

Emotional Resilience and Early Memory Loss

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Awareness of changes and choice are emotionally stabilizing

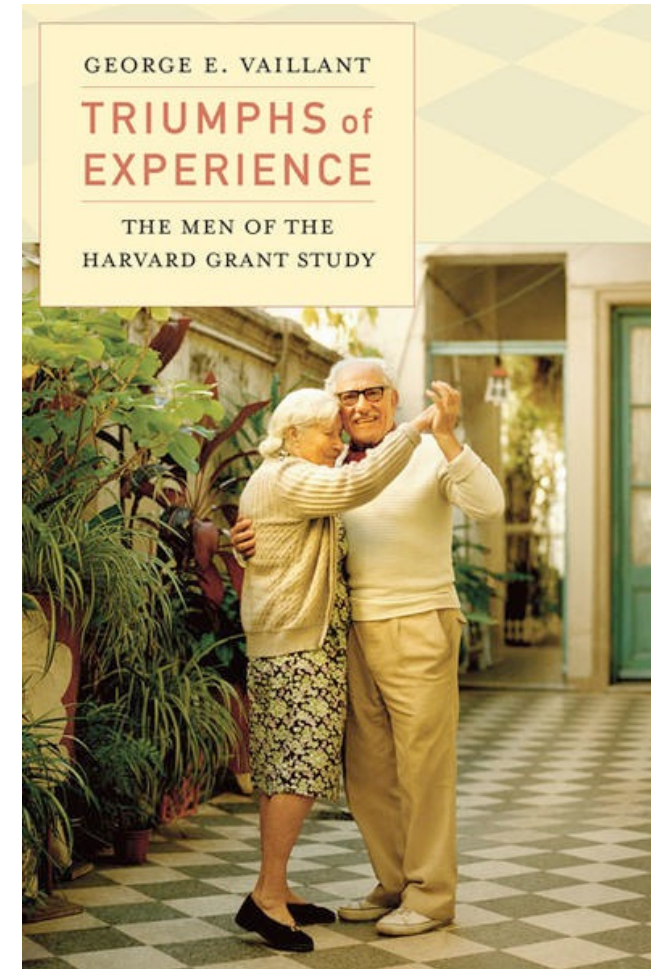
Feeling in
control
enhances
health

Langer & Rodin, 1976; Rodin &
Langer, 1977



Feeling connected to one another promotes resilience

- Having *healthy relationships* and a *positive outlook* predict
 - Better cognitive function
 - Longer lives



HARVARDgazette

Good genes are nice, but joy is better

Harvard study, almost 80 years old, has proved that embracing community helps us live longer, and be happier

What happens when we are forced to adapt to uncertain cognitive changes?

When we cannot control what is happening to ourselves and our loved ones?

When we feel disconnected from the world at large?

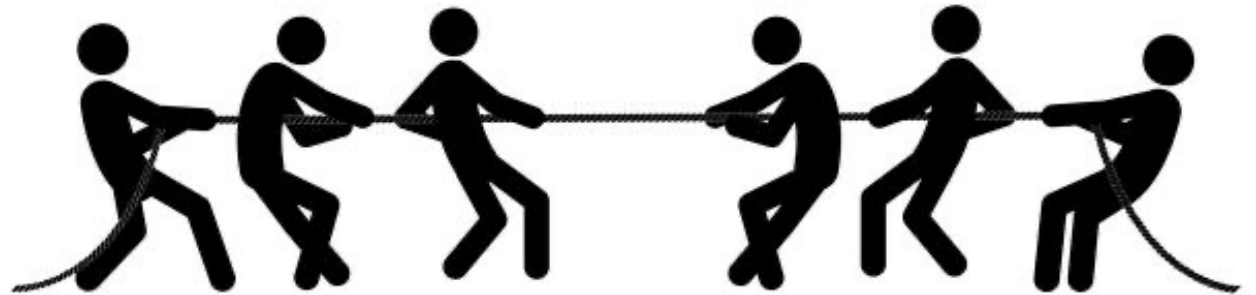


Presentation Overview:

- Cost of avoiding emotions
- Common challenges during early memory loss
- Tools for managing tough emotions
- Resources to promote resilience in your daily life
- How to get additional support/contribute to resilience science



Avoiding or fighting discomfort...



Avoiding emotions- Poll

- **In the past two weeks, have you tried to avoid hard emotions related to your diagnosis, or the diagnosis of a loved one?**
 - Snacking
 - Changing the topic in conversations
 - distracting to a TV show or movie, and more?

Emotions and early memory changes

- Neglecting your feelings can contribute to
 - poor sleep
 - illness
 - depression
 - stress eating
 - substance abuse, etc.
- Being aware of your feelings can help you best express them, and manage them



Notice the emotion, even when we don't have the antidote

“When will things go back to normal, like before the diagnosis?”

“I'm staying up worrying about why this is happening to me”

“I hate never having time to myself anymore!”

Guilt

Identifying Guilt

- Guilt is blaming yourself or taking fault for that something undesirable is happening
- Memory changes can lead families to experience many forms of guilt
 - “I brought this on myself”
 - “I’m not doing enough”
 - “I should know more”



Identifying Guilt- Poll

A man in a white shirt and tie is covering his face with his hands, appearing distressed or ashamed. Several hands from different people are pointing towards him, suggesting a public or group setting where he is being criticized or blamed.

- Who on the webinar has been having thoughts related to their diagnosis, or the diagnosis of a loved one, in the past two weeks, such as:
 - *“I should have done more”*
 - *“this is my fault”?*

Managing Guilt

- **Coping Tip: Engage in self-compassion**
 - “I am doing the best I can”
 - “I’m in a difficult situation and doing my best”
 - There is no such thing as perfect





Exercise:
Self-compassion break

Resentment



Identifying Resentment

- Feeling like you have to do it all, and all by yourself
- When put in a situation not of our choosing, it's common to feel upset and resentful
- Little things easily bother us when we feel unappreciated and unacknowledged

Identifying Resentment- Poll

- Who has struggled with thoughts like these in the past two weeks?
 - “it’s not fair that I have to deal with this”
 - “why is this happening to me?!”

Managing Resentment

- **Coping Tip: Join a support group**
 - Discuss common feelings with others in similar situation
 - Reminder that you are not frustrated alone- you are **having a human response** to change/shock



Exercise:
Lovingkindness meditation



Anxiety

Identifying Anxiety/Worry

- Feeling that things are not under control, and an overwhelming urge to get organized
- Anxiety can feel like
 - an impulse to run away
 - spirals of worry thoughts
 - racing heart
 - shortness of breath



Identifying Anxiety/Worry Poll

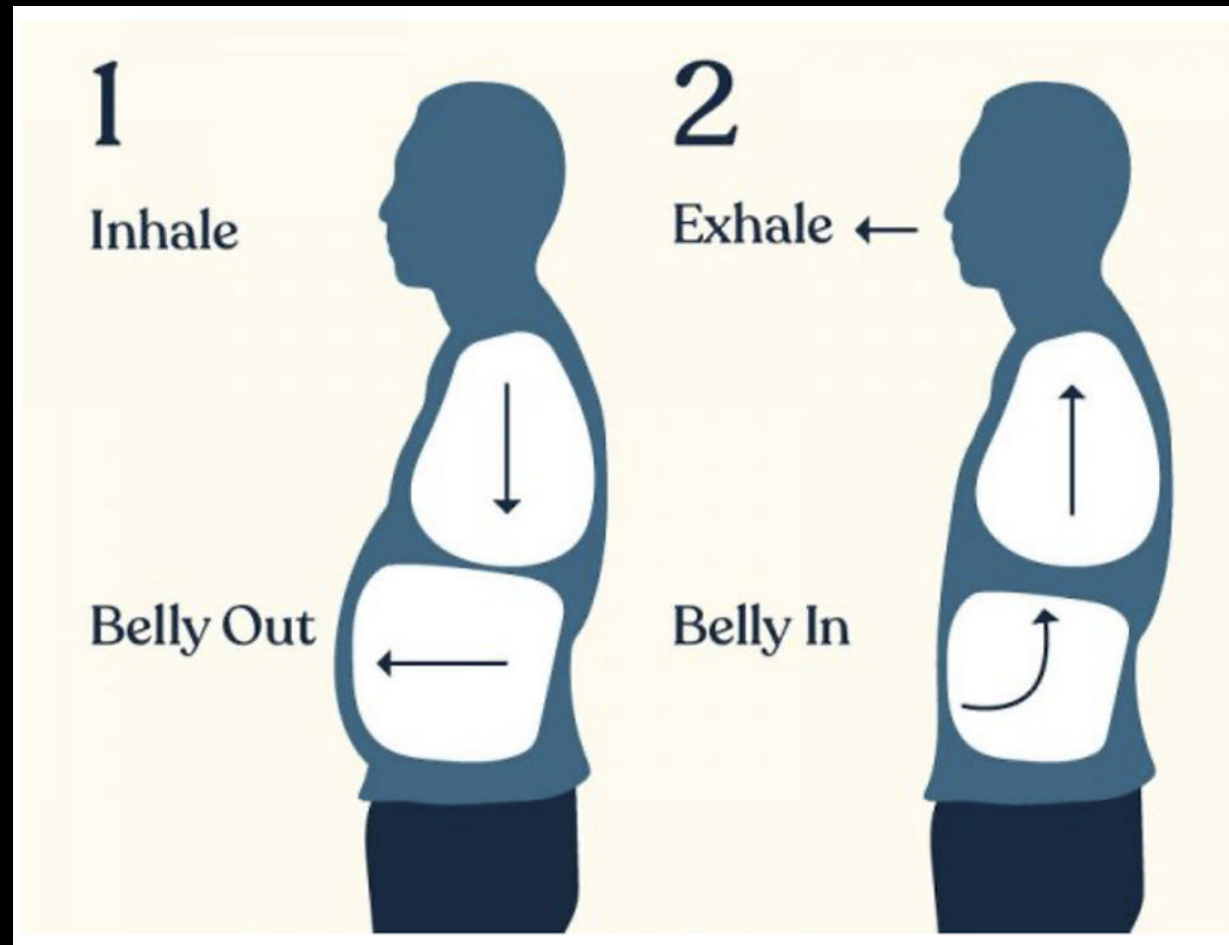
A close-up photograph of a woman with long brown hair, looking down with a distressed expression. Her hands are pressed against her forehead, and her eyes are closed or looking away. The image is dimly lit, emphasizing her emotional state.

- Who among us is currently experiencing the following feelings related to one's diagnosis, or the diagnosis of a loved one?
 - Overwhelm planning care tasks
 - Worry about future symptoms
 - Difficulty sleeping due to racing thoughts



Managing Anxiety

- Anxiety is an important sign from the body that helps us leave dangerous situations quickly
- **Shallow, upper chest breathing** is part of the typical stress response
- Chronic anxiety is damaging to the body
- The stress response can be reduced by consciously engaging in **deep breathing using the diaphragm.**



Exercise: Deep Breathing



Irritation



Poll- Irritation



- Who among us has felt short-tempered or frustrated over the past few weeks? With..
 - loved ones?
 - yourself?
 - the world?



Identifying & Managing Irritation

- When we are stressed, little things can upset us, and we can sometimes lash out at loved ones
- It is often harder to control what we say when we are exhausted
- **Coping Strategy: Take a self-care break**
 - Walk around the block
 - Take a nap
 - Drink a cup of tea
 - Take a moment to breathe

Cognitive changes are emotionally challenging



- Remember the tips we learned today for managing some difficult emotions involved
 - **Identify what you are feeling**
 - **Self-compassion break**
 - **Lovingkindness meditation**
 - **Deep breathing**
 - **Attend a support group**
- If you try these strategies and feel you still need additional support...
 - **Seek additional support from an individual therapist or counselor**



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What if I need
more
support/cannot
manage alone?

USC Older Adult Counseling Center (OACC)

- Since 1977, the Older Adult Counseling Center has been providing expert quality services and programs to people 55 and over, and their families.
- Located within the Psychology Services Center at the University of Southern California OACC is a non-profit counseling center serving the community.



What services are available at USC?

Clinical psychology Ph.D trainees provide individual and group therapy, supervised by licensed clinical psychologists.

- **Free** therapy services available via Zoom and in-person at USC
- Presenting concerns include depression, anxiety, caregiving stress, insomnia, difficulty adjusting to cognitive and physical changes, grief, etc.
 - Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
 - Acceptance and Commitment therapy (ACT)
 - Behavioral activation, and more!



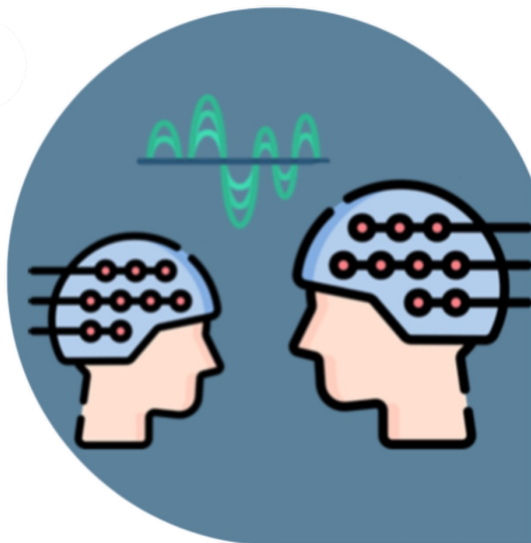
For caregiver support, consider joining...

Boosting Resilience Support Group

12 sessions group online with Alzheimer's LA

September – May 2024
every other **Monday 10-11:30am on Zoom**

Sign up today, call **213-740-1600** if interested in participating!



Contribute to resilience neuroscience: EEG Study

Help us understand how couples adjusting to dementia can remember supportive memories to feel better together!

Help clarify the neural patterns across partners that promote connection and well-being!

Sign up today, or call 424-260-3730 or email nrvlab@usc.edu if interested!

Thank you so much for participating and listening...

Happy to answer any questions!

