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#### PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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#### **SUMMARY**

This literature review addressed psychological resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim of analyzing how individuals and communities faced and adapted to this period of unprecedented adversity. The methodology adopted involved a literature review in academic databases, focusing on studies published from the beginning of the pandemic to the present. The results highlighted the significant impact of the pandemic on mental health, highlighting anxiety, depression and stress as common challenges. It was observed that psychological resilience, influenced by factors such as social support, coping strategies and psychological interventions, played a role in adapting to these challenges. Final considerations emphasized the importance of public policies and intervention strategies aimed at supporting psychological resilience, suggesting the need for integrated approaches that consider the different dimensions of mental health.

**Key words:**Psychological Resilience. COVID-19. Mental health. Pandemic. Coping Strategies.

# **ABSTRACT**

This bibliographic review addressed psychological resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, aiming to analyze how individuals and communities coped and adapted to this unprecedented period of adversity. The methodology involved reviewing literature from academic databases, focusing on studies published from the beginning of the pandemic to the present. Results highlighted the significant impact of the pandemic on mental health, identifying anxiety, depression, and stress as common challenges. It was observed that psychological resilience, influenced by factors such as social support, coping strategies, and psychological interventions, played a crucial role in adapting to these challenges. Final considerations emphasized the importance of public policies and intervention strategies aimed at supporting psychological resilience, suggesting the need for integrated approaches that consider the various dimensions of mental health.

Keywords:Psychological Resilience. COVID-19. Mental Health. Pandemic. Coping Strategies.

The COVID-19 pandemic, triggered by the SARS-CoV-2 virus at the end of 2019, caused a global health crisis of unprecedented proportions, affecting life in society, the economy, and, significantly, the mental health of populations. This period was characterized by uncertainty, fear, loss, abrupt changes in daily life and in the way individuals interact with each other and with the environment. Within this context, psychological resilience emerges as a relevant research topic, as it plays a fundamental role in individuals' ability to face, adapt and recover from situations of extreme stress and adversity.

The relevance of this topic is justified by the need to understand the mechanisms that allow some people to maintain or quickly recover their psychological well-being in the face of significant challenges, while others experience substantial difficulties. The pandemic offers a unique setting to explore these differences, given its global nature and pervasive impact on all aspects of human life. Understanding psychological resilience in this context can inform the development of intervention strategies and public policies aimed at supporting the mental health of the population during and after health crises.

The problematization emerges from the observation that, despite recognizing the importance of resilience for mental health, there is a lack of studies that explore its dynamics during events of such a disruptive magnitude as a pandemic. Questions arise about how psychological resilience manifests itself in different population groups, what factors influence it positively or negatively, and how interventions can be structured to strengthen this aspect of mental health in times of crisis.

Given this, the objectives of this research focus on: (1) exploring the concept of psychological resilience in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, identifying its main components and mechanisms; (2) investigate how psychological resilience affects the mental health of different population groups during the pandemic, including healthcare professionals, the elderly, and young people; (3) analyze strategies and interventions that promote psychological resilience, with the aim of identifying effective practices that can be recommended for managing mental health in health crises. Through these objectives, we seek to contribute to the body of knowledge on mental health in crisis contexts, providing support for the formulation of more effective strategies for psychological support and individual and collective resilience.

#### THEORETICAL REFERENCE

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology adopted to carry out this research consists of a literature review, a process through which the search, analysis and synthesis of published information on a given topic or research question is carried out. This method allows you to understand the state of the art, identify gaps in existing knowledge and establish connections between different studies and theories. The literature review stands out for allowing an understanding of a topic through the critical analysis of previous studies, without requiring the collection of primary data.

Data collection for this review was carried out through systematic searches in recognized academic databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and PsycINFO, using keywords. - key topics relevant to the topic of psychological resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The keywords were selected to cover studies relevant to the topic, including terms such as "psychological resilience", "COVID-19", "pandemic", "mental health", among others. The search was limited to articles published between the beginning of the pandemic, at the end of 2019, until the current moment, aiming to guarantee the relevance and timeliness of the data collected.

Data analysis followed a qualitative approach, in which the selected articles were carefully examined to extract information relevant to the research objectives. Initially, titles and abstracts were read for a preliminary selection based on relevance to the study topic. After this screening, the full articles considered relevant were read in full. During the analysis, central themes, research methods used, main findings, and the relationship of these findings with the concept of psychological resilience in the context of the pandemic were identified. This process allowed not only the understanding of the different perspectives and results found in the literature, but also the identification of patterns, divergences and gaps in the studies reviewed.

The synthesis of the collected data was structured to reflect on the research objectives, grouping

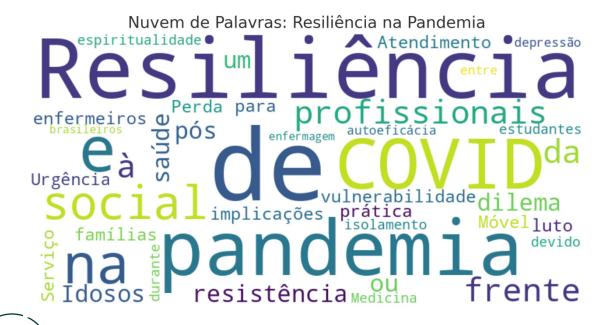
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placing information into thematic categories that facilitate the reader's understanding of the current state of knowledge and the main questions that have not yet been answered. Thus, the literature review carried out serves as a basis for the discussion on the importance of psychological resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, offering a consolidated view of existing studies and directions for future research.

Author(s)	Title	Year
KRAWCZYK, N.; Zan, D.	Resilience or resistance: a post-pandemic social dilemma	2021
MAIA, AOB; GUIMARÃES NETO, AC	Resilience of healthcare professionals in the face of COVID-19	2021
MOURA, MLS	Elderly people in the pandemic, vulnerability and resilience	2021
SCHMIDT, B. et al.	Loss, grief and resilience in the CO-VID-19 pandemic: implications for practice with families	2022
ROCHA, JTS et al.	Resilience of nurses from the Mobile Emergency Care Service in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic	2023
MORATO, AEP et al.	Resilience and spirituality of medical students during social isolation due to the Covid-19 pandemic	2023
SOUSA, LRM; LEONI, PHT; CARVALHO, RAG; VENTURA, CA; OLIVEIRA E SIL-VA, AC; REIS, RK; GIR, E	Resilience, depression and self-efficacy among Brazilian nursing professionals in the COVID-19 pandemic	2023

Source: own authorship

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**



Source: own authorship

# CONCEPT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

Psychological resilience, over time, has been the object of study in several areas of knowledge, evolving from a perception of an innate trait to a dynamic process that involves the interaction between the individual and their environment. This paradigmatic shift reflects the complexity of resilience as a multifactorial phenomenon, which encompasses an individual's ability to resist, recover and grow in

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in the face of adversity. Krawczyk and Zan (2021) elucidate this perspective by stating that "resilience transcends mere survival in the face of adversity, also implying the capacity for transformation and personal growth after traumatic experiences" (p. 34). This expanded definition recognizes resilience not only as a reaction to adversity, but also as an opportunity for personal development.

The components and characteristics of psychological resilience include aspects such as self-efficacy, optimism, cognitive flexibility and social support, which together form a set of internal and external resources that the individual mobilizes to face and adapt to challenging situations. Moura (2021) highlights the importance of these components by observing that "the interaction between individual factors, such as optimism and self-efficacy, and contextual factors, such as social support, constitutes the basis for the development of resilience in elderly people during the pandemic" (p. 200).

With regard to theories and explanatory models of resilience, approaches have been proposed to understand how this phenomenon manifests itself and can be strengthened. An example of this is resilient adjustment theory, which suggests that resilience results from an ongoing process of positive adjustment in response to significant challenges. Rock*et al.* (2023) offer insights into this model when discussing how "nurses from the Mobile Emergency Care Service demonstrate resilience by adjusting their coping strategies, maintaining effective professional performance even under intense pressure during the pandemic" (p. 27985).

Sousa *et al.* (2023) illuminates the discussion about the components of psychological resilience, by stating that the complexity of psychological resilience lies in its ability to manifest itself in different ways, depending on individual characteristics and the context. In nursing professionals, we observed that resilience ranges from the ability to maintain balanced mental health to the ability to find creative solutions to emerging problems in the work environment, which demonstrates the interaction between cognitive, emotional and social aspects in building resilience. ." (p. 1024)

This excerpt highlights the complex and dynamic nature of psychological resilience, highlighting the interdependence between personal and contextual factors in its formation and expression.

In summary, psychological resilience is understood as an adaptive process that allows the individual to face adversity, recover from traumatic events and, in many cases, experience personal growth. Theories and explanatory models of resilience offer a framework for understanding the mechanisms underlying this phenomenon, emphasizing the importance of considering both internal resources and external support in the development of resilience.

#### **IIMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON MENTAL HEALTH**

The COVID-19 pandemic represented a disruptive global event, affecting the mental health of vast segments of the population, including healthcare professionals, the elderly, children and adolescents. The extent and severity of this impact have been documented in several studies that point to a significant increase in cases of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress and other psychological disorders.

Health professionals, on the front line of the fight against the pandemic, faced high levels of stress, anxiety and exhaustion, due to direct exposure to the virus, fear of contagion for themselves and their families, in addition to work overload and daily coping with the death and suffering. Maia and Guimarães Neto (2021) elucidate this situation by highlighting that "prolonged exposure to these adverse conditions put the mental health of these professionals at risk, requiring effective coping strategies and psychological support" (p. 147).

Elderly people, in turn, were considered a high-risk group not only for COVID-19, but also for the psychological consequences of social isolation, which exacerbated feelings of loneliness and abandonment.

Moura (2021) reflects on this reality, indicating that "the interruption of daily activities and the funding from loved ones imposed significant challenges on the mental health of the elderly, increasing the incidence of anxiety and depression in this group" (p. 198).

Children and teenagers also faced unique challenges, with school closures and suspension of social activities limiting their social and educational development. Disruption of daily routines, prolonged confinement and exposure to a potentially stressful home environment have contributed to increased anxiety, behavior problems and learning difficulties. Schmidt et al. (2022) note that "the pandemic brought with it a crisis in children's mental health, evidenced by an increase in symptoms of anxiety, depression and stress, directly affecting well-being and development.



ment of this population" (p. 5).

Sousa *et al.* (2023) illustrates the complexity of the challenges faced and the need for integrated approaches to mitigate the impact on mental health, explaining that the COVID-19 pandemic not only revealed existing vulnerabilities in health and social support systems but also exacerbated inequalities, disproportionately impacting the mental health of vulnerable groups. In this scenario, it is imperative to develop and implement public policies and intervention strategies that take into account the specific needs of each group, promoting access to mental health services, social support and psychological resilience. Interdisciplinary collaboration and the mobilization of community resources emerge as key elements to effectively address this mental health crisis" (p. 1028).

This panorama highlights the importance of multidisciplinary and evidence-based approaches to face the challenges posed by the pandemic in mental health, emphasizing the need for psychological support adapted to the particularities of each affected group.

#### STRATEGIES FOR FOSTERING PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, promoting psychological resilience has become a priority to mitigate the negative impact on the population's mental health. Effective strategies to foster resilience include psychological interventions, strengthening social and community support networks, in addition to the development of individual coping and adaptation strategies.

Psychological interventions, such as cognitive-behavioral therapies, have been applied to help individuals deal with the adverse psychological effects generated by the pandemic. These interventions aim to improve stress management, promote adaptive coping skills, and strengthen self-efficacy. Maia and Guimarães Neto (2021) highlight that "the use of psychological interventions focused on resilience proved to be effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression, suggesting that such approaches may be important for supporting mental health during health crises" (p 150).

The role of social and community support networks is also fundamental in promoting resilience. Social support, whether it comes from family, friends or communities, contributes significantly to psychological well-being, offering a foundation of emotional and practical support that facilitates overcoming challenges. Krawczyk and Zan (2021) note that "engagement in social support networks strengthens resilience by providing a sense of belonging and support, essential elements for facing adversity" (p. 35).

Furthermore, the adoption of individual coping and adaptation strategies is vital for psychological resilience. These strategies include the practice of mindfulness, physical exercise, relaxation techniques and the search for activities that promote meaning and purpose. Morato *et al.* (2023) offer insight into the importance of these practices:

"During the social isolation imposed by the pandemic, individual coping strategies, such as maintaining a structured routine, regular physical exercise and involvement in pleasurable activities, emerged as key elements for preserving mental health and promoting resilience. Such practices not only help mitigate the effects of stress and anxiety, but also promote a sense of control and self-efficacy, fundamental aspects for successful adaptation to adverse situations" (p. 101).

Sousa *et al.* (2023) highlights the integration of these strategies in building resilience, therefore, the integration of psychological interventions, the strengthening of social support networks and the implementation of individual coping strategies constitute a holistic approach to the development of psychological resilience. This approach not only empowers individuals to deal with current adversities, but also prepares them to face future challenges, promoting more effective and sustainable adaptation. Resilience, therefore, should be seen as a dynamic process, which benefits from a continuous interaction between external support

These perspectives underscore the complexity of psychological resilience and the need for integrated and adaptive approaches to promoting it amid crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE IN HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare professionals have faced specific challenges that have tested their psychological resilience in unprecedented ways. They found themselves on the front lines, facing not only the heightened risk of exposure to the virus, but also the emotional toll of treating patients in difficult conditions.

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criticism, often without sufficient resources. This situation exacerbated stress, anxiety and the risk of burnout in this group, making the adoption of effective coping strategies and interventions imperative.

Maia and Guimarães Neto (2021) highlight the pressure suffered by these professionals, stating that "the resilience of health professionals in the face of COVID-19 has become a critical factor, given the constant exposure to high-stress situations, intense workload and the ethical dilemma arising from the scarcity of resources" (p. 147). This scenario highlighted the urgent need for psychological support and adaptive coping strategies for this group.

Coping strategies adopted by health professionals include both stress management techniques and strengthening support networks inside and outside the work environment. Rock*et al.* (2023) explore the importance of support between colleagues, mentioning that "the resilience of nurses during the pandemic was significantly reinforced by mutual support in teams, highlighting the strength of solidarity and companionship in critical moments" (p. 27985). This social support acts as a buffer against stress, promoting mental health and well-being.

Additionally, specific psychological interventions, such as debriefing sessions, cognitive behavioral therapy and mindfulness programs, have been implemented in various contexts to help these professionals deal with trauma, fear and anxiety. Sousa *et al.* (2023) illustrates the effectiveness of these interventions, therefore, implementation of intervention programs focused on promoting resilience and managing stress in healthcare professionals has shown positive results, with a significant decrease in stress and anxiety levels. Such programs, which included mindfulness techniques, cognitive behavioral therapy and support groups, not only contributed to the mental health of professionals, but also improved the quality of care provided to patients. These findings highlight the importance of integrated approaches that consider the psychological and emotional needs of health professionals as an essential part of health crisis management" (p. 1029).

This holistic approach, which combines emotional support, stress management techniques and psychological interventions, proves to be fundamental to strengthening the psychological resilience of health professionals. By recognizing the unique challenges faced by these individuals and implementing effective coping strategies and interventions, it is possible to not only support the mental health of this group, but also ensure continuity and quality of care for patients in times of crisis.

#### **PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL ISOLATION**

Social isolation, a measure adopted globally to contain the spread of COVID-19, has had significant impacts on people's mental health and resilience. This period of distancing has exacerbated feelings of loneliness, anxiety and depression, challenging the resilience of individuals in different spheres of life.

The relationship between social isolation and mental health has been widely documented during the pandemic, with studies indicating an increase in reports of psychological problems. Moura (2021) highlights the adverse effects of isolation on the elderly, stating that "the elderly, already vulnerable to mental health problems, found themselves particularly affected by isolation, with reports of an increase in the feeling of loneliness and depressive symptoms" (p. 198). This group, especially, suffered not only from the fear of the disease, but also from the interruption of their routines and the loss of physical contact with family and friends.

However, psychological resilience can be cultivated and maintained even in periods of isolation, through the adoption of specific strategies that promote well-being and mental health. Schmidt*et al.* (2022) offers an insight into such strategies stating that throughout the social isolation imposed by the pandemic, it became evident that maintaining psychological resilience requires conscious and targeted effort. Strategies such as establishing a daily routine, practicing regular physical activities,

the search for hobbies or pleasurable activities, in addition to strengthening social bonds through means digital technologies, have proven to be essential to mitigate the negative effects of isolation on mental health. Such practices not only help maintain a structure in everyday life, but also promote a sense of control and the ability to find moments of joy and satisfaction, fundamental for resilience in times of crisis" (p. 7).

Furthermore, the role of digital technologies in supporting mental health and promoting resilience during isolation has become undeniably important. Videoconferencing platforms, social networks and other forms of digital communication have made it possible to maintain social contact, mitigating the effects of physical distance. Sousa *et al.* (2023) complement this perspective, noting that "the use of resources

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online to maintain social connections and access psychological support has been a strategy for many, allowing continued emotional support and sharing of experiences, essential for resilience during isolation" (p. 1028).

These approaches highlight the importance of adaptive strategies that individuals can adopt to preserve their mental health and resilience in the face of the challenges posed by social isolation. By emphasizing the need to maintain routines, engage in meaningful activities and support networks, even virtually, it is possible to mitigate the negative impacts of isolation and promote healthier adaptation during and after the pandemic.

#### CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE

The relationship between vulnerability and resilience in the face of adversity, especially in pandemic contexts such as that caused by COVID-19, constitutes a significant field of study in psychology and related areas. This discussion addresses how individuals and communities face and adapt to situations of extreme pressure, considering that vulnerability and resilience are not mutually exclusive, but aspects that can coexist, influencing the ability to respond to adversity.

Vulnerability, understood as susceptibility to psychological, physical or social harm, can be exacerbated in situations of global health crisis, disproportionately affecting groups already at risk. However, the presence of vulnerability does not necessarily prevent the development or manifestation of resilience. On the contrary, resilience can emerge as an adaptive response to these vulnerabilities, highlighting the human capacity for recovery and adaptation. Krawczyk and Zan (2021) elucidate this dynamic, stating that "despite the evident vulnerabilities brought by the pandemic, we also observed an extraordinary capacity for resilience, both individual and collective, which allowed people to face and adapt to adverse circumstances" (p. 34).

Factors that influence psychological resilience in pandemic contexts include, but are not limited to, social support, adaptive coping strategies, internal resources such as optimism and hope, and the ability to find meaning and purpose even in adverse situations. Moura (2021) highlights the importance of these factors, especially for the elderly, by indicating that "the ability to maintain social connections, even virtually, and the possibility of engaging in meaningful activities contributed to strengthening the psychological resilience of elderly people during isolation" (p. 198).

Sousa *et al.* (2023) deepens the understanding of the factors that contribute to resilience, highlighting that the interaction between individual factors, such as the capacity for emotional self-regulation, and contextual factors, such as access to social support networks, plays a role in promoting of psychological resilience during the pandemic. This finding reinforces the need for integrated approaches that not only recognize the existence of vulnerabilities, but also actively seek to strengthen the resources available to individuals and communities, thus facilitating a healthier and more resilient adaptation to the adversities faced" (p. 1028).

This analysis suggests that building resilience is a dynamic process, influenced by a combination of internal and external factors, and that the presence of vulnerabilities does not exclude the possibility of developing or manifesting resilience. Rather, recognizing and addressing these vulnerabilities can be an essential step in promoting resilience, suggesting the importance of public policies and psychosocial interventions that address both immediate needs and long-term strategies to strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities to confront crises. future ones.

### **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The final considerations of this literature review on psychological resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic reflect on the challenges, strategies and interventions analyzed in the previous topics. The pandemic, an event of unprecedented global proportions in recent history, has brought to light the importance of psychological resilience as a determining factor in the ability of individuals and communities to face, adapt and recover from significant adversity.

The review showed that the pandemic affected the mental health of the general population, with particular impacts on specific groups such as healthcare professionals, the elderly, children and adolescents. These impacts have included increased cases of anxiety, depression, stress and other psychological disorders, highlighting the urgent need for effective strategies to promote resilience and support mental health.

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It has been observed that psychological resilience is not a static characteristic, but a process dynamic that can be developed and strengthened over time. Strategies to promote resilience, such as psychological interventions, strengthening social and community support networks, and the adoption of individual coping strategies, proved to be fundamental to mitigating the adverse effects of the pandemic on mental health.

The review also highlighted the complex relationship between vulnerability and resilience, indicating that although certain conditions may increase susceptibility to psychological harm, the presence of adequate support, internal resources and adaptive strategies can enable people to not only cope with adversity, but also find opportunities for personal and community growth and strengthening.

Considering the findings of this review, it is imperative that public policies and intervention strategies are aimed at supporting psychological resilience. This involves not only implementing accessible and effective mental health programs, but also creating environments that promote well-being.
- being, social support and adaptive coping capacity. Collaboration between governments, non-governmental organizations, communities and health professionals is essential to develop and implement these strategies effectively.

Furthermore, future research should continue to explore the various facets of psychological resilience, identifying factors that contribute to its promotion and maintenance, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of specific interventions. This will not only expand understanding of resilience as a dynamic process, but also provide practical guidelines for developing programs and policies that meet emerging needs in times of crisis.

In short, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted psychological resilience as an indispensable resource for facing unprecedented challenges. By promoting individual and collective resilience, it is possible not only to overcome current adversities, but also to prepare society to respond more effectively to future crises, promoting a faster and more sustainable recovery.

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