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Relational Leisure and Family Dynamics: On the Road to Resilience

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A Quilt Called "Family"

With Thanks to Dennis K. Orthner

Jay Mancini and Dennis Orthner, Park City, UT, 1997

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With Appreciation

- *Deepu V. George*, University of Texas School of Medicine at San Antonio

- *Bryce Jorgensen*, New Mexico State University

- *Pauline Boss*, University of Minnesota

- *Chalandra Bryant*, University of Georgia

- *Lauranne McMillan*, University of Georgia

Presentation Goals

- Review social trends about work, leisure, and families

- Present selected research findings on families and leisure

- Review conceptual frameworks on families and time-use

- Discuss a contextual model of family stress, coping, and resilience

- Suggest implications for working with families

But first, an in-class assignment

- Reflect on a leisure experience you have had with family members
  - What picture is in your mind?
  - Do particular words come to mind?
  - At that point in time, how did you feel about the experience?
  - As you reflect back on that time, what meaning do you attach to it? What are you lingering thoughts?
  - At the end of the day, is it a experience worth remembering? What is the reason it is worth recalling, or not worth recalling?

Trends: Work, Vacations, Travel

Who

- Many summer travelers will be making the most of their summer moments by hitting the road as a family (49%), while 36% will travel with a significant other and 11% with friends.

What

- 61% work while on vacation, despite family members' complaints
- Women prefer to read while men opt to drink to relax
- 55% of respondents of the survey would rather wake up early than sleep late while on vacation
- 60% rather not have an itinerary and live spontaneously during their vacation
- Planning a vacation:
  - 36% plan to immerse themselves into the local culture
  - 30% plan local shopping trips
  - 26% plan to learn about the local food and cuisine
  - 24% plan to partake in learning/educational activities
  - 23% plan to visit historical sites and monuments

When

- 42% of Americans didn't take any vacation days in 2014
- 15% of Americans took more than 20 vacation days.

Where

- Top destinations
  - 21% plan to go to Florida
  - 15% plan to go to California
  - 11% plan to go to the Bahamas
  - 10% plan to go to New York
- The beach is the much preferred vacation destination

How

- The average vacation expense per person in the United States is $1,145, or $4,580 for a family of four.

Remember this!

- Americans apparently are not so fond of vacations
  - Even those who are continue to work while vacationing
  - Some do not relax while vacationing
- If you are female, young, a city-dweller, live in the East, and have less money, the odds of vacationing are against you
- Women relax with a book and men relax with a gin and tonic
- We do want to experience the local culture at our destination
- We are beach-goers and pretty fond of Florida, and California is not so bad either
- Almost 9/10 of us travel with someone we care about

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Family leisure research and well-being outcomes: Selected findings

- Family leisure gives opportunities for **generativity** from grandparents to grandchildren, therefore building family legacy (Hebblethwaite & Norris, 2011)
- **Parent involvement** in adolescent media use important factor for variation in family functioning (Hodge, Zabriskie, Fellingham, Coyne, Lundberg, Padilla-Walker, & Day, 2012)
- Relationship between family leisure involvement and **family life satisfaction** stronger among parents than among children in the family (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003)
- **Women** with strong preference for out of home leisure activities tended to delay their first births (Becker & Lois, 2012)
- **Father involvement** in everyday and usual family leisure strong predictor of family functioning (Buswell, Zabriskie, & Lundberg, 2012)
- Weekend work was associated with significantly less shared leisure time on days worked, in effect suggesting that **"withdrawals"** outstripped **"deposits"** as it involves spending time with family (Craig & Brown, 2014)
- Family time is a protective factor as it involves **adolescent risks** when chosen by family members but not when it represents a default use of time (Crouter, Head, McHale, & Tucker, 2004)

Family leisure research and well-being outcomes: Selected findings

- What families do with their time is largely influenced by **resources** available to them (Harrington, 2015)
- Women teleworkers participated in family leisure activities but most reported a lack of **personal leisure** time (Shaw, Andrey, & Johnson, 2003)
- **Parents** are often not satisfied with the time they spend with children and spouses, and women are more likely to want to improve the **quality** of family time and men are more likely to want **more time** with their spouses and children (Roxburgh, 2006).
- The shift from male-breadwinner to **dual-earner** and **single-parent** households, rather than changes in the length of the workweek per se, have created growing concern for balancing work and family (Jacobs & Gerson, 2001).
- Both mothers and fathers often experience indoor free time in very short, **fragmented episodes**, although fathers are more likely to have some longer periods of leisure (Beck & Arnold, 2009)
- **Productive** family time (e.g. homework) was related to lower emotional well-being, as was **maintenance** family time (e.g. household chores), but only when youth engaged in it with both parents (Offer, 2013)

Remember This!

- Spending time together as a family has the potential for accomplishing important family goals, including establishing patterns of support for one another, as well as forming a family identity

- There is substantial variability in family and time use patterns, and individual and family demography has an important role

- If "withdrawals" from family time outstrip "deposits" to family time, there may be a point where there are insufficient funds to pay what is needed for family life quality

- Since parents are the "gatekeepers" for family activities inroads for supporting family leisure experiences must begin with them

Ways of Thinking about Families and Time Use

A first step in moving toward either conducting research on families and time use OR working with families more effectively as they navigate and negotiate their lives is to be *conversant on ways of thinking about families and time use*

- Zabriskie and colleagues **Core and Balance Model**

- Orthner & Mancini **Model of Social Cohesion and Social Dissonance**

- Mancini, George, & Jorgensen **Model of the Life Cycle of Relational Tourism**

Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning

- Ramon Zabriskie and BYU colleagues
- Two patterns of family leisure
  - Core patterns provide predictable family leisure experiences that foster personal relatedness and family closeness
  - Balance patterns provide new experiences that provide input necessary for family systems to be challenged
- In tandem, these two patterns are what families use to meet needs for stability and change

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Zabriskie, R.B., & McCormick, B.P. (2001). The influences of family leisure patterns on perceptions of family functioning. *Family Relations*, *50*, 281-289.

Activities of the Core and Balance Model

Core activities

- Watching TV, videos and other media together
- Playing board games
- Playing together in the yard
- Building snowmen/women, raking the leaves and then jumping in the pile together
- NOTE: Require little planning, quite spontaneous and informal, and enhance interaction between family members

Balance activities

- Family vacations
- Most outdoor recreation (i.e. boating)
- Special events
- Trips to sporting event, theme park (all of Orlando, for example), or a bowling alley
- NOTE: Typically occur less frequently, more novel, may involve more complex skill development, require more resources, usually not home based

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Model of Social Cohesion and Social Dissonance

- Whenever family members are in contiguity there is potential for matters to go well, or for there to be strain. Multiple factors contribute to how well family leisure adds to or takes away from family well-being.

- This model accounts for possible family leisure outcomes by examining how time-use can be conceptualized, as well as how individuals and families either incur costs or gain benefits

Orthner, D.K., & Mancini, J.A. (1980). Leisure behavior and group dynamics: The case of the family. In S.E. Iso-Ahola (Ed.), *Social psychological perspectives on leisure and recreation* (pp. 307-328). Springfield, IL: Thomas.

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Leisure Behavior & Group Cohesion

	Group Cohesion
Leisure Time	• Required for relaxation, communication, conflict resolution, and experience sharing • Can increase family identity • Members can continually provide definitions of situations, give and receive feedback, and share meanings

Leisure Activity	• Individual activities:
	  • May facilitate family cohesion indirectly by "renewing" individual for social interaction
	• Parallel activities:
	  • Increased opportunity for mutual feedback and sharing compared to individual activities
	  • Provides personal development and a sense of togetherness
	  • Can be important for adjustment and more productive communication
	• Joint activities:
	  • Family sociability exemplified
	  • Optimal communication and alternative role patterning may occur
	  • Increased insight into and empathy for the needs of others
	  • Opportunity for tension release, for sharing of problems, and for coming to terms with other stressors
	  • Provide a form in which family members are not obligated or expected to conform to typical family rules
	  • Pre-activity planning and post-activity recollection creates more opportunity for sharing and communication

Leisure Preference	• Cohesion is fostered when there is relatively close correspondence between behavior and preferences • Close correspondence leads to leisure that will provide opportunities for productive communication, shared meaning, and feedback

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Leisure Behavior & Social Dissonance

	Social Dissonance
Leisure Time	• Differences in schedule • Dissatisfaction resulting from limited time • Work time vs. leisure time • Constrained time may be potential point of conflict

Leisure Activity	• Individual activities
	    • May severely restrict role flexibility and family communication
	    • New information about one another may develop slowly
	    • Limits effective communication
	• Parallel activities
	    • False impression of togetherness
	    • May represent compromise and not being fully satisfied
	• Joint activities
	    • More opportunity for venting anger, bickering, and a power struggle
	    • May be hard for some families to adapt to departure from everyday interaction patterns

Leisure Preference	• Conflicts over interests and preferences common • Family sociability requires negotiation and compromise

Model of Life-cycle of Relational and Family Tourism

- In family science we often speak about the life course and the life cycle, sometimes with regard to families and sometimes with regard to individuals

- A framework we developed fairly recently parses the relational tourism experience over time, and includes the range of benefits associated with its various parts
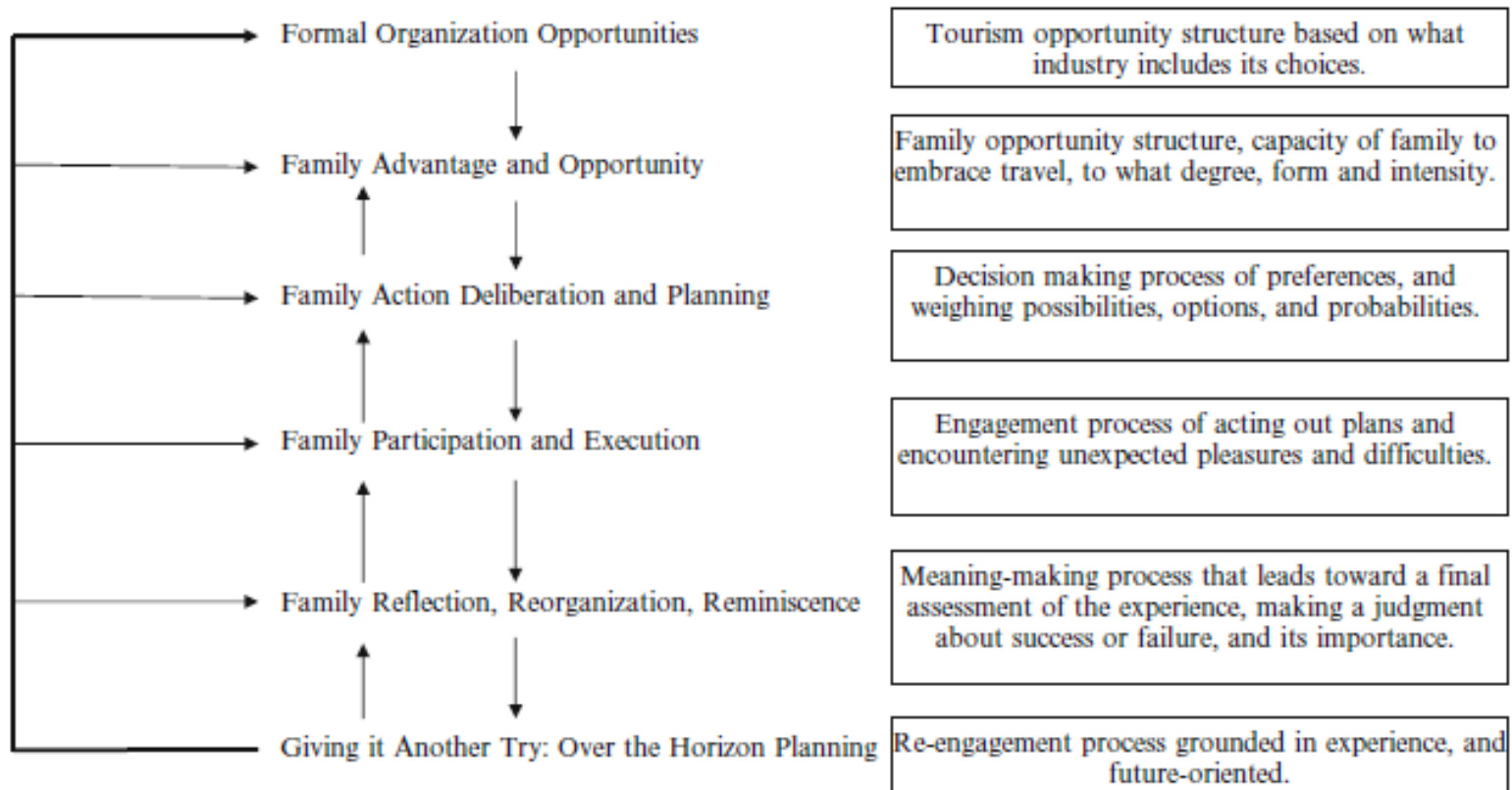
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Formal Organization Opportunities	Tourism opportunity structure based on what industry includes its choices.
Family Advantage and Opportunity	Family opportunity structure, capacity of family to embrace travel, to what degree, form and intensity.
Family Action Deliberation and Planning	Decision making process of preferences, and weighing possibilities, options, and probabilities.
Family Participation and Execution	Engagement process of acting out plans and encountering unexpected pleasures and difficulties.
Family Reflection, Reorganization, Reminiscence	Meaning-making process that leads toward a final assessment of the experience, making a judgment about success or failure, and its importance.
Giving it Another Try: Over the Horizon Planning	Re-engagement process grounded in experience, and future-oriented.

Relational tourism: interplay of structural and process elements. Note: There are two processes reflected in this figure, the one showing how each element of the relational tourism cycle informs another in a linear way and the other showing these elements intersecting as relational tourism unfolds

The relational tourism life cycle: contexts, interactions, transactions

Formal organization opportunities and contexts	Family advantage and opportunities	Family action, deliberation, and planning	Family participation and execution	Reflection, reorganization, and reminiscence	Over the horizon planning: next steps
The range of choices families may have provided to them by the tourism industry	Abilities families may have to actually participate in certain tourism activities	Weighing options for family travel and tourism and accommodating individual family members	Acting on the plan and accommodating individual travel and tourism behaviors of family members	Attaching meaning, importance, and satisfaction to the travel experience	Starting the conversation on what the next travel and tourism experience might contain
Aside from choices, the influence the industry can have on families, either their aspirations or their behaviors	Opportunities determined by available time and available resources	Coming to terms with competing needs and wants, making decisions, and finalizing a concrete scheme	Coming to terms with anticipated experiences and actual experiences	Making sense of the experience, recalling memorable events and interactions, and recalibrating future expectations	Placing new thinking in the context of past experiences, determining what should be enhanced and what should be avoided

Remember This!

- Ways of thinking about family leisure time then informs what we observe about families, and how we then become helpful to families

- Family leisure is not a "one size fits all" proposition because "all are not one size"

- Spending time together can have multiple and varied outcomes

- Family leisure time has a life-cycle and therefore has multiple "leverage points" or "turning points"

Stress, coping, resilience and family time: A contextual model
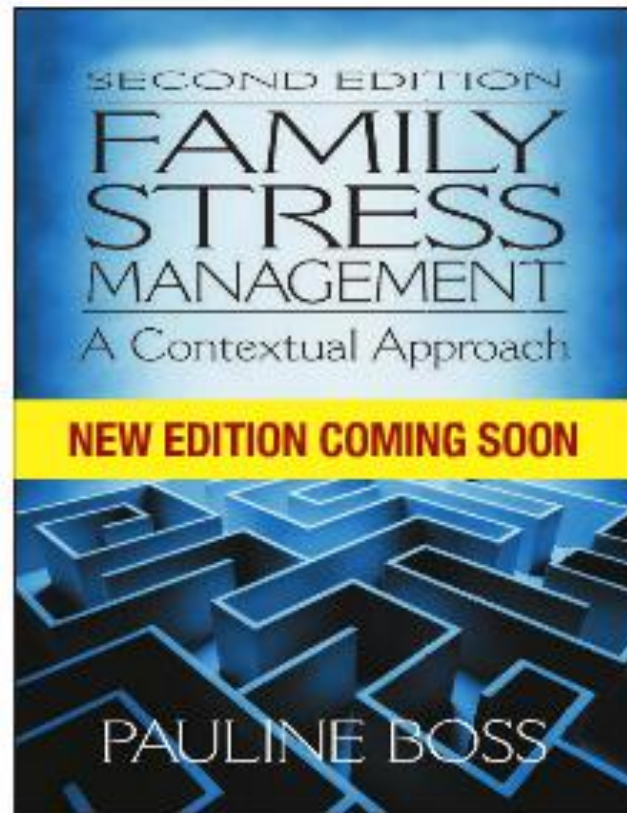

FAMILY STRESS MANAGEMENT

Third Edition

Pauline Boss | Chalandra M. Bryant | Jay A. Mancini

ISBN: 978-1-4522-7000-5 • July 2016

This new **Third Edition** continues to provide a framework for students and professionals to learn how to help families manage their stress, exploring both the larger context surrounding families and stress and emphasizing the need for a more general contextual model of family stress.

NEW • Vitalsource

Boss, P., Bryant, C.M., & Mancini, J.A. (2016). *Family stress management: A contextual approach* (3rd Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

How Stress Presents Itself to Families

Classification of Stressor Events and Situations

Source

Internal
Events that begin from someone inside the family, such as addiction, suicide, violence, or running for an election

External
Events that begin from someone or something outside the family, such as floods, terrorism, and inflation

Type

Normative
Developmental
Predictable
Events that are expected during the life course: birth, puberty, adolescence, marriage, aging, menopause, retirement, and death

Catastrophic
Situational
Unexpected
Events or situations not foreseen: a young person dies

Ambiguous
Events or situations that remain unclear; facts about the status of a family member remain unclear; facts are unavailable or unclear

Clear
Facts are available; family knows what is happening and how it will turn out

Volitional
Events or situations that are wanted and sought out: freely chosen job changes, college entrance, or a wanted pregnancy

Nonvolitional
Events or situations not freely chosen: laid off, fired, divorced, and given up for adoption

Duration

Chronic
A situation of long duration: diabetes, chemical addiction, or discrimination and prejudice

Acute
Event that lasts a short time but is stressful: broken leg

Density

Cumulative
Events or situations that pile up, one after the other, so there is no time to cope before the next stressor occurs; families worn down by multiple unresolved stressors

Isolated
One event that occurs with no other stressors; easily pinpointed

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Resilience and Vulnerability

- *Resilience*
  - Process of successfully overcoming adversity
  - Capacity to adapt
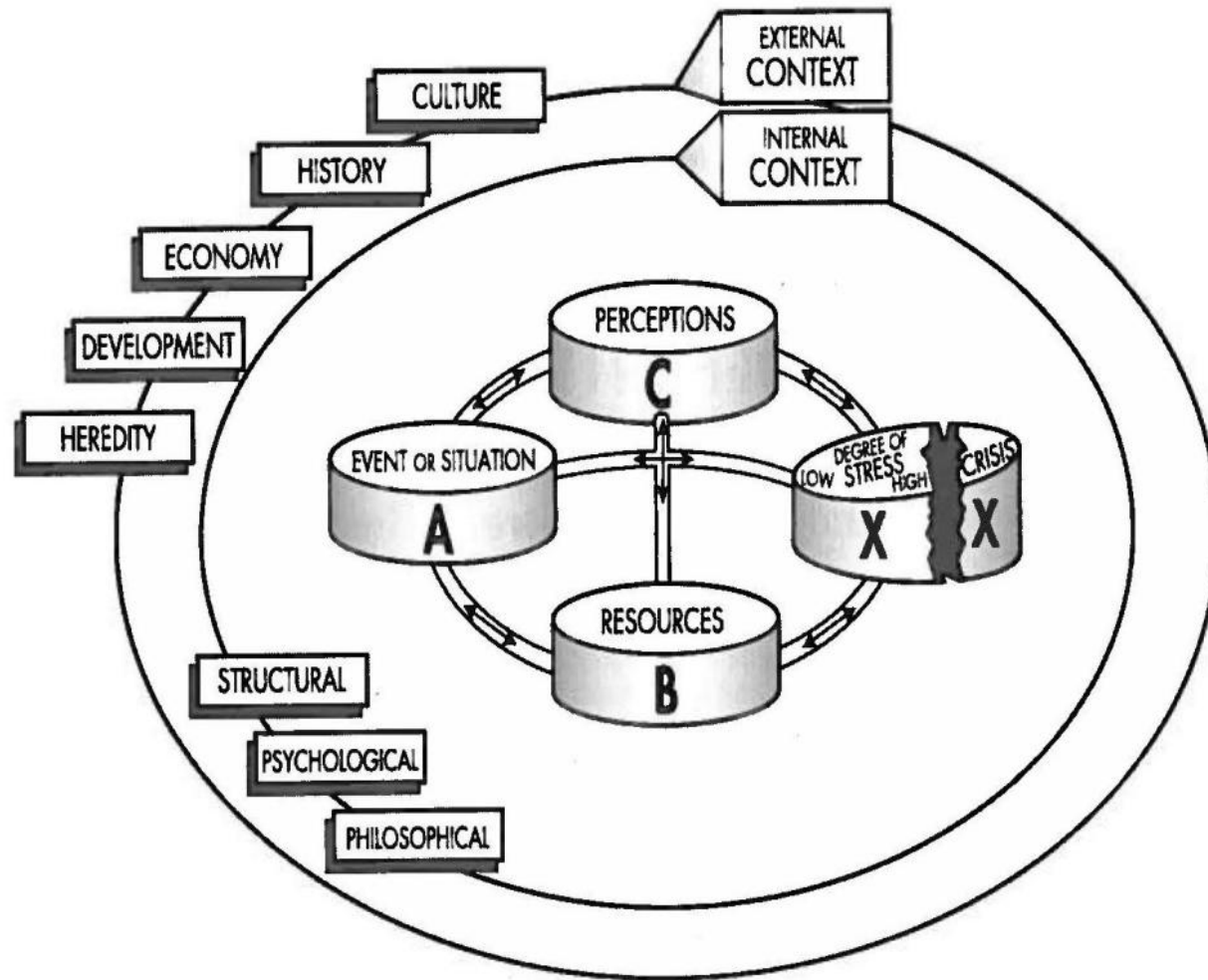 - Return to baseline + thriving

- *Vulnerability*
  - Experiences, situations, or characteristics that expose a person to additional negative experiences and results
  - Risk
  - Increase odds of poor results
  - Internal and external elements
  - Chronic and acute

The Contextual Model of Family Stress

CMFS Framework on Stress: Leverage points

- ABC-X theory
  - A-circumstance or situation
  - B-existing resources
  - **C-perception of the situation (meaning)**
  - X-result
  - B and C are clear leverage points, and A is a potential leverage point

The Functions of Relationships

- Emotional (to deal with despair and worry)

- Instrumental (to accomplish practical tasks)

- Informational (to achieve better decisions)

- Companionate (to spend time in a context for support)

- Validation (to support feeling worthwhile, competent, and hopeful)

- Contributes the power of interpersonal relationships to the mix of managing potential stress

Cutrona, C.E., & Russell, D. (1987). The provisions of social relationships and adaptation to stress. In W.H. Jones, & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Advances in personal relationships* (pp. 37-67). Greenwich, CT: Jai Press.

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Remember This!

- Family leisure can be viewed as a resource-builder on an interpersonal level
- There are multiple contextual influences and pressures on families
- Therefore sustaining family well-being in part depends on the resources families can build, and some of these are internal to a family
  - Families have a say about some of what they face
  - But have little to no say about other things
- *Ceteris paribus* ("all else being equal") being intentional with families on matters of time use is pivotal for coping and resilience strategies

Relational Leisure and Family Dynamics: On the Road to Resilience

- We began with me asking you to reflect on your own family leisure experience. It's a good thing to do because we have a storehouse of family memories that involve leisure

- Then I cited for you information from the popular press on families and vacations, and some of the findings surprised you, and some may even have disturbed you

- Of course we then reviewed some of the scientific studies on family time, and some of those findings surprised you (and other findings are entirely what you would expect)

- I introduced ways of thinking about family time, and then made a few remarks about our framework focused on family stress, coping, and resilience

- Here are a few closing remarks

Relational Leisure and Family Dynamics: On the Road to Resilience

- Looking backward, moving forward
  - *Educational interventions*: Family life education can have an important influence on how adults in families view family time, helping them realize it as a resource with payoffs for family identity and cohesion
  - *Therapeutic interventions*: Couple and family therapy can have an important role in supporting the repair work that often goes on in troubled families. Sometimes a new platform for interacting is what families need as they reconfigure how they interact and how they view each other. How time is spent as that reconfiguration occurs may be critical.
  - *Policy interventions*: Among the many reasons why a substantial number of Americans do not vacation (therefore families are not vacationing) are those related to the nature of work, what employers provide, and what government demands/requires of the workplace. In many respects resilience is about external opportunities and barriers which are the gatekeepers on what is possible for families.
  - *People-to-People interventions*: At the end of the day, we live our lives in the company of others, including friends, neighbors, work associates, and family members. Given what we know about the power of social networks and interpersonal relationships, at the individual level we can encourage families we know to take the time to take a deep collective breath, step out of the fast lane, and take a little time with family.

About the Presenter

- Jay A. Mancini is the Haltiwanger Distinguished Professor of Human Development and Family Science at The University of Georgia, and Emeritus Professor of Human Development at Virginia Tech. He is the editor (with Karen A. Roberto) of *Pathways of human development: Explorations of change* (2009, Lexington books), and the author (with Pauline Boss and Chalandra M. Bryant) of *Family stress management: A contextual approach* (2016, Sage Publishers). He is a Fellow of the National Council on Family Relations.

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