

Life-Span Development Thirteenth Edition

Chapter 19: Socioemotional Development in Late Adulthood

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Theories of Socioemotional Development

- Erikson's Theory:
 - Integrity vs. Despair: involves reflecting on the past and either piecing together a positive review or concluding that one's life has not been well spent
 - Life review: looking back at one's life experiences, evaluating them, and interpreting/reinterpreting them

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Theories of Socioemotional Development

- Erikson's Theory (continued):
 - Regrets:
 - Education, careers, marriages, finance/money, family conflict and children's problems, loss and grief, and health
 - Making downward social comparisons
 - Resolving regrets following the death of a loved one
 - Reminiscence therapy: discussing past activities and experiences with another individual or group

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Theories of Socioemotional Development

Erikson



Conflict and Resolution	Culmination in Old Age
Old age Integrity vs. despair; wisdom	Existential identity; a sense of integrity strong enough to withstand physical disintegration.
Middle adulthood Generativity vs. stagnation; care	Caring for others, and empathy and concern.
Early adulthood Intimacy vs. isolation; love	Sense of complexity of relationships; value of tenderness and loving freely.
Adolescence Identity vs. confusion; fidelity	Sense of complexity of life; merger of sensory, logical, and aesthetic perception.
School age Industry vs. inferiority; competence	Humility; acceptance of the course of one's life and unfulfilled hopes.
Early childhood Initiative vs. guilt; purpose	Humor; empathy; resilience.
Toddlerhood Autonomy vs. shame; will	Acceptance of the cycle of life, from integration to disintegration.
Infancy Basic trust vs. mistrust; hope	Appreciation of interdependence and relatedness.

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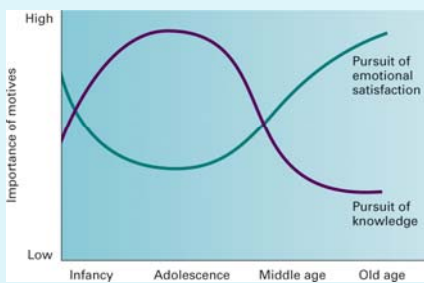
Theories of Socioemotional Development

- Activity Theory:
 - The more active and involved older adults are, the more likely they are to be satisfied with their lives
- Socioemotional Selectivity Theory:
 - Older adults become more selective about their social networks, spending more time with individuals with whom they have had rewarding relationships

Theories of Socioemotional Development

- Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (continued):
 - Two important classes of goals:
 - Knowledge-related
 - Emotional
 - Trajectory for each type of goal is different
 - As older adults perceive that they have less time left, they spend more time pursuing emotional satisfaction

Theories of Socioemotional Development



Theories of Socioemotional Development

- Selective Optimization with Compensation Theory: successful aging is linked with three main factors:
 - Selection: older adults have a reduced capacity and loss of functioning, which require a reduction in performance in most life domains
 - Optimization: it is possible to maintain performance in some areas through continued practice and the use of new technologies
 - Compensation: older adults need to compensate when life tasks require a higher level of capacity

Theories of Socioemotional Development

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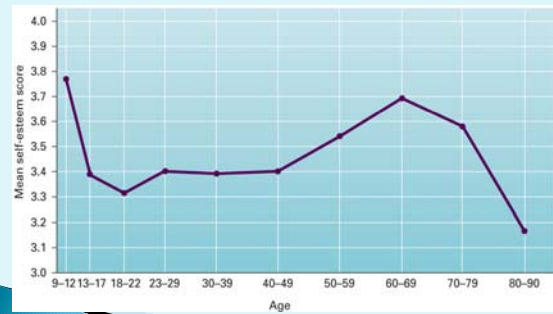
Personality, The Self, and Society

- Personality
 - Conscientiousness predicts lower mortality risk from childhood through late adulthood
 - Low conscientiousness and high neuroticism predicts earlier death
 - High conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness were related to higher mortality risk

Personality, The Self, and Society

- The Self and Society
 - Self-Esteem
 - Tends to decline significantly in the 70s and 80s because of:
 - Being widowed, institutionalized, or physically impaired
 - Having a low religious commitment
 - Declining health

The Self and Society



Personality, The Self, and Society

- The Self and Society
 - Possible Selves: what individuals might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming
 - Self-Control
 - A majority of adults in their 60s and 70s reported being in control of their lives

Personality, The Self, and Society

- Older Adults in Society
 - Stereotyping Older Adults
 - Ageism: prejudice against others because of their age
 - Policy Issues in an Aging Society
 - Status of the Economy
 - Health Care
 - Eldercare
 - Generational Inequity
 - Income
 - Living Arrangements
 - Technology

Families and Social Relationships

- Lifestyle Diversity
 - Married Older Adults
 - In 2004, 56% of U.S. adults over 65 were married; 45% of older adult women were widows
 - Marital satisfaction is greater in older adults than middle-aged adults
 - Retirement alters a couple's lifestyle
 - Older adults who are married or partnered are usually happier and live longer than those who are single

Families and Social Relationships

- Lifestyle Diversity
 - Divorced and Separated Older Adults
 - Represented only 8% of older adults in 2004
 - Social, financial, and physical consequences of divorce
 - Remarriage is increasing due to rising divorce rates, increased longevity, and better health

Families and Social Relationships

- Lifestyle Diversity
 - Cohabiting Older Adults
 - Today, 3% of older adults cohabit
 - Romance and Sex in Older Adults' Relationships
 - An increased number of older adults date
 - When older adults are healthy, they still engage in sexual activities

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Families and Social Relationships

- Older Adult Parents and Their Children
 - About 80% of older adults have living children, many of whom are middle-aged
 - Adult daughters are more likely to be involved in the lives of aging parents
 - Adult children often coordinate and monitor services for aging disabled parents

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Families and Social Relationships

- Great-Grandparenting
 - The four-generation family is more common
 - Great-grandparents can transmit family history

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Families and Social Relationships

- Friendship
 - In late adulthood, new friendships are less likely to be forged and close friends are chosen over new friends
 - Friendships are more important than family in predicting mental health
 - Individuals with close ties to friends were less likely to die
 - Unmarried older adults in a friend-focused network fared better physically and psychologically than other unmarried older adults with little friend contact

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Families and Social Relationships

- Social Support and Social Integration
 - Social Support
 - Convoy Model of Social Relations: individuals go through life embedded in a personal network of individuals to whom they give and from whom they receive social support
 - Social Integration
 - Older adults have fewer peripheral social contacts and more emotionally positive contacts with friends and family
 - Emotional and social loneliness can affect the quality of marriage in older adults

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Families and Social Relationships

- Altruism and Volunteerism
 - Older adults who had persistently low or declining feelings of usefulness to others had an increased risk of earlier death
 - Volunteering is associated with a number of positive outcomes

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Ethnicity, Gender, and Culture

- Ethnicity:
 - Elderly ethnic minority individuals face both ageism and racism
 - More likely to become ill but less likely to receive treatment
 - Many never reach the age of eligibility for Social Security benefits
 - Despite stress and discrimination many ethnic minority individuals have developed coping mechanisms that allow them to survive

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Ethnicity, Gender, and Culture

- Gender:
 - Some developmentalists believe that there is decreasing femininity in women and decreasing masculinity in men during late adulthood
 - Older men often become more feminine, but women do not necessarily become more masculine
 - Older adult females face ageism and sexism

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Ethnicity, Gender, and Culture

- Culture
 - Three factors are important in living the “good life”
 - Health
 - Security
 - Kinship/support

Ethnicity, Gender, and Culture

- Culture
 - Seven factors are likely to predict high status for older adults in a culture:
 - Have valuable knowledge
 - Control key family/community resources
 - Engage in useful/valued functions as long as possible
 - Role continuity
 - Age-related role changes that give greater responsibility, authority, and advisory capacity
 - Extended family
 - Respect for older adults

Successful Aging

- Many abilities can be maintained and/or improved in older adults due to:
 - Proper diet
 - Active lifestyle
 - Mental stimulation and flexibility
 - Positive coping skills
 - Good social relationships and support
 - Absence of disease
 - A sense of self-efficacy