

# Adulthood

**Unit 3: Developmental Psych**

# Erikson's View of Adulthood

**Intimacy vs. Isolation** (age 19-40) - Exploring the ability to share close, personal relationships with other people leading to longer term commitments.

**Generativity vs. Stagnation** (age 40-65) - We give back to future generations by finding ways to continue to contribute to one's family and community.

**Integrity vs. Despair** (age 65 - death) - Focus on reflection. Productivity slows and we look back at our life and our accomplishments to hopefully find satisfaction with our lives.

# Aging

## Physical Changes

Weight Increases -- 1 lb per year

Farsightedness -- adapting to dark

Hearing Declines --  $\frac{3}{4}$  of adults

Menopause -- loss of fertility

Senile Dementia -- 15% over age 65

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# Aging

## Cognitive Changes

Intelligence remains **stable**

**Speed** in learning, problem solving,  
and memory retrieval declines

**IQ drops** in the last few years  
before death

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# Transitions in Family Life

- As a person becomes an adult they experience changes in family responsibilities and relationships. This happens when one leaves their *parental family unit* to create their own.
- This time of transition between leaving the family of your youth and creating the family of your adulthood is sometimes called “**between families**”
- That stage is getting wider. Why do you think?

# Marriage

- Over 90% of people marry. Why?
- What are the benefits of marriage? List as many as you can.
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# Children

The arrival of the first child is a major transition in one's life. Why?

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# Male Development

Daniel Levinson proposed a model of adult development for men from early, to middle, to late adulthood that was characterised by a man's reactions to the transition periods in his adult life. Some major transitions are:

- The Age-Thirty Crisis
- Settling Down
- The Midlife Crisis
- Middle Adulthood



# The “Age 30 Crisis”

Between the ages of 28 and 30 men are re-examining the major commitments that have been made thus far.

- Current marriage or relationship
- Career goals
- Life goals

Any parts of life that are unsatisfactory now must be attended to because it will soon be too late to make any major changes. The crisis is resolved when decisions are made and a man begins the *Settling Down* period.

# The “Mid-Life Crisis”

At about age 40, when early adulthood comes to an end, the midlife transition begins. Men begin to question their past and their future.

A big part of this crisis deals with *Erikson’s Generativity vs. Stagnation* stage and whether a man feels fulfilled and useful in his current life. There is often a feeling of being *pressed for time before old age and death*

- What are some stereotypical reactions to the midlife crisis?

# Female Development

Where men often face a crisis at midlife, married women at midlife may be facing fewer demands in their traditional task as mother.

For many this means a time of greater personal freedom and new opportunities.

# Female Development

Challenges women traditionally face during midlife:

- Empty Nest Syndrome
  - Contrary to belief this event is most likely not traumatic
  - Spouses reconnect and spend more time pursuing their own goals and interests
- Depression
  - Middle aged women are commonly affected by depression as their sense of personal worth changes with their changing roles of daughter, lover, wife, mother, and wage earner.
- Menopause
  - Loss of fertility and the onset of symptoms such as hot flashes, sleep problems, mood swings, weight gain, and thinning hair.

# Social Clock

A person's notion of the developmental schedule that specifies what he or she should have accomplished by certain points in life.

## YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Create a visual representation of your own social clock. How old will you be when you...?

It can be a timeline, an actual clock, a flow-chart, or something else of your own design.

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**10 marks**

# Old Age

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# Changes in Health

- Physical Strength and Senses decline about 1% per year.
- 31% of people above the age of 65 are obese.
- 35% of elderly people have at least 1 chronic disease. 4 most common are:
  - Heart disease
  - Hypertension
  - Diabetes
  - Arthritis

# Life Changes

- Transitions in younger life - graduation, marriage, children, etc. - are often positive and create greater involvement in life.
- Transitions in late adulthood - retirement, widowhood, etc. - are often negative and reduce responsibilities and increase isolation.
- Though some older adults continue to invest in themselves, develop new skills and remain active socially.

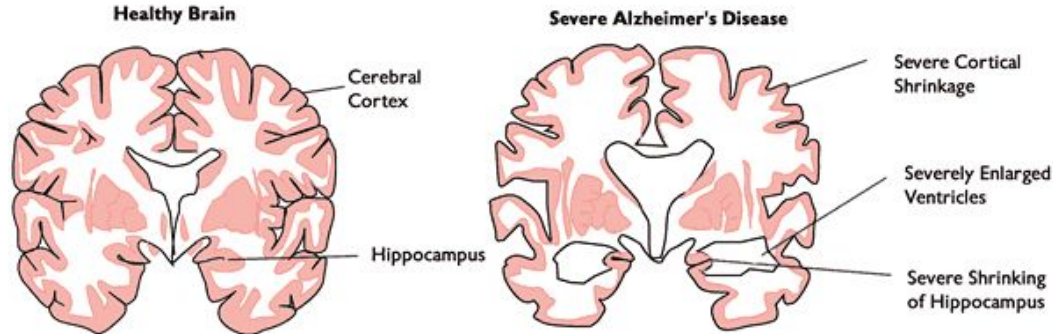


# Cognitive Changes

- The decline in intelligence and memory that comes with old age is much less significant than young people tend to think.
- The ability to use accumulated knowledge and learning in appropriate situations increases with age and experience.
- The ability to solve abstract problems and generate hypotheses declines as the nervous system matures.

# Cognitive Changes

- A small percentage of the elderly are affected by mental disorders that affect their ability to think and remember.
  - **Senile Dementia** - collective term describing decreases in mental abilities (forgetfulness, disorientation, etc.) experienced by some people in old age.
  - **Alzheimer's Disease** - a neurological condition that destroys a person's ability to think, remember, relate to others, and care for him/herself.



# Attitudes Towards Aging

- Many of our attitudes are based on a **decremental model** of aging – an idea that progressive physical and mental decline are inevitable with age.
  - In reality there is great variance in the physical and mental state among the elderly.
- The prevalence of this view leads some people into a climate of prejudice against the old or **ageism**.

**Jaring Timmerman** (age 104)  
World record holder in masters swimming.  
Winnipeg, MB



# Dying and Death

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# Adjusting to Death

**Elizabeth Kubler-Ross** (1969) focused her research on how the terminally ill react to their impending death.

- She interviewed 200 patients and identified 5 stages of psychological adjustment.
- Later referred to as the **5 Stages of Grief**, this model can be applied to any situation in which a person goes through major personal loss.
- The model was first introduced in Kubler-Ross's book *On Death and Dying*. She later wrote that the stages were not intended to be a linear, predictable progression.

**Thanatology:** The study of dying and death.

# 5 Stages of Grief

## 1. Denial

- Common first reaction, believing there has been some mistake.
- Refusing treatment, convinced the doctors are wrong and incompetent.

## 2. Anger

- Frustration that occurs when they realize denial cannot continue, often directed at others.
- "Why me" reaction, may alienate themselves from friends and family.

## 3. Bargaining

- Change of attitude to an attempt to bargain with fate.
- Usually involves a promise of reform in exchange for more time.

## 4. Depression

- Become aware of the losses they are facing and those to come.
- Expressions of sadness that need to be felt.

## 5. Acceptance

- Sense of calm after the period of struggle.