition
- Cognitive, Reflective, Compassionate Dimensions
- Integration of Self; *Who Am I? (life values, meaningful story, making sense of life and death, finding self; satisfaction)*
- Gero-Transcendence (connect to universe & future generations, decreasing concern about self)

(Tornstam, 1989, 1996, 1999; Jeste and Oswald, 2014; Neubauer et al., 2017; Ardel and Edwards, 2016; Ardel & Jeste, 2016; Koffer et al., 2019; Kivnik et al., 2020)





“A human being would certainly not grow to be seventy or eighty years old if this longevity had no meaning for the species. The afternoon of a human life must also have a significance of its own and cannot be merely a pitiful appendage to life’s morning.”

- Carl Jung, Structure of the Dynamics of the Psyche



Clinical Implications

- Discover past coping skills, assist in learn new coping skills (mastery, control)
- Discover what is important in patients' lives; encourage reflection
- Discover, encourage, and develop patients' goals, plans, wishes
- Focus on what can make people happy (well-being, quality of life), what makes patients satisfied with life and with themselves
- Tailor interventions, individualize care; follow priorities of individuals





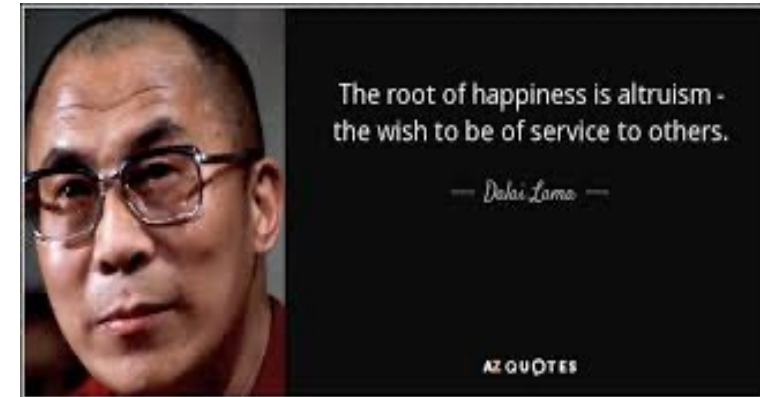
Clinical Implications (cont'd)

- Enhance social support; build, develop, expand social support resources, including confidant; encourage face-to-face contact and fidelity to a variety of routine and meaningful activities. *Social interactions matter. Provide sense of belonging. Diversify social ties.*
- *Use technology and on-line resources*
- Explore and develop strengths. Promote mastery & coping, compassion, resilience, optimism, social engagement. Focus on improving well-being, life satisfaction, happiness, purpose, meaning, and self-acceptance. Emphasize the positive and not the stigma
- Help patients develop skills to manage day-to-day life (self-efficacy and control)



+ Clinical Implications (cont'd)

- Emphasize factors that enhance resiliency skills (nurture meaning, problem-solving, forgiveness, resolution, mindfulness, meditation, reflection, regulation of emotion)
- Give messages of not giving up, of hope, of ability to positively cope. (Outdoors, news sabbath, watch-read-discuss, learn new things, imagination, move)
- Promote altruism, engagement in compassion, and personal dignity
- Existential issues: allow conversations of meaning, acceptance, integrity; dying, death. Allow conversations about death, future generations, legacy, engagement with life.
- Social distancing as opportunity for reflection, life review, what really matters





Summary

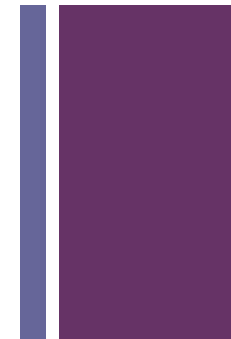
*“The most important task is to help older adults find a way to **sustain active aging in the face of physical disabilities and other barriers...** We must not assume all elders are embedded in social networks that permit optimal optimization. **Life with people, all the people, all the time.**”* - Dan Blazer, 2001

“We do what we can to stay united apart, alone together.” - Susan Gubar, 2020





Conclusion



For older persons who are suffering, we can help them successfully age if we focus upon their strengths and if we are able to deliver care that effectively promotes wellness, well-being and wisdom. We need to develop approaches that resonate with the realities of existence!



Resources



- **engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults**, is a national effort to increase social engagement among older adults through a variety of activities. Administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) and funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging, which is part of the Administration for Community Living, engAGED identifies and disseminates information about emerging trends, resources and replication strategies that the Aging Network can customize for use in their communities.

<https://www.engagingolderadults.org>

- New York Times article (April 20, 2020, updated April 24, 2020)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/smarter-living/how-to-manage-your-loneliness.html?referringSource=articleShare>



Selected Podcasts

(Courtesy of Dr. Elizabeth Hale)



- <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/594719471> (loneliness)
- <https://www.npr.org/2020/04/20/838757183/a-social-prescription-why-human-connection-is-crucial-to-our-health> (loneliness)
- <https://www.happinesslab.fm/season-1-episodes/mistakenly-seeking-solitude>
(peripheral contacts count – talking to total strangers can bring joy)
- <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/dr-vivek-murthy-and-bren%C3%A9-on-loneliness-and-connection/id1494350511?i=1000472142134> (loneliness and connection)



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