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Perceiving benefits in adversity: stress-related growth in women living with HIV/AIDS

Karolynn Siegel ^a ... Eric W Schrimshaw ^{a, b}

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Abstract

This study examines perceptions of illness-related positive of change or stress-related growth among a sample of African American, Puerto Rican, and non-Hispanic White women ($n=54$) living with HIV/AIDS in New York City, USA. While these women acknowledged the negative stresses of living with HIV/AIDS, 83% reported at least one positive change in their lives that they attributed to their illness experience. A number of different domains of potential growth were identified including: health behaviors, spirituality, interpersonal relationships, view of the self, value of life, and career goals. While growth was reported by nearly all the women, some variation was found in the forms of growth reported in relation to the women's ethnic/racial background, class, and IV drug use history. These data suggest an expanded conceptualization of stress-related growth that includes behavioral aspects of growth in response to stress and

illness, and which takes into account the diverse ways in which growth may be experienced.



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Keywords

Stress-related growth; Coping; HIV/AIDS; Women; New York City

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