

Social Connectedness & Community Engagement Among People Aging with HIV: A Cross National Review of Two Studies

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- ▶ Study 2: National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Aging

- ▶ **Research Teams**

- ▶ Canadian Study Colleagues: David Brennan, Charles Furlotte, Lesley Harris & Christina Pierpaoli.
- ▶ U. S. Study Colleagues: Karen Fredriksen-Goldsen, Hyun-Jun Kim

Background

- ▶ Aging with HIV is a complex process.
- ▶ Physical health, psychological well-being, social resources, spirituality and personal characteristics make up risk and protective factor associated with improved adaptation to aging.
- ▶ Social support has found to be protective in decreasing stigma among older adults (Emlet, et al, 2013) as well as increasing resilience and mastery (Emlet, Shiu, Kim & Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2017).
- ▶ Community engagement has also been found to be supportive of successful aging in this population (Emlet, Harris, Furlotte, Brennan & Pierpaoli, 2017).

Today's Focus

- ▶ What is the role of social connectedness in positive aging with HIV?
- ▶ How does community involvement foster positive aging and does it manifest differently across countries?
- ▶ Report on the findings of two studies:
 - ▶ Study 1: Qualitative results of older adults in Ontario Canada (N=30), 2013.
 - ▶ Study 2: Quantitative results from older gay and bisexual men from the National Health, Aging, Sexuality and Gender (NHAS) Study, (n=335), 2014 survey data.

Qualitative Findings

Study #1

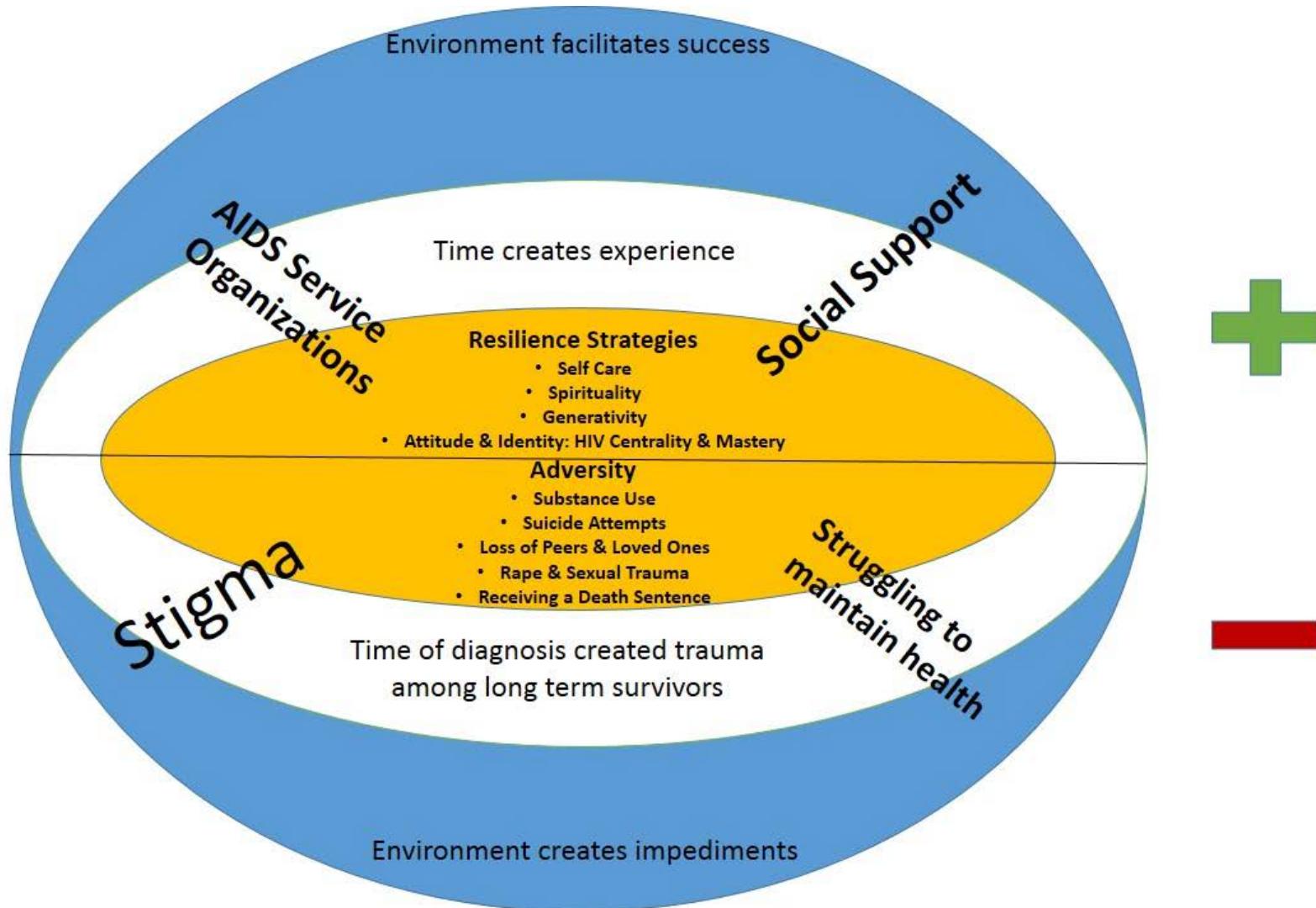
- ▶ Canadian based
- ▶ Adults 50 and over recruited from Hamilton and Toronto in 2013
- ▶ Social connectedness that contributes to successful aging?
- ▶ Semi-structured interviews completed with 30 individuals

Qualitative Findings

- ▶ Building and Maintaining Social Support
 - ▶ Friends
 - ▶ Family
 - ▶ Partners/Lovers
 - ▶ HIV Community
 - ▶ Providers
- ▶ Pruning Social Networks
 - ▶ Bigger is not always better
 - ▶ Appraisal of benefits
 - ▶ Letting Go!
- ▶ Now I'm very careful in selecting who is going to be my friend. It's very important to me to connect with people who are going to accept me.
- ▶ I expect a lot from myself, because you have to garner respect for yourself. And that means choosing the right people that you associate with.

Qualitative Findings

- ▶ Generativity – Giving Back
 - ▶ Dividuality – Placing something of the self with other
 - ▶ We are socially embedded, sociocentric
 - ▶ High level of volunteerism, often but not limited to ASOs
 - ▶ Acknowledgement these are “elders” in the HIV community
- ▶ I would say the positive aspects of living well with HIV is that I can take my experiences and volunteer in different organizations, and teach other PHAs [persons living with HIV/AIDS] about my successes in living with HIV.
- ▶ So, how do you give back, how do you say thank you, for the good healthcare? Well, you contribute as much as you can in the social structure.



Quantitative Findings

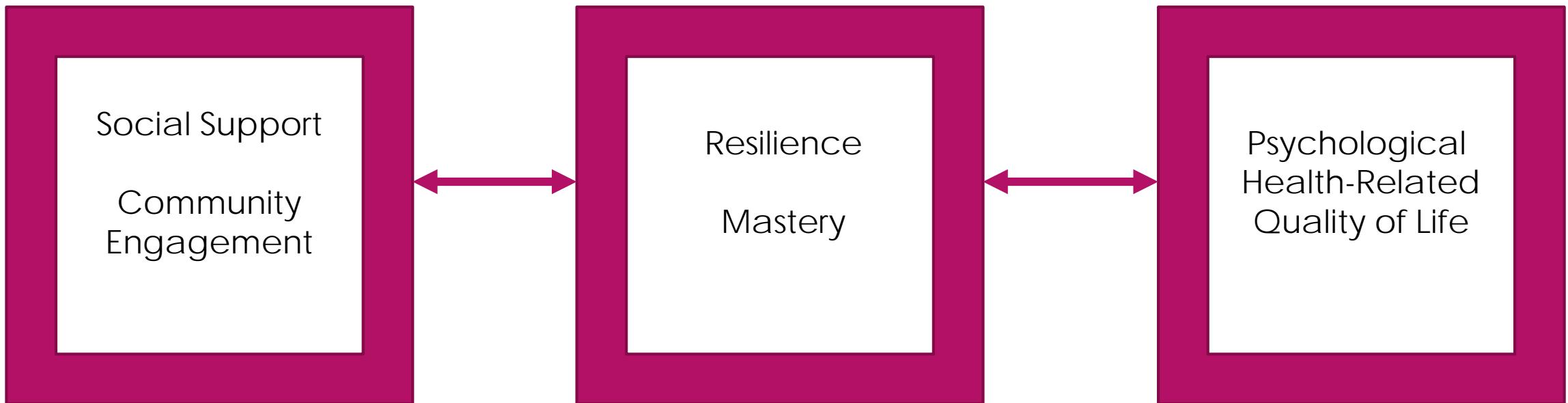
Study #2

- ▶ U.S. based
- ▶ MSM 50 and over part of the National Health, Aging, Sexuality/Gender Study – 2014
- ▶ Examined factors that contribute to resilience, mastery and psychological health related quality of life through multivariate analysis
- ▶ Survey data from 335 NHAS participants who live with HIV

Results of Multivariate Regression on Resilience and Mastery

	Resilience		Mastery	
	b (95% CI)	b (95% CI)	b (95% CI)	b (95% CI)
Demographic Characteristics				
Age	.00 (-.02, .02)	.01 (-.01, .03)	-.02 (-.04, .00)	-.01 (-.03, .01)
Bisexual (vs. Gay)	-.08 (-.48, .33)	-.26 (-.74, .22)	.26 (-.14, .66)	.14 (-.26, .55)
Racial/Ethnic Minority	-.23 (-.72, .13)	-.28 (-.70, .13)	-.03 (-.37, .31)	.03 (-.30, .35)
≤ High School (vs. > HS)	-.49* (-.90, -.08)	-.46* (-.85, -.06)	-.29† (-.61, .03)	-.24 (-.54, .06)
≤ 200 FPL (vs. > 200% FPL)	-.16 (-.23, .55)	.02 (-.35, .39)	.03 (-.35, .29)	-.18 (-.51, .15)
HIV Related Factors				
Years with HIV	.03* (.00, .05)	.01 (-.01, .03)	.04** (.02, .05)	.02** (.01, .04)
Progression to AIDS	-.24 (-.59, .11)	-.19 (-.53, .15)	-.20 (-.47, .07)	-.17 (-.41, .08)
Adverse Experiences				
Depression ever (vs. never)	-.72** (-1.07, -.38)	-.60** (-.94, -.26)	.04 (-.25, .32)	.14 (-.13, .41)
Lifetime discrimination	.00 (-.06, .07)	.01 (-.04, .07)	-.03 (-.11, .04)	-.03 (-.09, .03)
Lifetime victimization	-.01 (-.04, .02)	-.02 (-.04, .01)	-.02† (-.05, .00)	-.02* (-.05, -.00)
Psycho-Social Characteristics				
Internalized stigma		.01 (-.14, .17)		-.08 (-.22, .07)
Spirituality		.03 (-.07, .14)		.06 (-.02, .15)
Social support		.22** (.05, .38)		.18* (.03, .33)
Community engagement		.19** (.05, .34)		.17** (.04, .30)

Social Connectedness is Associated with Quality of Life



Conclusions

- ▶ Two studies in the U.S. and Canada examine the importance of social connectedness to positive adaptation to aging with HIV.
- ▶ Obtaining social support is associated with successful aging as well as resilience in this population.
- ▶ Sources and the positive nature of support networks emerge as critical
- ▶ Social connectedness moves beyond receiving support
- ▶ Reciprocity in both studies was found to be important
 - ▶ Generativity or giving back to others in a qualitative study in Ontario
 - ▶ Community engagement including helping others and active engagement was significantly associated with resilience and mastery.
- ▶ Cross national and cross paradigm evidence supports the importance of social connectedness – giving and receiving support in positive adaptation to aging with HIV

Additional Information/Resources

- ▶ Emlet, C. A., Shiu, C-S, Kim, H-J, & Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. I. (2017). *Bouncing back: Resilience and mastery among HIV-positive gay and bisexual older men.* *The Gerontologist*, 57(Supple 1). S-40-S49.
- ▶ Emlet, C. A., Harris, L., Furlotte, C., Brennan, D. J., & Pierpaoli, C. (2017). *Aging well with HIV: Insider strategies from long term survivors in Ontario Canada.* Paper presented at the 2017 International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics World Congress. San Francisco, CA (July 23-27, 2017).
- ▶ Emlet, C. A. Harris L., Furlotte, C., Brennan, D. J. & Pierpaoli, C. (2016) "I'm happy in my life now, I'm a positive person": Approaches to successful ageing in older adults living with HIV in Ontario, Canada. *Ageing and Society*, 37, 2128-2151.

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