

Successful Ager: Eugene H. Kunitake & Our Next Public Lecture

UC San Diego

Center for Healthy Aging
Stein Institute for
Research on Aging

Welcome to the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging and the Sam and Rose Stein Institute for Research on Aging e-newsletter!

Successful Ager: Eugene H. Kunitake



Eugene H. Kunitake, a retired Navy dentist with 26 years of active-duty service, has a motto which he lives by: “Eat like a bunny and jump like a bunny”, and at the age of 82 he puts this motto into practice every day and with every meal.

Growing up as one of seven children on a 10-acre farm in Kona, Hawai'i, Eugene learned at a very young age the importance of farming and community. His village in Kona was extremely close-knit and while members of the village lived as far away as twenty miles, social connections were cultivated and prioritized. The importance of having strong relationships with family and friends and

building this reliance on social relationships, Eugene believes, is part of what has helped him age successfully. He also believes a secret to his aging success stems from his diet. “In my village in Hawai'i, I observed all the farm animals like chickens and pigs. These animals' lives were simple, and I think we need to keep our lives simple to live long lives. Animals eat a lot of vegetables. As I am getting older my body is telling me to eat less refined foods and focus on what a wild animal does: eating simple foods and sleeping well. This is why I decided to raise my own vegetables in my own garden”. In fact, Eugene's diet is strictly whole foods as he declines processed food and restaurant food.

Eugene moved to San Diego with his wife Yutaka while stationed with the Navy. Together they raised three children and have three grandchildren. After retiring from the Navy in 1999, he started focusing his time on building a vegetable garden at their home in Carmel Valley. To do this, he transformed their backyard by taking out the entire lawn (except just a small patch) and has been planting vegetables there ever since.

He now spends much of his retirement enjoying

the benefits of gardening by planting seeds and growing his own young plants—tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants, cabbage, herbs, etc. Year-round Eugene can be found harvesting fibrous foods from his own backyard garden. By expanding upon his own innovative gardening techniques, Eugene prides himself no pesticides are sprayed over the vegetables nor spread on the ground, and he has been able to grow cabbages that are over 10lbs!



Over the years the surplus from his garden has been distributed to not only his neighbors, friends, and family, but also to the Triton Food Pantry at UCSD and sometimes at parking lots of Asian grocery stores. He finds great joy and satisfaction in making human connections by distributing the vegetables he has grown and watching how they make other people happy.

Eugene's discipline can be a challenge to emulate, but his advocacy for eating whole foods grown from your own garden is a testament to healthy living. Continuing to learn, experimenting with gardening techniques, and

staying busy cultivating his skills is one of the reasons why Eugene believes he is aging successfully. Having something meaningful to do daily is important for all of us, at any age! So, eat like a bunny and jump like a bunny ... a helpful motto to staying active on the path to healthy aging.

Know a Successful Ager?



At the Stein Institute for Research on Aging we like to highlight the stories and lives of successful agers in our community. Successful agers are those that continue to engage in activities that are meaningful and have found ways to adapt to challenges as they age. If you know of someone that you think we should spotlight please email Sasha Weiss at saweiss@health.ucsd.edu to nominate them!

Please register for our next Public Lecture on July 24th with Colin Depp, PhD

A promotional graphic for a public lecture. On the left, a circular portrait of Colin Depp, PhD, is shown in a blue shirt. Below the portrait, a yellow banner contains his name and title: "Colin Depp, PhD Associate Director". The background features abstract blue and yellow shapes, including overlapping circles and horizontal stripes. On the right, the UC San Diego logo is displayed, along with the text "Center for Healthy Aging Stein Institute for Research on Aging". The main text reads: "Please join us for our next PUBLIC LECTURE 'SOCIAL CONNECTION AND HEALTHY AGING'". Below this, it says "Please join us for a talk with one of our associate directors, with Dr. Colin Depp Q & A to follow." At the bottom, there are three icons: a clock for "4 - 5PM", a calendar for "WED, JULY 24", and a location pin for "ZOOM".

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4 - 5PM WED, JULY 24 ZOOM

As a clinician scientist, Colin Depp's research has focused on technology-based longitudinal assessment and real-time interventions in mental health, in particular mobile technology applications in serious mental illnesses. Dr. Depp has been fortunate to receive as PI several NIMH and VA grants, each concerned with evaluation of technology enhanced assessments and cognitive and behavioral real-time interventions. He is a co-investigator on several other NIH and foundation-funded projects that deliver multi-component behavioral interventions and incorporate use of technology to assess and modify suicide risk, cognitive ability, and other mental health outcomes. Dr. Depp is also the Director of Research Education and Training at the Clinical and Translational Research Institute at the University of California, San Diego and is active in the role of mentoring clinician scientists in multiple training programs. This position has led him to be increasingly involved in inter-disciplinary education programs, and developing team science in collaboration with clinicians, engineers, and bioinformaticians, as well as in creating novel training opportunities in entrepreneurship in medical devices. Clinically, he is a practicing clinical psychologist in the VA San Diego where he mentors and clinically supervises residents, fellows, graduate students, and interns.

[Please Register Here](#)

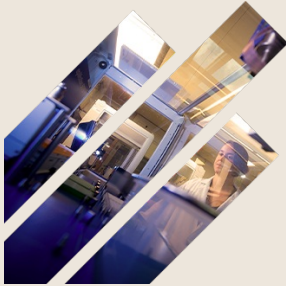
Resilience, Compassion and Self-Compassion Program available for License

After nearly a decade of research and



development, we are pleased to announce that our evidenced-based program to enhance resilience, compassion, and self-compassion is now licensed and available for use in community settings.

If you are interested in learning more about the program, please contact us at healthyaging@health.ucsd.edu



We Need Your Support!

When you give to the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging and the Stein Institute for Research on Aging, you're making the decision to support **the pursuit of a healthier, longer life for you and your loved ones**. Please **make a gift** to help sustain and expand our successful aging programs.

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