

Resilience of older people with cognitive decline and their support networks

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The Dutch consortium on Resilience & Dementia proposes that:

1. resilience is a relevant concept in all stages of cognitive decline (Fig 1);
2. a socioecological, multisystem perspective on resilience is required to advance understanding of, and care and support for people with cognitive decline and their support networks.



Fig. 1. A resilience approach can be applied at all levels, from cell to society, from micro to macro. These levels are interdependent.

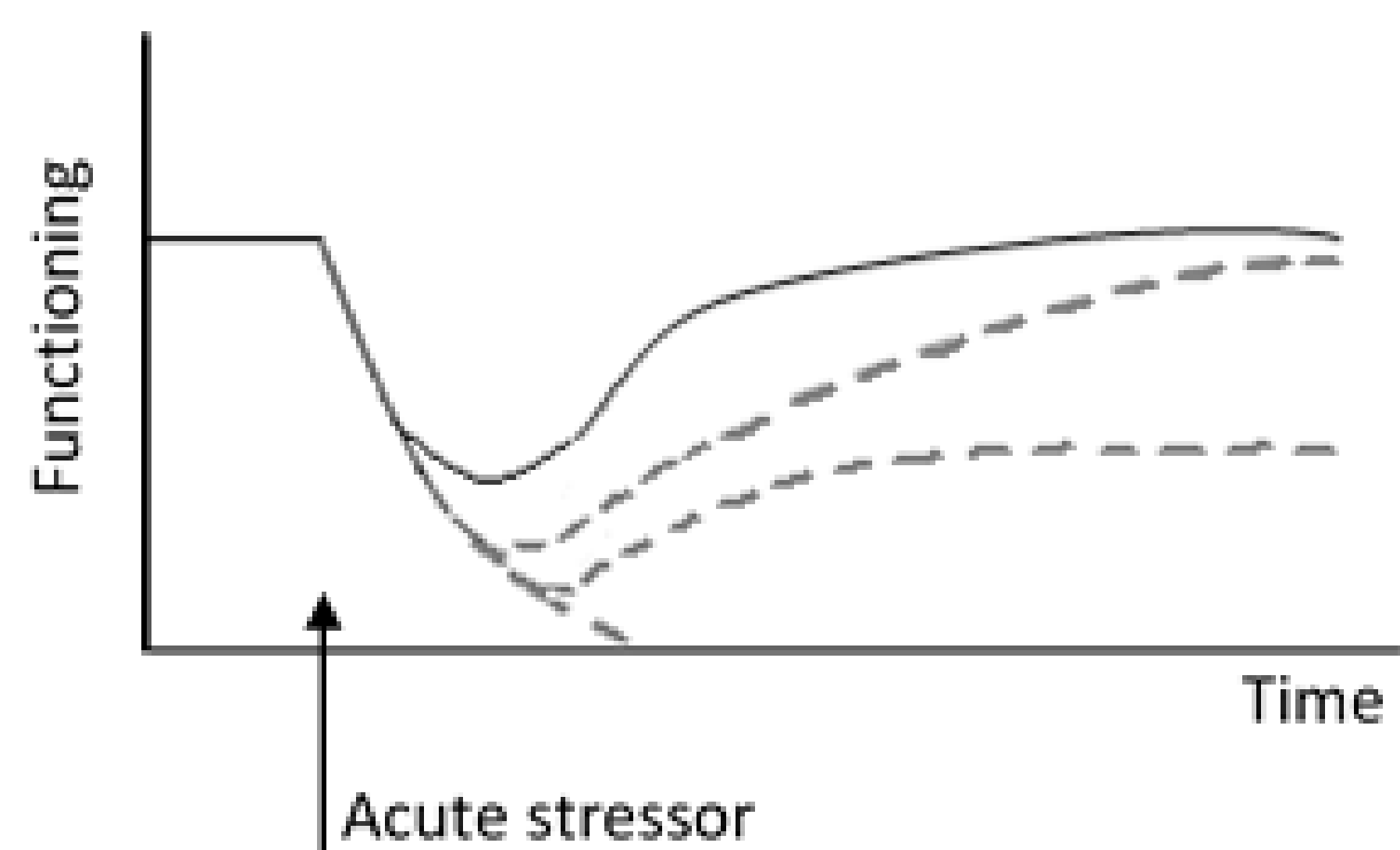


Fig. 2. Visualisation of the concept of resilience
— optimal recovery; - - - delayed, incomplete or no recovery

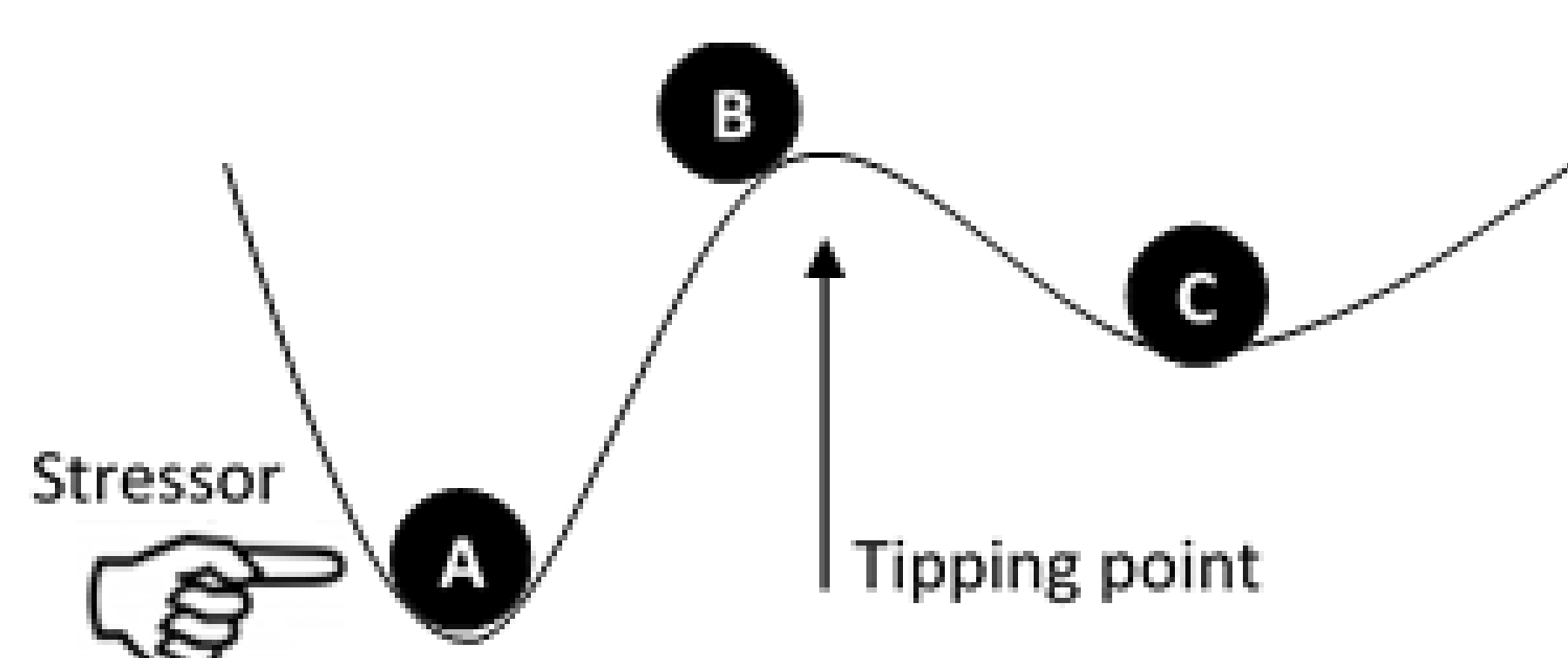


Fig. 3. Visualisation of the concept of resilience
A = stable state; B = transition state; C = unstable state

Resilience in preventive context

To understand differences in response to risk factors of (further) cognitive decline and informs personalised prevention.

Example: Understand why some but not all people with traumatic brain injury develop dementia.

Resilience in prognostic context

To predict recovery trajectory after adversity (Fig 2).

Example: Analysing the reaction of a person with cognitive decline to an infection-induced delirium.

Resilience in curative or rehabilitation context

Interventions to strengthen resilience aim to boost recovery from cognitive decline or maintenance of functioning (Fig 3, C → A).

Example: Coaching a person with progressive aphasia and their family in finding new methods to communicate, so that the person can maintain their social role in the family.

Resilience in care context

Interventions can strengthen coping mechanisms to maintain functioning of the individual and their support network.

Example: Monitoring stress factors that influence the caregivers' resilience enable timely interventions to prevent crisis admissions.

Resilience in social and policy context

Redesigning social and physical environments to support people with cognitive decline and their support networks.

Example: Age-friendly cities

Why a socioecological, multisystem perspective?

Good care for people with cognitive decline requires a resilient health and social care system. Given the interdependency of resilience at micro-, meso- and macro-levels, an integrative socioecological perspective is required (Fig 1).