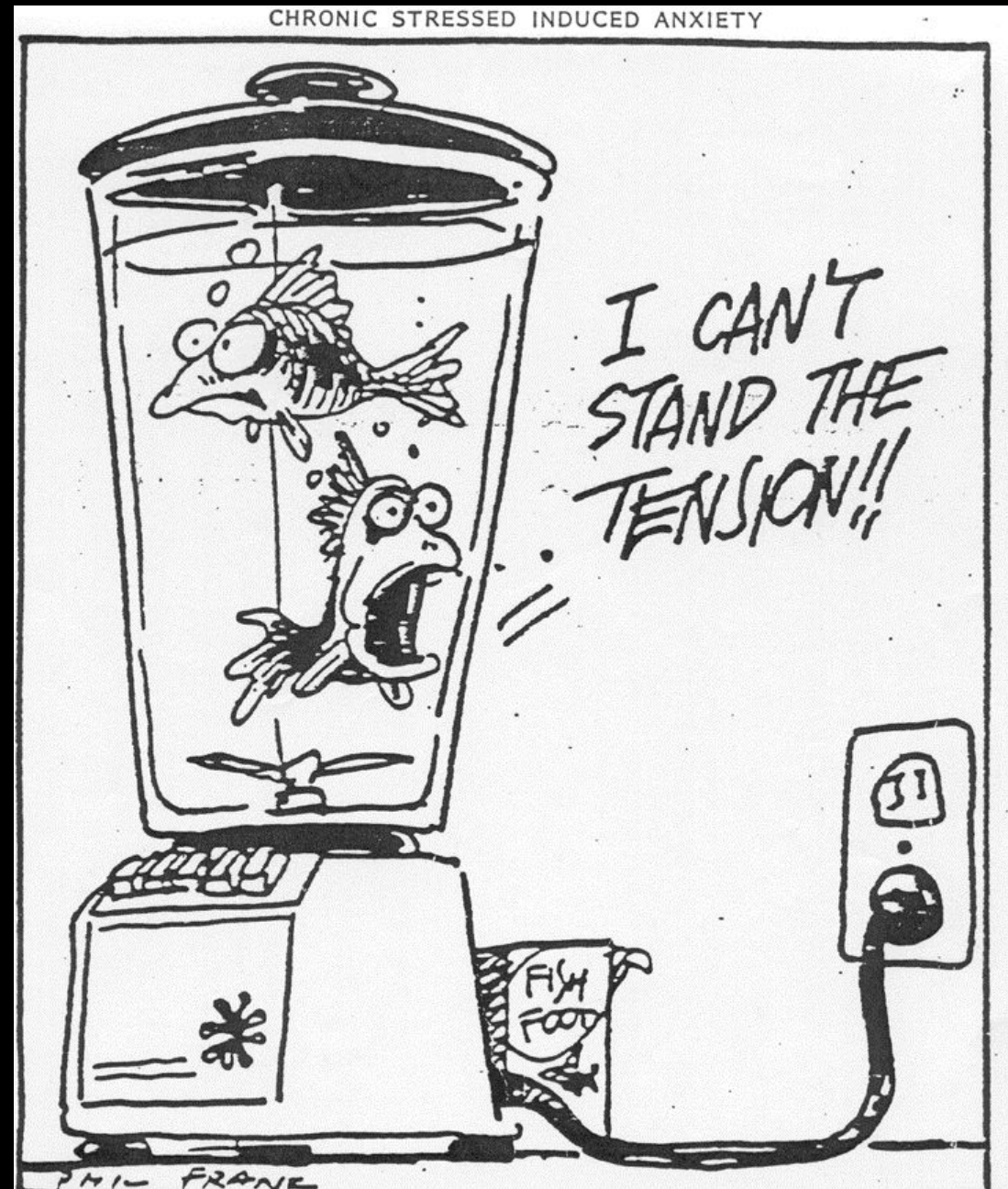


Social Isolation: The compounding effects of Covid-19 on Elder Abuse and Trauma

Sarah Yanosy, LCSW
Fordham University
Columbia University

914-649-1259
syanosy@gmail.com





“Demands which tax or exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize” Lazarus, 1966

STRESS

- Poor physical and mental health of the victim
- Mental disorders and alcohol and substance abuse in the caregiver
- Gender of victim
- Shared living situation
- Dependency on the elder
- Poor family relationships
- Perceived burdensomeness
- Ageist stereotypes
- Erosion of the bonds between generations of a family
- Systems of inheritance and land rights, affecting the distribution of power and material goods within families
- Migration of young couples, leaving older parents alone in societies where older people were traditionally cared for by their offspring; and
- Lack of funds to pay for care.
- Low standards for health care,
- Poorly trained, remunerated, and overworked staff
- Deficient physical environment
- Policies that operate in the interests of institutions, not residents.



Risk Factors

World Health Organization

- Quarantine – inability to leave home/facility, higher intensity longer term contact with caregivers
- Social Distancing – limited visitation with loved ones, less oversight
- Changing and conflicting recommendations – uncertainty, confusion and mistrust
- Politicization of issues – mask wearing as a statement



Now add Covid-19...



A vertical purple bar on the left side of the slide features three stylized hands of different shades of purple and grey, overlapping and holding each other in a supportive grip.

Three Types of Loneliness

- Lack of intergenerational contact
- Lack of contribution to society
- Existential loneliness (questioning one's value)

Linda P. Fried
Columbia University





Still Face Experiment the toll on elders

- Mirror neurons
- Human connection
- Regulating effect of others on emotions
- Emotional contagion
- Behavior as communication

***The toll on us:
When we see someone else
suffering or in pain, mirror
neurons help us to read her or
his facial expression and
actually make us feel the
suffering of the pain of the
other person. These moments
are the foundation of empathy
and possibly of morality, a
morality that is deeply rooted
in our biology, p.5.***

**Marco Jacoboni, 2008
*Mirroring People***





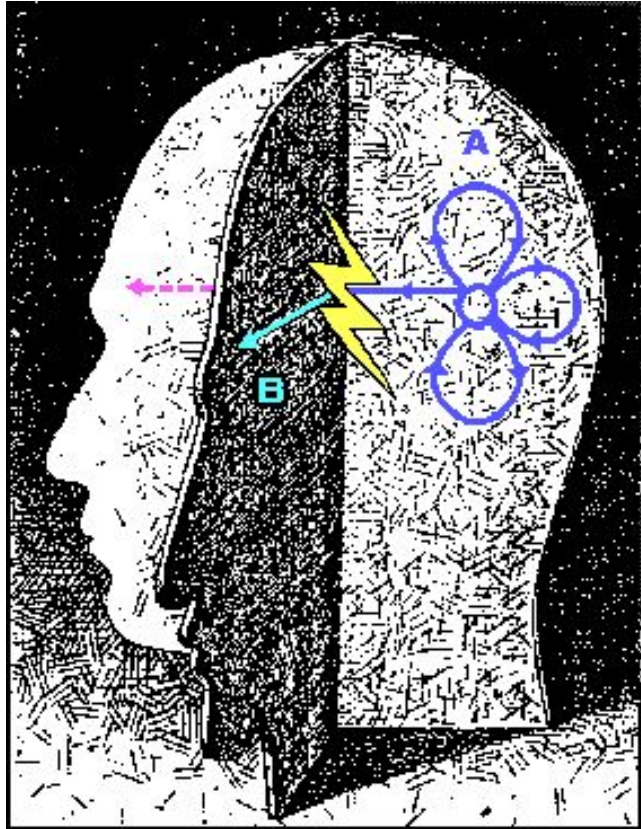
INABILITY TO USE NORMAL SOCIAL OBSTACLES

(COATES ET AL, 1979)

- As bearers of disturbing thoughts and negative emotions, victims are suppressed
- Listeners switch topic away from trauma
- They attempt to press their own perspective of the trauma upon victim
- Exaggerate victims' personal responsibility
- Avoid contact with victim altogether

The impact of trauma on Clients, caregivers and workers

(SAAKVITNE & PEARLMAN, 1996)



- No time, no energy
- Disconnection
- Social withdrawal
- Sensitivity to violence
- Alterations in sensory experiences – symptoms of PTSD
- Nightmares
- Cynicism
- Despair and hopelessness
- Diminished self-efficacy
- Changes in identity, worldview, spirituality

Action
Changes Things

What do Elders Need?

Combating Social Isolation for Elders During COVID-19

Programming to empower elders in building community

Helpline For Concerned Persons: 212-746-6905
Case Consultation Line for Professionals: 212-746-6905

Technology

LifeLine

[Lifeline Support Program for Affordable Communications](https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/lifeline-support-affordable-communications) – Communication devices for low-income subscribers.

<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/lifeline-support-affordable-communications>

Spectrum

[Spectrum Internet Assist](https://www.spectrum.com/browse/content/spectrum-internet-assist) – Affordable internet access for elders receiving SSI.

<https://www.spectrum.com/browse/content/spectrum-internet-assist>

Education

DOROT

["Tech Made Easy"](https://www.dorotusa.org/tech-made-easy-seniors-new-instructional-guides) - Instructional Guides for Late-Tech Adopters

- <https://www.dorotusa.org/tech-made-easy-seniors-new-instructional-guides>

New York Public Library

Extensive subscriptions

[TechConnect Virtual Literacy Classes](https://sites.google.com/a/nypl.org/techconnect/home)

- <https://sites.google.com/a/nypl.org/techconnect/home>

Senior Planet

[Technology educational videos](https://seniorplanet.org/)

- <https://seniorplanet.org/>

Care Partner's Program

[Clinical phase study](https://www.carepartners.org/) offering virtual support for caregivers of elders with Alzheimer's disease.

- Contact (646) 962-7141 or AgeingBehavioralRsrch@med.cornell.edu for more information on recruitment.

Outreach

DOROT – dorotusa.org

[University Without Walls](https://www.dorotusa.org/) – building lifelong educationally engaged

community. Contact (877) 819-9147 or e-mail www@dorotusa.org

[Caring Calls](https://www.dorotusa.org/) – Volunteer-based

intergenerational connections. Contact DOROT at (212) 769-2850 or e-mail info@dorotusa.org

DFTA

[Virtual Senior Centers](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dfta/service) holding remote events

- <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dfta/services/find-help-page>

AgeingConnect – entrypoint for DFTA services and outreach. Contact (212) 244-6469 for more information.

NY Connects

[Friendship Line](https://www.nycconnects.ny.gov/) – outreach to lonely older adults. Contact (800) 971-0016 for more information.

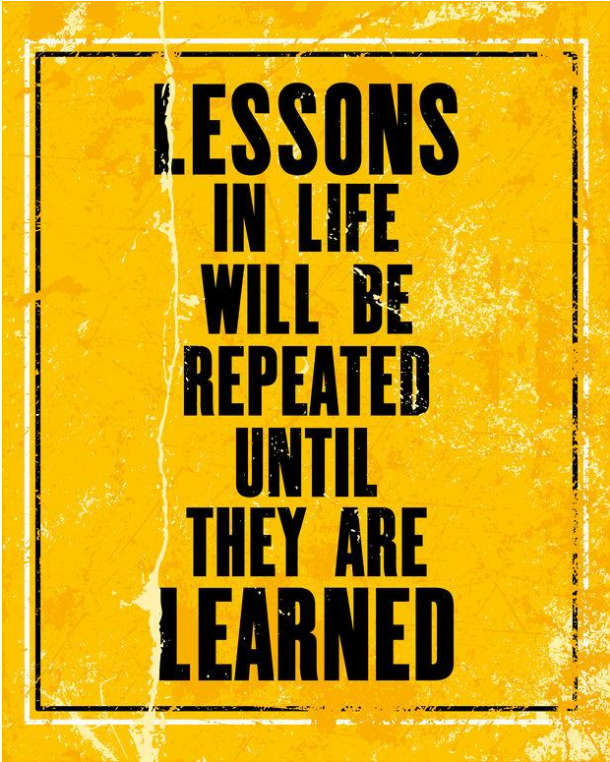
- <https://www.nycconnects.ny.gov/services/friendship-line-3503>

What do
caregivers/staff
need?





LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT MITIGATING TRAUMA

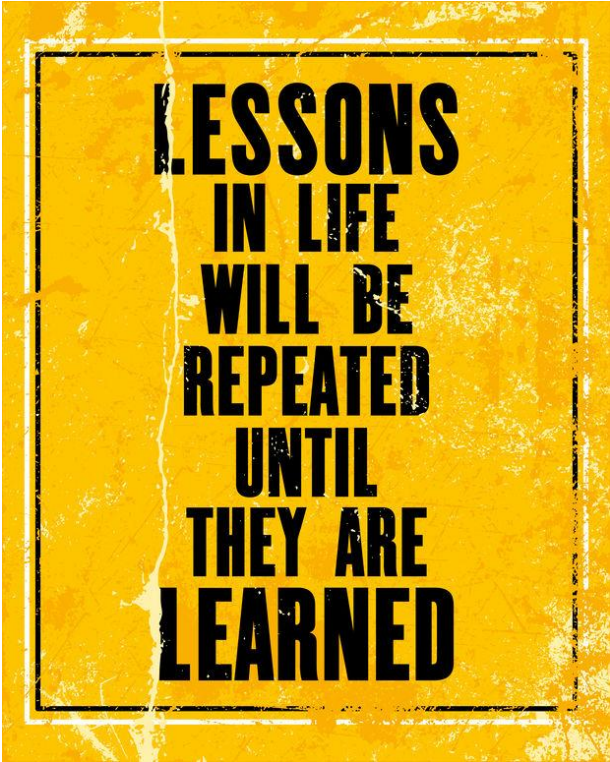


**LESSONS
IN LIFE
WILL BE
REPEATED
UNTIL
THEY ARE
LEARNED**

COMMUNICATION

- Bridging silos
- Boundaries
- Secrets: Information as power

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT MITIGATING TRAUMA



**LESSONS
IN LIFE
WILL BE
REPEATED
UNTIL
THEY ARE
LEARNED**

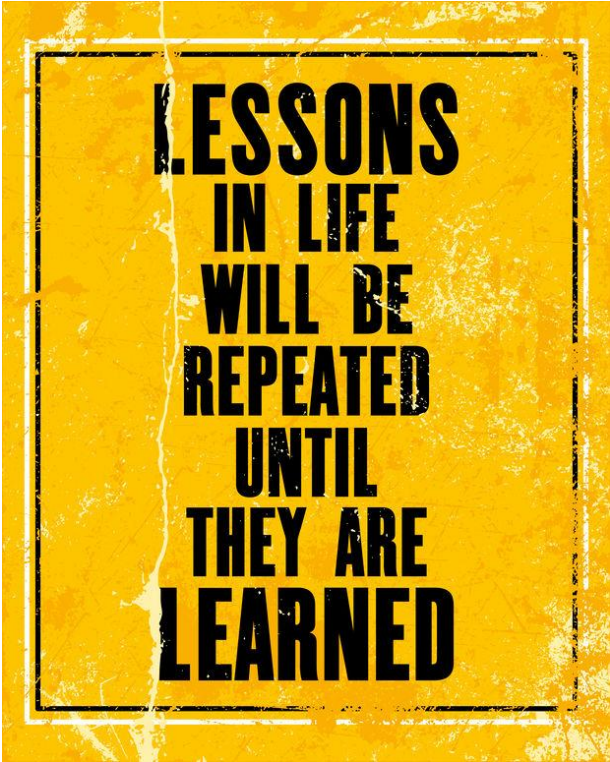
Empowerment vs. Helplessness

- Acknowledging grief and loss
- Chunking tasks
- Redefining fairness - differentiated needs

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT MITIGATING TRAUMA

Emotional Intensity

- Attending to multiple kinds of safety
- Recognizing freeze response
- Putting words to feelings/using “both...and” thinking



**LESSONS
IN LIFE
WILL BE
REPEATED
UNTIL
THEY ARE
LEARNED**

Emotional Volume Plan

- What feelings are most difficult to manage?
- What triggers those feelings?
- What are the signs your emotional volume is too high?
- What are three things you can do to turn it down?