affect, and life satisfaction in the expected direction. If supported by future work, these findings could inform practitioners in developing more specific interventions relevant to older adults based on their disability profiles. Understanding various combinations of disablement has potential implications for services and interventions to be tailored to individuals’ distinct disability-related needs.

Session 2270 (Symposium)

NEW BRAIN AGING CENTER
Chair: Feng Lin Co-Chair: Yeates Conwell Discussant: Janine Simmons

Evidence indicates an association between emotional well-being (EWB) and underlying brain processes, and that those processes change with both normal and pathological brain aging. However, the nature of these associations, the mechanisms by which EWB and its component domains change with brain aging, and how those changes may be associated with common neuropathologies like Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD), are largely unexplored. The NIA-funded Network for Emotional Well-being and Brain Aging (NEW Brain Aging) has the goal of developing a nationwide community of investigators dedicated to research that identifies and tests mechanisms by which brain aging influences EWB and how EWB may impact risk for and progression of ADRD. Synthesizing human and animal literature, our premise is that relationships between EWB and ADRD are bidirectional – normal and pathological changes in aging brain influence EWB and EWB contributes to brain health and illness, such as ADRD. NEW Brain Aging will identify and coalesce resources for interested investigators and provide funding opportunities to stimulate research and development of the field. Component presentations of this symposium will include (1) an overview by Dr. Robert Kaplan of the current state of research on EWB; (2) the role of animal studies (Kuan Hong Wang) and (3) human subjects research (Feng Yankee Lin) in EWB and aging; and (4) design of NEW Brain Aging and resources it will provide (Yeates Conwell). Janine Simmons will explain NIA’s vision for EWB research and lead open discussion.

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING HUMAN STUDIES
Feng Lin, University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, New York, United States

Early evidence indicates an association between EWB and underlying brain processes, and that those processes change with both normal and pathological brain aging. However, the nature of these associations, the mechanisms by which EWB and its component domains change with brain aging, and how those changes may be associated with common neuropathologies in ADRD, are largely unexplored. We propose an appraisal-adaptation model in understanding relationships between EWB and ADRD. For human models, we encourage the use of well-established measures that directly assess eudaimonic and hedonic EWB, including abnormal scenarios (e.g., neuropsychiatric symptoms, anhedonia, loneliness, etc.), as well as older adults with exceptional cognition (i.e., superagers or supernormals). Dr. Lin will review premises associated with the appraisal-adaptation model in conducting human research on EWB, aging, and ADRD.

ACTIVITIES OF NEW BRAIN AGING
Yeates Conwell, University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, New York, United States

The Network for Emotional Well-being and Brain Aging (NEW Brain Aging) was funded by NIA with the goal of forming a national, transdisciplinary collaborative that includes investigators with research expertise in emotional well-being (EWB), Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD), human and animal neuroimaging, stress regulation, and computational/quantitative methods. Our objective is to stimulate mechanistic research identifying and testing mechanisms by which brain aging influences EWB and how EWB may impact risk for and progression of ADRD. This presentation will explain the structure and functions of the network that serve as a resource for investigators interested in EWB and aging research, and how to access them: a transdisciplinary community of scholars interested in brain, aging, and EWB research from both human and animal fields; webinars; workshops to establish priorities for NEW Brain Aging activities; a resource repository; and pilot project funding opportunities to which network members can apply.

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING ANIMAL MODELS
Kuan Wang, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York, United States

Clinical studies suggest an association between EWB and the risk or progression of AD. However, the mechanistic link and causal relationship between EWB and AD remain unknown, due to limited experimental access and control of the underlying human brain processes. Animal models offer genetic control of AD mutations and neural circuit analysis tools, but subjective feelings of EWB cannot be assessed through self-report. To study EWB across species, we adopt a theoretical framework that views emotions as central brain states that respond to exteroceptive or interoceptive stimuli and cause multiple cognitive, somatic and behavioral changes. Recent neuroanatomical and functional imaging studies have identified evolutionarily related brain circuits in the encoding and regulation of central emotional states in animals. Dr. Wang will review progress in elucidating the functional activities of these circuits and discuss the challenges and opportunities to link these neural representations to EWB and AD related pathological progression.

OVERVIEW OF EWB AND AGING
Robert Kaplan, Stanford University, Stanford University, California, United States

The accumulation of scientific knowledge has been hampered by inconsistent usage of terms and categories. Ontology is the study of categories, their properties, and the relations between them. This presentation considers the definition and measurement of emotional well-being (EWB), a term that has been used inconsistently in research and clinical practice. The category contains eudaimonic and hedonic well-being that represent interrelated but conceptually distinct aspects of mental health. This presentation will review the definition.
and measurement of EWB and evidence for the validity of the construct. Evidence suggests EWB increases after age 50 and is important for maintenance of cognitive function in old age. Further, low in EWB may be a risk factor for incident ADRD, and is likely to impair cognitive functioning.

NIA PRIORITIES ON EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING
Janine Simmons, NIA, NIH, District of Columbia, United States

In 2021, NIH funded six high-priority research networks designed to develop resources to support and advance the study of emotional well-being (EWB) and its core components. These research networks aim to advance the field by facilitating transdisciplinary research in the social, behavioral, psychological, biological, and neurobiological sciences. The National Institute on Aging (NIA) co-sponsored the RFA, and provided funding for NEW Brain Aging, because of the central importance of EWB to health trajectories across the adult lifespan. In this presentation, Dr. Simmons, Chief of the Individual Behavioral Processes Branch within the NIA Division of Behavioral and Social Research (BSR), will discuss how EWB research fits within NIA priorities. She will then facilitate open discussion about NIA and BSR’s vision for the EWB network of networks, the synergy of NEW Brain Aging with other members of the larger network, and the opportunities these networks will provide for researchers interested in EWB.

Session 2275 (Symposium)

NOVEL STRATEGIES TO REACH AND ENGAGE OLDER VETERANS DURING COVID-19
Chair: Amanda Peeples Discussant: Kim Van Orden

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health measures to prevent its spread have important implications for the health and wellbeing of older Veterans. Prior to the pandemic, social isolation was already recognized as a risk for older adults, contributing to increased risk of depression, physical inactivity, and mortality. Stay-at-home orders, social distancing, and transitions to new ways of delivering care have meant that many of the ways in which older Veterans connect with VA and others have changed. Older Veterans and Veterans with serious mental illness (SMI) are especially vulnerable to experience negative impacts from social isolation and loneliness. This symposium will present on four novel and adapted strategies for engaging with older Veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond: 1) VA Connection Plans, a whole health intervention to promote social connections for older Veterans with and without SMI (Peeples); 2) telehealth adaptations to PEER, an in-person, peer-delivered exercise intervention for older Veterans with SMI (Muralidharan); 3) VA compassionate Contact Corps, a VA Volunteer Service program to connect older Veterans with friendly volunteers via telephone (Sullivan); and 4) group telehealth interventions to foster social connection among older Veterans and their families (Weiskittle). Kim Van Orden, geropsychologist and director of the Hope Lab (Helping Older People Engage) at the University of Rochester Medical Center, will serve as discussant.

VA CONNECTION PLANS: A WHOLE HEALTH INTERVENTION TO PROMOTE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS FOR OLDER VETERANS
Samantha Hack,1 Anjana Muralidharan,2 and Amanda Peeples,3 1. VA Maryland Health Care System, Baltimore, Maryland, United States, 2. Veterans Affairs Capitol Healthcare Network, Baltimore, Maryland, United States, 3. VISN 5 MIRECC, Baltimore, Maryland, United States

The Connection Plan intervention was created as a brief intervention to assist older adults experiencing social isolation during COVID-19. Based in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), it is designed to help older adults create a “Connection Plan” to cope with distress related to social isolation. In 1-2 sessions, interventionists work with the older adult to create a Connection Plan with three parts: Mind (ways to change negative thoughts), Body (ways to change unpleasant body sensations), and Connections (ways to increase social engagement). Through soliciting feedback from key stakeholders (Veterans and VA clinicians), the Connection Plan intervention was adapted for the VA context. This paper will present this process of creating the VA Connection Plans manual, as well as associated efforts to disseminate the intervention to 900 VA staff and deliver it to 600 older Veterans with (age 50+) and without (age 65+) serious mental illness.

ENGAGING OLDER VETERANS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: IN-PERSON, REMOTE, AND HYBRID MODELS
Sera Havrilla,1 Alicia Lucksted,1 Deborah Medoff,2 Karen Fortuna,3 Amanda Peeples,1 and Anjana Muralidharan,4 1. VISN 5 MIRECC, Baltimore, Maryland, United States, 2. University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, Maryland, United States, 3. Dartmouth College, Lebanon, New Hampshire, United States, 4. Veterans Affairs Capitol Healthcare Network, Baltimore, Maryland, United States

Older adults with serious mental illness (SMI) have complex care needs across medical, psychiatric, cognitive, and social domains. This growing population exhibits high levels of medical comorbidity and sedentariness. Innovative interventions that promote holistic recovery for this group are needed, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Peer Education on Exercise for Recovery (PEER) is a peer coaching intervention, delivered by VA Peer Specialists (Veterans with lived experience of mental illness), to promote exercise and physical activity among older adults with SMI. This paper will present on three different models of PEER: fully in-person, fully remote, and a hybrid model with both in-person and remote elements. Preliminary data indicates that PEER is (1) engaging and well-liked, (2) associated with greater sustained increases in physical activity compared to an active control, and (3) can lead to sustained physical activity increases that are resilient to situational constraints such as physical distancing.