Navigating the Rapids

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Mapping the Rapids

We aimed to scout out:

1. Prevalence of specific caregiving challenges
2. Incidence of stressful life events

Over the course of the prior year

Among those with K awards/CDAs or in the funding period of first R01 or equiv
Who was on the Journey?

152 of 210 eligible (72%)
Age: 39.7 ± 5.1
Women: 50%
Minority: 9.8%
Assist. Professors: 63.2%
With an MD: 70%, PhD only 30%
Married: Women 84%, Men 93% (p=0.08)
Children: 88% equal
What were the Challenges?

Hospitalization:
16% child had surgery
22% adult hospitalized
28% child hospitalized

Care coordination:
4% child (chronic debilitating condition)
21% adult outside the home
5% eldercare
1% hospice care
What Happened?

Stressful Life Events
Sixty-four percent at least one, average $1.9 \pm 1.1$:
- 30% death/serious illness of close friend or family
- 18% major money problems
- 17% divorce/break up of close friend or family
- 11% death of pet
- 9% partner with serious illness
- 6% verbal abuse
- 4% experience of disaster or violence
- 3% divorce
What Happened?

- Partner with cancer - radiation, chemo, & BMT.
- Preterm twins at 25 weeks.
- Child with autism - five forms of in-home therapy/week.
- Father with fragile diabetes has heart attack, bypass surgery, and new TIAs.
- Daughter with fulminant encephalitis & more than 6 months of hospitalization and rehabilitation.
- Father-in-law in hospice care for 18 months.
- Child assaulted, develops PTSD and is ultimately enrolled in therapeutic boarding school.
- Parents with dementia are refusing residential care.
Every river has rapids. You did not put them there. Life will happen - great things & challenging things
Why We Travel Alone

• Striving and Equity

• Fear of Pity

• Another Shoe will Drop
Staying the Course

Scout the rapids & make a plan.
Involve others.
Disclose needs when you’re ready.

Every river has rapids.
You did not put them there.
Roles of Guides

Share the map
Normative data can change culture

Provide the right gear
Feature resources of faculty assistance programs

Coach the process
Share experiences

Invest in the journey
Provide resources to protect or restore momentum when challenges happen
Provisioning

• Solid insurance (with life & disability)
• Take enhanced mental health coverage
• Health savings accounts
• Understand FAP and FMLA before need
• Emergency fund (3-6 months of living expenses)
• Get/stay out of debt.
• Plan with friends, neighbors, and family.
What This Implies

Things happen – often.
To most faculty in a year.
Invest in peace of mind:
  Think ahead
  Be familiar with resources
  Keep your finances in order
  Build a robust emergency fund
  Have a plan for help
  Accept it when needed