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The Development of Purpose among Marginalized Older Adults: A Resource for Resilient Aging

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Title: The Development of Purpose among Marginalized Older Adults: A Resource for Resilient Aging

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Contrary to societal presumptions, older adults can show positive adaptation despite facing declines associated with late life (i.e., *resilient aging*; Wiles et al., 2019). One understudied resource that older adults may use to support their resilience is having a sense of purpose. Drawing on purpose has been shown to positively relate to mental and physical health (Musich et al., 2018). However, there is limited research that has examined how older adults develop purpose, particularly those who experience challenges due to aspects of their identity (i.e., due to marginalization). The current study explores older adults' life stories to understand how a sense of purpose develops among the older minority population across the lifespan. This study further examines purpose as a tool for resilience that aids in challenges and barriers experienced by marginalized older adults. Recruitment is actively underway to seek older adults aged 60+ whose voices may be less often heard or have faced challenges in their life due to factors that are not limited to race, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, and age (Kanna, 2018). Before the interview process, potential participants are screened using the Orientation-Memory- Concentration test for dementia (i.e., those who do not pass are ineligible). Eligible participants are then scheduled for a virtual study session, including a semi-structured interview and a brief set of surveys. The target sample size is 25 participants. Pilot interviews have revealed that older adults describe helping others as part of their purpose but also as a tool to overcome challenging life events. Upon completion of the interviews, grounded theory analysis will be conducted in order to understand how purpose manifests among older adults who face challenges due to their identity.