

The Importance of Psychological Resilience in Maintaining Functionality During the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 Pandemisi Sırasında İşlevselliğin Sürdürülmesinde Psikolojik Dayanıklılığın Önemi

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ABSTRACT

The Corona Virus Disease (COVID)-19 pandemic requires a complex journey for individuals, which is full of unknowns, includes intense stress and anxiety, and causes many changes in the family structure physically, spiritually and economically. Psychological resilience is thought to be a concept that is associated with the ability of some people to overcome negativities, while others lose their functionality despite a crisis situation such as a pandemic. Therefore, it is important to develop psychological resilience in order to minimize the negative effects of the pandemic and to overcome this journey. The purpose of this review article is to discuss the concept of psychological resilience and the importance of psychological resilience at the point of reducing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the individual and strategies to develop psychological resilience.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, Psychological Resilience

ÖZ

COVID-19 pandemisi bireyler için karmaşık, bilinmezliklerle dolu, yoğun stres ve kaygı içeren, fiziksel, ruhsal ve ekonomik olarak aile yapısında birçok değişikliğe neden olan bir yolculuk gerektirmektedir. Psikolojik dayanıklılık, bazı kişilerin olumsuzlukların üstesinden gelme yeteneği ile ilişkilendirilirken, bazılarının ise pandemi gibi bir kriz durumuna rağmen işlevselliğini yitirmesi ile ilişkilendirilen bir kavram olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu nedenle pandeminin olumsuz etkilerini en aza indirmek ve bu yolculuğun üstesinden gelmek için bireylerin psikolojik dayanıklılığını geliştirmek önemlidir. Bu derleme makalenin amacı, psikolojik dayanıklılık kavramını ve COVID-19 pandemisinin birey üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerini azaltma noktasında psikolojik dayanıklılığın önemini ve psikolojik dayanıklılığı geliştirmeye yönelik stratejileri tartışmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: COVID-19, Pandemi, Psikoloji Dayanıklılık

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Psychological Reliance

Positive organizational behavior, which focuses on human power and development, broke new ground in organizational behavior research and brought positive psychology consisting of resilience, self-efficacy, hope and optimism to the agenda (4). Studies on resilience, which is among the dimensions of positive psychology, aim to protect the individual against life's problems, stress and negative situations by increasing awareness on the subject (1,5). The most important part of positive psychology, resilience is the capacity to liveness and even get better in response to a disadvantaged, traumatic situation or adversity (4,6). When resilience is conceptualized, it is expressed in two ways as psychological resilience. While the first is defined as reducing stress, the second is considered as a feature that increases adaptation (2,7).

Resilience is a positive psychological ability that enables individuals to successfully overcome changes, obstacles, difficulties and risky situations, this capacity can be changed, transformed and developed under the influence of individual and environmental factors (3,8). While some people take a passive attitude in the face of difficulties and stop resisting and accept defeat, others can cope with risky situations, get rid of stressful situations and even develop their capacity by using these challenges as an opportunity (2,3). At this point, the stress factors that constitute psychological resilience, how the individual responds to this process and the psychological, biological, social and cultural factors that affect the process should be considered and evaluated (2).

Risk Factors, Protective Factors and Positive Adjustment that Affect Psychological Resilience

Factors that increase the probability of negative situations or cause the existing negative situation to continue are considered as risk factors. These risk factors are; grouped in 3 categories as individual factors, familial factors and environmental factors (9).

The expression of protective factors, on the other hand, refers to situations that alleviate and reduce the effects of the difficulty experienced and facilitate adaptation. Protective factors; it is collected in three categories as individual, familial and environmental protective factors (9).

In order to talk about psychological resilience, we must observe the existence of positive results beyond risk and protective factors (10). Positive results can be expressed as the competence of the person to overcome the problems, the developmental processes successfully completed. Positive results reflect positive fit. Positive results emerge as a result of the interaction of the individual and the environment (9).

Table 1. Risk Factors (9).

Individual Risk Factors	Familial Factors	Risk	Enviromental Factors
Premature birth	Illness or psychopathology of the parents		Low socio-economic level
Chronic diseases / hospitalization	Divorce or death of parents		Child abuse and neglect
Alcohol substance use	Becoming a mother during adolescence		To be physically or sexually abused
Early pregnancy	Domestic violence or abuse		War, migration and natural disasters
Mental retardation	Discipline with an overly authoritarian or disinterested attitude		Homelessness
Low self esteem	To be adopted		Lack of policies to prevent current societal problems
Lack of success	Having a parent with a drug addiction or criminal history		Dangerous peer relationship
Depression	Low age difference between siblings		Inadequate education, health and social services

Table 2. Protective Factors (9,10).

Individual Protective Factors	Familial Protective Factors	Enviromental Protective Factors
High level of intelligence	Support of parents	Peer support
Academic success	Positive relationship with one of the family members	School support
Easy temperament	Existence of effective parenting and rules	Positive relationships with a supportive adult in the social circle
Internal locus of control	Realistic expectations for children	Having a social support network
Self-efficacy, high self-esteem	High level of education of the parents	Having people who set a positive example in the environment
Optimism and hope	Sufficient socioeconomic level of the family	Effective societal resources
Effective problem-solving skills	Good relationship between siblings	Adequate and effective social policies and services for problems
Social competence	Don't be a big family	Youth and community centers

Psychosocial Effects of the COVID19 Pandemic

COVID-19 outbreak its rapid spread and severe clinical course due to its nature the main stress affecting the whole world in a short time due to has become a factor (11). The quarantine practice, which has been implemented within the scope of the concerns experienced all over the world, especially in the field of health and economy, and the lack of interpersonal contact that follows it is

causing individuals to feel lonely (2). Uncertainty and associated anxiety have always been strong in pandemics. Although it is argued that uncertainty is always a bad experience in the human world, it can be felt more than ever during the pandemic period (12,13). Because as the perception of threat posed by the contagious disease increases, people who experience panic and stress exhibit different behaviors than they always do (14). The psychological impact of quarantine can include post-traumatic stress disorder, confusion and frustration (15). It is also known that the difficulties and stress experienced during the pandemic can trigger common mental problems such as anxiety, depression and suicide (16,17,18). On the other hand, they may also feel guilt and shame, thinking that they deserve the disease. The patient, whose symptoms progress over time, has to go to the hospital. In the hospital, he encounters a painting he never knew before. Healthcare workers in space suits, whose faces they cannot see, can be frightening to patients (11).

Taylor (2019) mentions that global epidemics reveal five important psychosocial conditions. The first of these is that due to the risk of contagion and death of the epidemic, people tend to go shopping in a panic and start to stock up on food and cleaning materials. The second is the display of racist attitudes and behaviors, including exclusion and stigmatization, against societies that are considered to be the source of the virus and that are supposed to cause its spread all over the world. Third, due to health concerns and suspicion of contamination, the way the health system is occupied. The fourth is the behavior of not being able to tolerate situations such as compulsory isolation, maintaining social distance, staying at home and not complying with the bans applied to prevent the spread of the epidemic. Fifth, there is an increase in unfounded claims and conspiracy theories alongside relevant real and accurate information (19).

All of these psychological and social symptoms affect a person's normal functioning and can lead to disruptions in their education, family life, employment opportunities, and activities of daily living. These aspects of the epidemic have a direct impact on psychosocial life, resulting in reduced quality of life and difficulties in coping with the situation. Considering the social and psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic,

it is an important question to answer how the psychosocial states of individuals are affected (17).

The Role of Psychological Resilience in Maintaining Functionality in the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 virus causes health problems in two ways. The first is the physical health problems caused by the virus, and the other is the mental health problems such as anxiety, panic and anxiety related to the epidemic. COVID-19 should be considered not only as a medical health crisis, but also as a crisis for mental health (20). After the pandemic crisis is over, three situations will emerge. First, after the crisis, we can continue from where we left off before the crisis, by preserving the process before the crisis. The second may follow a worse picture after the crisis. The crisis can seriously affect social functioning by leaving negative, hurtful and traumatic effects. Finally, by evaluating this situation as a window of opportunity, it can become much more functional than the situation before the crisis. One of the factors that are effective in overcoming this crisis situation, becoming more functional and evaluating it as an opportunity is the psychological resilience of the individual (3). The COVID-19 pandemic is a period in which the psychological resilience of individuals should be high and at the same time nurtures the resilience of individuals (4). When the literature investigating the relationship between COVID-19 and psychological resilience is examined, it is seen that the psychological resilience of the participants is at a moderate level (21,22,23). That psychological resilience is negatively related to loneliness, hopelessness, stress, anxiety and depression in the literature; On the other hand, it is seen that there are many research results revealing that it is positively related to social support, hope, optimism and self-esteem (24,25).

Although it is known that the pandemic process forces everyone psychosocially on a global scale, it can be said that the epidemic affects some special groups more in this sense (26). The effects of the global COVID-19 epidemic process on human psychology include many individual differences. Stress-related and traumatic effects are likely to differ according to the social and cultural characteristics, socioeconomic conditions,

psychological well-being and individual characteristics of the person during and after the COVID-19 epidemic, which threatens people's lives and is on a global scale (20). The personal characteristics of psychologically resilient individuals are listed as follows by different researchers: Having a calm character, the ability to receive positive reactions from the environment, showing empathy and compassion, having good communication skills, having humor, have a purpose and a view of life, social harmony, ability to establish healthy relationships, effective communication and problem solving, good level of mental competence, hope and optimism, self-efficacy, perceiving and interpreting experiences constructively, supportive family relationships, having an adaptive character, ability to manage stress, to maintain relations with the social environment, to open up one's feelings and thoughts easily, to have individual awareness, to accept oneself, to be willing to establish emotional relations, to act quickly in problem solving (3, 27, 28, 29).

Psychological resilience is a trait that can be acquired, developed, and transformed. Therefore, in this process, the role of increasing the psychological resilience of the individual is great in order to minimize the effects of negativities (3).

Strategies to Increase Resilience in the COVID-19 Pandemic Process

During the COVID-19 epidemic process, it is important for the healthcare professional to consider the patient as a whole and to detect possible psychosocial problems at an early stage and to make the necessary intervention in the crisis situation of individuals who have experienced being sick (11). Individuals do not show the same reaction, attitude and behavior to the same traumatic and stressful life events, resilience development techniques that are beneficial for one person may not work for others, and this situation may differ due to cultural characteristics (3).

There are various suggestions to support psychosocial well-being by increasing psychological resilience during the Covid19 process. To reduce the stigma, it is important to separate a person from having an identity defined by COVID-19. Accordingly, instead of calling people with the disease "COVID-19 cases", "victims", "COVID-19 families" or "infected",

“people with COVID-19”, “people receiving treatment for COVID-19” expressions such as can be used “COVID-19 People recovering from ”. Keeping people in touch with loved ones, including digital means, is a way to maintain contact during the quarantine period. Information should be obtained only from reliable sources, as there is a lot of false or erroneous information about the epidemic during the COVID-19 process, which is expected to cause fear and anxiety (26). Psychosocial support of family members who received the news of their patient's death during the pandemic is also important (11). Even if there is a very painful event, the event should not be exaggerated outside the truth and the event should be viewed from a broad perspective. Unexpected possible situations should be accepted as a natural part of life, short-term and achievable goals should be determined for the situation. Individuals should increase their positive expectations about life (30). It is also seen that it is important to strengthen the capacity of health systems in order to improve the quality of psychosocial care to be offered to individuals. For this purpose, in order to strengthen individuals psychosocially, Consultation Liaison Psychiatry (CLP) units can be established in institutions where these patients are treated and cared for (11).

Individuals' ability to effectively cope with the problems they face and not resort to dysfunctional coping strategies such as avoiding, ignoring and giving up in the face of problems requires high psychological resilience averages. This environment should be provided to individuals by health professionals (3). While improving psychological resilience, it is critical to identify the factors that affect individuals and societies in order to improve their situation and to increase their control over them (3,31). Empowerment after the COVID-19 pandemic includes reordering priorities and making sense of life, improving relationships, increasing individual awareness, recognizing new options, and experiencing psychosocial and spiritual changes (3).

In general terms, the main ways in the formation of resilience are indicated. These; establishing connections and relationships, avoiding seeing crises as insurmountable problems, accepting that change is a part of life, moving towards one's goals, taking decisive steps, searching for opportunities for self-development,

looking at himself with a positive perspective and paying attention to the individual's needs and feelings. It is stated that actions such as writing about experiences, sharing with others and meditation are activities that can be considered beneficial in developing resilience (3).

Conclusion

During any contagious disease epidemic, the psychological reactions play a critical role in shaping both the spread of disease and the occurrence of mental distress and social impairment during and after the epidemic. It can be said in the light of literature information that the COVID-19 epidemic will lead to sociological and psychological effects that go beyond the deaths and losses. Mental health and physical health are mutually affected. Health professionals should be a guide for individuals to effectively cope with the problems they experience and provide psychosocial support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through interventions that will increase psychological resilience, individuals can be prevented from being adversely affected by possible crisis and trauma, and it can be ensured that they maintain a healthy lifestyle and increase their quality of life. Due to COVID-19, individuals need to know that they are not alone in their mental problems, and that getting support and solidarity is an effective way to cope with stress. In addition, regular and frequent organization of trainings, seminars and activities aimed at increasing the psychological resilience of individuals can be extremely beneficial in terms of social mental health in terms of adapting to the new world order and lifestyle. Providing online consultancy services through various institutions to individuals in need during the Covid-19 process can help reduce the negative effects of the epidemic on people.

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