Residents of long-term care settings and their family caregivers have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The present mixed-methods study examines trajectories of well-being pre- and post-pandemic onset for caregivers of persons with dementia living in residential long-term care. Participants were taking part in, or had recently completed, an ongoing intervention trial to support families transitioning a relative into long-term care. Beginning in summer 2020, we started assessing caregivers’ COVID-19-related experiences and added three surveys spanning 4-months beyond the 12-month parent study period to capture caregivers’ adjustment throughout the pandemic. Using latent growth curve models, we estimated caregivers’ (N = 104) trajectories of depressive symptoms, burden, and self-efficacy before and during the pandemic. We also tested whether the counseling intervention had protective effects for participants in the treatment group, and examined moderators including long-term care facility size, care recipient’s dementia and health status, and quality of staff interactions.

OPTIMISM IS PROSPECTIVELY ASSOCIATED WITH RESILIENCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
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Emerging research has identified how protective factors—like optimism—are associated with resilience to stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the majority of research is cross-sectional, which creates ambiguity around the causal direction because these very protective factors might have also changed due to the pandemic. In the current study, we used longitudinal data from the Health and Retirement Study (N = 921; Mage = 64.54, SD = 10.71; 59.6% female; 57.5% White) to examine how optimism measured in 2016 predicted adjustment during the pandemic (in 2020). Higher baseline levels of optimism were subsequently associated with less worrying and stress resulting from changes in social contacts (βs > 1.10), less loneliness and not feeling overwhelmed (βs > 1.16), and greater COVID-related resilience and benefit-finding (β = .21). The findings will be discussed in the context of mechanisms that facilitate the protective functions of optimism and other psychological characteristics.

AGING IN PLACE SINCE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ONSET: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT
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The COVID-19 pandemic may fundamentally change neighborhood environments and ways of aging in place. This research aimed to investigate perceptions of and engagement in neighborhoods since the pandemic onset among online survey respondents of the COVID-19 Coping Study. We analyzed a random stratified sample of 500 open-ended responses collected July-September 2020 with quotas for age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education to match the US population aged 55+. Qualitative thematic analysis identified both increased and decreased local activity and varying levels of social interaction, support, and civic engagement. Community characteristics including age structure, socioeconomic diversity, density, housing patterns, weather, and social infrastructure were related to neighborhood perceptions. These interacted with personal characteristics such as duration of residence, living arrangements, family closeness, health status, and preferred lifestyle. Results highlight coping strategies among aging adults and their neighbors, sources of individual and community vulnerability, and opportunities to strengthen social infrastructure and resiliency within neighborhoods.

DOES PERSONALITY SHAPE COVID-19 RESPONSES IN OLDER ADULTS?
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Knowing how personality plays out in a pandemic can provide guidance to improve public health messaging. In a sample of 2066 participants (Mage = 51.42; 48.5% female), we examined whether personality is associated with concerns, precautions, preparations, and duration estimates of the COVID-19 pandemic. Personality traits were measured before the pandemic; responses were assessed in late March 2020. We investigated whether age moderates the trait-response associations because older adults are at higher risk for severe complications of COVID-19. Among the 65-96-year-olds, higher conscientiousness was associated with more preparations, higher openness was associated with greater concerns, and both higher openness and agreeableness were related to more preparations and longer duration estimates. This pattern has implications: If all older adults took COVID-19 seriously, individual differences in personality should not matter; however, our findings indicate that they do matter and could be considered in the development of personality-tailored communication to older adults.

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DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGE OVER THE LIFE COURSE

CHILD’S DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND PARENTAL HEALTH IN LATER LIFE: DO PARENTAL RACE AND GENDER MATTER?
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Parents, particularly mothers, who experienced early life adversities (ELAs) are more likely to have a child with developmental disabilities (DD). We have little knowledge about how parental health varies across race-gender groups among those with a DD child and the role of ELAs in the associations. Using Black and White adults (n = 8,778; 25% Blacks) from...