

Structured Group Discussions Help Finding Meaning in Life and One's Own Mental Resources

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Mental well-being has been a neglected aspect of ageing. However, there is a growing interest in maintaining mental well-being, recovery from challenging situations and personal growth in later life.

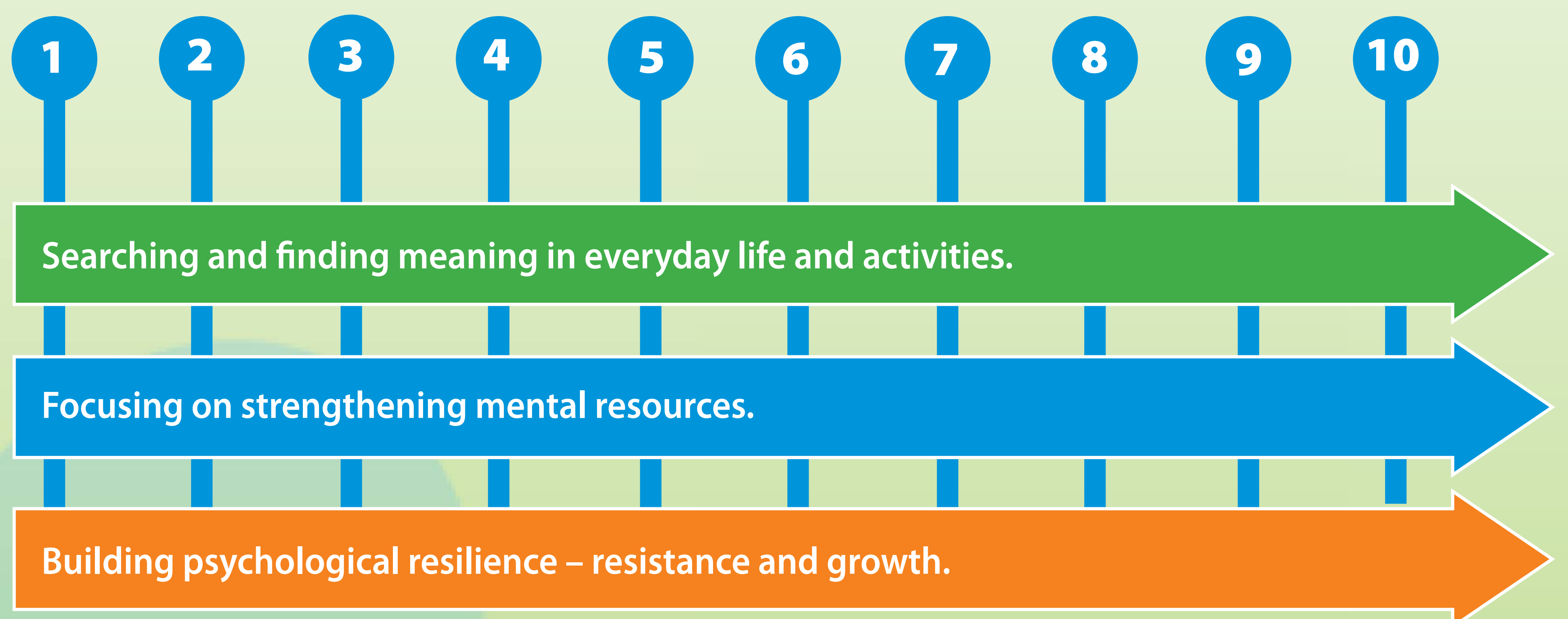
Findings about mental well-being in the project are based on 30 individual interviews, 3 discussion groups and data collection in open discussions for older adults. The shared themes in the data include meaning in life, significant life events relevant for mental well-being and individual means of maintaining mental well-being in later life.

Qualitative inquiry widens the spectrum of understanding the relevance of the concept of mental well-being for older adults. Feelings of emptiness and meaninglessness can be expressed and encountered safely in a structured group situation. Sharing reflections in discussion groups focused on finding one's own mental resources was found to be a promising source of support for personal growth.

The Bridge of Mental Well-Being

is a structured group discussion model, which contains ten meetings with following themes:

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|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Welcome and introduction | 6. Gratitude |
| 2. Resources in daily life | 7. Doing what matters |
| 3. Freedom of attitude as a resource | 8. Meaningful daily life |
| 4. Life story as a resource | 9. Future prospects |
| 5. Strengthening stories | 10. Evaluation and conclusion |



Conclusions

- 1) Interviews and group processes demonstrate that finding meaning in life is an individual mental process.
- 2) There is a need for positive information about possibilities to support, maintain and enhance mental well-being in later life.
- 3) Will, skills and emotions are three essential and practical aspects of mental well-being that all need to be taken into account in the promotion of mental well-being.

