COVID-19 Pandemic and Climate Crisis: Using Gerotranscendence as a tool to foster Post-Crisis Resilience and Meaning in Older Adults

Nathalie Robinson, MA, Ph.D (Cand.), RP (Qualifying) Contact: nrob049@uottawa.ca
School of Counselling, Psychotherapy and Spirituality

Introduction

- One in four Canadians will be over the age of 65, by 203111;
- Older adults have shown vulnerability to both climate change and COVID-198,13;
- In infectious diseases as a result of climate change in the last 50 years4;
- For older adults, the last stage of life consists of going inward and reflecting on their life6.

Gerotranscendence

- This theory allows for a new understanding of aging15;
- As well as prevent feelings of guilt or bitterness6;
- Older adults undergo gerotranscendence to stress levels and life satisfaction6.

Table 1. Impacts of COVID-19 and Climate Change on Older Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Isolation13</td>
<td>In Depression and Anxiety13</td>
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Resilience

“the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, threats or significant sources of stress, and bouncing back from difficult experiences”7.

- Important to promote resilience among older adults to cope with stresses2;
- COVID-19 and previous experience to disasters can be ways to foster resilience1;
- Later life resilience fosters successful aging and improved quality of life7.

Research Objectives

1. Determine the level of resilience, social support and life satisfaction for older adults prior to the intervention

Analysis:

- Quantitative (Regression)
- Phenomenological (IPA) Analysis

Methodology

Research Design:
- Older Adults (+65)
- Mixed Methods Design

Data Collection:
- Phase I: Questionnaires
  1. Resilience in Older Adults Survey (ROAS)11
  2. Geriatric Anxiety Scale5
  3. Geriatric Depression Scale2
  4. “Social Support” adopted 10 items from Yoon’s study (2010)6
  5. “Satisfaction with life” 20-item scale developed by Yoon (2010)6
- Phase II: Structured Interviews
  1. Thornstam’s short-form Gerotranscendence scale6
  2. Using open-ended questions
- Phase III: Questionnaires
  1. Participants will be asked to fill out questionnaires from Phase I

Impacts and Implications

- Fill in the gaps in the literature regarding older adults lived experience during COVID-19 and climate change
- Importance of reviewing life experiences in later life to promote aging successfully
- Demonstrate older adults’ capabilities for post-crisis resilience and meaning
- Add to the literature regarding the use of gerotranscendence as an intervention

Knowledge Translation

- Publish academic articles, attend conferences
- Data will be publicly available through social media platforms and through podcast episodes
- Create workshops at community centers

References


Figure 1. Three levels of Gerotranscendence

- Older adults review their life experiences and can find meaning6;
- Discussing the process of growing old allows for a new construction of reality15;
- Rewriting their experiences will allow acceptance of past mistakes6;