

glucose were associated with better episodic memory ( $r=.27$ ) and executive functioning ( $r=.32$ ). Results further revealed associations between immigration-related trauma and elevated posttraumatic stress symptomatology. Implications for mental health and early detection of modifiable risk factors to promote healthy aging in vulnerable Hispanic/Latino immigrant populations are discussed.

#### PSYCHOSOCIAL STRESS PROFILES AND COGNITIVE FUNCTION IN A RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE SAMPLE OF ADULTS

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We developed comprehensive multi-domain profiles of psychosocial stress in urban-dwelling, racially and ethnically diverse adults (age range: 25-65; N=256; 63% Non-Hispanic Black; 25% Hispanic; 9% Non-Hispanic White) and evaluated associations with cognitive function. Participants completed psychosocial stress measures tapping into ten domains and tasks of processing speed, working memory, and episodic memory. Latent profile analyses controlling for age yielded four-profiles: high neighborhood stress, moderate versus high work stress and daily discrimination, and high health and relationship stress. Profiles significantly differed in income, age, and employment status. The profile with moderate work stress and daily discrimination and the profile with high neighborhood stress each had significantly lower working memory than the other profiles. The finding of lower working memory among individuals in the moderate work stress and daily discrimination profile was not due to sociodemographic variables. Results highlight the potentially cumulative influence of different contextual stressors on cognition.

### Session 1300 (Paper)

#### Teaching and Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

##### GENERATING COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING IN GERONTOLOGY COURSES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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This presentation describes the core traits of a community-engaged learning (CEL course), how one gerontology program incorporated a theoretical framework to continue to provide students opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how generalizable this is across gerontology programs. Caregiving and Aging Families, a gerontology course enrolling both undergraduate and graduate students, champions community-engaged learning in two critical ways: students attend caregiver support groups in the community, and students form a partnership with a caregiver mentor in the community. This partnership allows students an intimate

look at the caregiver's role and burden while enlisting the student to prepare a service care plan and compendium of resources for the caregiver. Ensuring the safety of older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic placed restrictive parameters on these experiences. While students typically attend support groups and identify and partner with a caregiver mentor in person, this needed modification during the pandemic. This was created through the application of Baltes' Theory of Selection, Optimization, and Compensation (SOC model), aided by a CEL teaching assistant, funded through the campus Community Service Center. This allowed for identifying, coordinating, and communicating with community partners throughout the semester and provided ongoing communication, technical assistance, and problem-solving for both partners and students. Caregiver groups with a robust online, synchronous presence were identified and approached. The gerontology program communities of interest disseminated a call for community caregivers with basic technological familiarity. The caregiver mentor-student partnerships were founded and maintained, with additional benefits stemming from a shared pandemic experience.

##### GENERATION TO GENERATION PROJECT: PAIRING STUDENTS WITH OLDER ADULT MENTORS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Pamela Elfenbein, *University of North Georgia, Gainesville, Georgia, United States*

To meet the needs of older adults isolated in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we began pairing Human Services and Gerontology students with community dwelling adults 55 years of age and older, recruited through senior centers and other organizations serving older adults.

Students paired with isolated older adults were tasked with building supportive relationships, assuring that basic needs were being met and that all available community resources were in place, and then documenting their mentor's life stories with an emphasis on the resilience, strength and wisdom of their older adult mentors (to focus and build on their strengths, the older adults we engage with are referred to as our "mentors"). Oral histories and supporting artifacts are archived in the university's library permanent repository.

The oral histories portray unique perspectives into life, strength, and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine. The older adult mentors participating in the Generation to Generation project reported feeling strengthened and connected through their participation in the Generation to Generation project.

To determine if social Isolation and loneliness can be ameliorated through participation in the Generation to Generation oral history project, researchers utilized the UCLA Loneliness Scale in pre- and post- participation interviews; findings will be shared.

##### HIGH DEATH ANXIETY AND AMBIGUOUS LOSS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM TEACHING THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Raven Weaver,<sup>1</sup> Cory Bolkan,<sup>2</sup> and Autumn Decker,<sup>1</sup> 1. *Washington State University, Pullman, Washington, United States*, 2. *Washington State University, Vancouver, Washington, United States*

For gerontological educators, topics such as mortality, loss, and end-of-life issues often emerge or are central in their courses. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has raised our awareness of loss and death on a global scale and teaching during the pandemic has raised questions about how educators, communities, or systems of higher education can support students' learning while simultaneously experiencing losses during intense times of uncertainty. In this mixed-method study of 246 students enrolled in undergraduate thanatology courses, we explored their levels of death anxiety and their experiences with pandemic-related losses. We found that students' death anxiety increased significantly during the pandemic, in comparison to the years prior ( $p < .001$ ). We also conducted a content analysis in a subset of students' written narratives ( $n = 44$ ) regarding their pandemic experiences. We identified three themes. Participants desired: (a) more flexibility from instructors, no questions asked; (b) more compassion and understanding; and (c) specific, targeted support resources. The voices of students were filtered through the authors' interpretation as educators to provide several teaching recommendations that support student learning during challenging times. The recommendations align with a trauma-informed approach, given the high rates of death anxiety and ambiguous loss among students, and have immediate implications for educators teaching during the pandemic, and for years to come. Finally, we also advocate for more university and community-based thanatology, and gerontology education offerings in general, to help normalize conversations about death, loss, and bereavement.

#### INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION AS INTERVENTION: SOCIAL ISOLATION IN OLDER ADULTS DURING COVID-19

Laura Kirk,<sup>1</sup> Penny Kessler,<sup>2</sup> Stephanie Gingerich,<sup>3</sup> Sharon McGill,<sup>3</sup> and Hanna Pryor,<sup>4</sup> 1. *University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States*, 2. *University of Minnesota, University of Minnesota School of Nursing, Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States*, 3. *University of Minnesota School of Nursing, Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States*, 4. *Presbyterian Homes and Services, Roseville, Minnesota, United States*

Social isolation and loneliness are prevalent and impactful in the lives of older adult across care settings, and the emergence of a deadly global pandemic requiring social distancing and quarantining exacerbated these experiences significantly in 2020. A semester-long communication-focused clinical project was developed and piloted for sophomore bachelor of nursing science (BSN) students during fall 2020. Affording preclinical nursing students the opportunity to develop communication skills early in their program of study holds potential, and learning the story of older adults appears to be mutually beneficial; older adults serve as mentors and share their story, and preclinical nursing students have an opportunity to learn about their mentor's life, challenging some prevalent stereotypes about aging. A pre- post-clinical survey of student attitudes toward older adults suggests a dramatic positive shift in perspective, and unsolicited, anecdotal comments in student reflections support this finding: "...it helped me feel much more open to working with older adults in the future"; "This conversation taught me that my assumptions about the older generation are not always correct". Of older adult participants, 96% reported the experience enriched and enhanced their social connectedness, with

88% requesting to participate in the program again. Narrative comments from residents indicated that their involvement enabled them to feel engaged and purposeful: "I was a mentor"; "Conversations were so alive. Connections with curious young people fill my heart and soul." Intergenerational sharing of life stories has the potential for both healing and growth and may provide an antidote to ageism.

#### SOCIAL RETRIBUTION OF STUDENTS OF MASTER IN GERONTOLOGY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: ENHANCING COMPETENCIES

Elva Dolores Arias-Merino,<sup>1</sup> Ma. Guadalupe Díaz-González,<sup>2</sup> Neyda Ma. Mendoza-Ruvalcaba,<sup>3</sup> Martha Elena Vazquez-Arias,<sup>4</sup> and José Rosario Gonzalez-Ulloa,<sup>5</sup> 1. *Universidad de Guadalajara, Zapopan, Jalisco, Mexico*, 2. *Desarrollo Integral de la Familia, DIF Zapopan, Zapopan, Jalisco, Mexico*, 3. *Universidad de Guadalajara CUTONALA, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico*, 4. *Universidad de Guadalajara, El Palomar, Jalisco, Mexico*, 5. *Universidad de Guadalajara, Tlaquepaque, Jalisco, Mexico*

Introduction: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic older adults were called to lockdown and social isolation. Master in Gerontology (MAGE) in a social retribution action delivered a companion program called "I'm with you, You're with me". MAGE competencies encompass those proposed by AGHE. The aim is to analyze competencies acquired by students in gerontology in the companion program during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Method: Participated 16 students of MAGE and 16 older adults selected by their high vulnerability conditions reported by social workers from the Metropolitan Center of Older Adults from DIF-Zapopan city. The program was designed to provide emotional support, was delivered by telephone for 3 months (Ago-Nov 2020). Experiences were obtained through an online-questionnaire, data were analyzed qualitative and quantitatively. Results: Students reported higher development in the competencies: 1) Interactional, that capture the process of knowing and doing across the fields of gerontology, related to stereotypes and discrimination, autonomy and self-determination, and the use of the technology to enhance the communication; 2) Fundamental, that represent the essential orientation to the field of gerontology, related to identify the impact of public policy and the application of intervention strategies and the use of technologies with older adults, families and caregivers; 3) Contextual, related to promote solid social networks for the wellbeing. The meaning of participating in this program was mainly centered in a gratifying professional experience, "small actions that make big gestures". Conclusion: Gerontologist promote social solidarity through the transference and applying of the knowledge to enhance social development.

#### Session 1305 (Symposium)

##### THE WAKE FOREST IASDR: A RESOURCE FOR STUDYING THE EFFECTS OF CALORIC RESTRICTION ON HEALTH OUTCOMES IN OLDER ADULTS

Chair: Denise Houston

Co-Chair: Jamie Justice

Discussant: Anne Newman