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Characteristics of Significant Life Events Across Adulthood

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Significant life events interfere with everyday life and have an impact on our well-being. Yet relatively little is known how the characteristics of significant life events change through adulthood. Based on the reasoning that developmental losses increase, and developmental gains decrease with age, we hypothesize that older compared to younger adults report significant life events that are less normative, have lower valence, and are less controllable. At the same time, because of their life experience and better emotion-regulation skills, older adults should handle less normative, less positive, and less controllable life events better than younger adults (in terms of subjective well-being, life satisfaction, and subjective health). We tested these hypotheses on a sample of $N = 6'688$ participants aged 18-90 years who reported experiencing at least one of 19 significant life events (from a list) during the past two years (e.g., relocation, job change, illness). The analyses are being conducted and will be presented at the time of the conference. The results will inform us about aspects of life events that are developmentally relevant regardless of the content of the life events.

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