

Detailed Chapter Outline with Key Terms

Chapter 18: Psychosocial Development in Late Adulthood

Focus: Jimmy Carter, “Retired” President

- *Successful or optimal aging:* Terms referring to the aging process in adults who are relatively healthy, competent, and in control of their lives, and who experience late adulthood as a positive stage of life.

THEORY AND RESEARCH ON PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Measuring Stability and Change in Personality

Three Ways of Measuring Stability and Change in Personality:

- Measure average levels of various traits within a population
- Follow individuals over periods of time
- Rank-order comparisons of different people at different ages for a given trait

Personality, Emotionality, and Well-Being

- *Extroverted:* Outgoing and socially oriented personality.
- *Neurotic:* Moody, touchy, anxious, and restless personality.

Erik Erikson: Normative Issues and Tasks

- **Ego integrity versus despair:** According to Erikson, the eighth and final critical alternative of psychosocial development, in which people in late adulthood either achieve a sense of integrity of the self by accepting the lives they have lived, and thus accept death, or yield to despair that their lives cannot be relived.
- *Wisdom:* The virtue in Erikson’s eighth stage, an informed and detached concern with life itself in the face of death itself.

Models of Coping

- **Coping:** Adaptive thinking or behavior aimed at reducing or relieving stress that arises from harmful, threatening, or challenging conditions.

George Vaillant: Adaptive Defenses

- *Adaptive defenses:* Mature defenses, in Vaillant’s theory, such as altruism, humor, suppression, anticipation, and sublimation.

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Cognitive-Appraisal Model

- **Cognitive-appraisal model:** Model of coping, proposed by Lazarus and Folkman, which holds that, on the basis of continuous appraisal of their relationship with the environment, people choose appropriate coping strategies to deal with situations that tax their normal resources.

Coping Strategies: Problem-focused versus Emotion-focused

- **Problem-focused coping:** In the cognitive-appraisal model, coping strategy directed toward eliminating, managing, or improving a stressful situation.
- **Emotion-focused coping:** In the cognitive-appraisal model, coping strategy directed toward managing the emotional response to a stressful situation so as to lessen its physical or psychological impact; sometimes called *palliative coping*.

Age Differences in Choice of Coping Styles

- **Proactive:** A type of emotion-focused coping that involves confronting or expressing one's emotions or seeking social approval.
- **Passive:** A type of emotion-focused coping that involves avoidance, denial, or suppression of emotions or acceptance of the situation as it is.
- **Ambiguous loss:** A loss that is not clearly defined or does not bring closure.

Does Religion or Spirituality Affect Health and Well-Being?

Models of "Successful" or "Optimal" Aging

Disengagement Theory versus Activity Theory

- **Disengagement theory:** Theory of aging, proposed by Cumming and Henry, which holds that successful aging is characterized by mutual withdrawal between the older person and society.
- **Activity theory:** Theory of aging, proposed by Neugarten and others, which holds that in order to age successfully a person must remain as active as possible.

Continuity Theory

- **Continuity theory:** Theory of aging, described by Atchley, which holds that in order to age successfully people must maintain a balance of continuity and change in both the internal and external structures of their lives.

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The Role of Productivity

Selective Optimization with Compensation

- *Selective optimization with compensation:* In Baltes's dual-process model, strategy for maintaining or enhancing overall cognitive functioning by using stronger abilities to compensate for those that have weakened.

LIFESTYLE AND SOCIAL ISSUES RELATED TO AGING

Work and Retirement

Trends in Late-Life Work and Retirement

How Does Age Affect Attitudes Toward Work and Job Performance?

Life after Retirement

- **Family-focused lifestyle:** Pattern of retirement activity that revolves around family, home, and companions.
- **Balanced investment:** Pattern of retirement activity allocated among family, work, and leisure.
- **Serious leisure:** Leisure activity requiring skill, attention, and commitment.

How Do Older Adults Fare Financially?

Living Arrangements

Aging in Place

Living Alone

Living with Adult Children

Living in Institutions

Alternative Housing Options

- *Assisted living:* Living in a facility that enables the older person to maintain privacy, dignity, autonomy, and a sense of control over their own homelike space, while giving them easy access to needed personal and health care services.

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Mistreatment of the Elderly

- **Elder abuse:** Maltreatment or neglect of dependent older persons, or violation of their personal rights.

Categories of Elder Abuse:

- *Physical abuse* - physical force that may cause bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment
- *Sexual abuse* - nonconsensual sexual contact with an elderly person
- *Emotional or psychological abuse* - infliction of anguish, pain, or distress
- *Financial or material exploitation* - illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, property, or assets
- *Neglect* - refusal or failure to fulfill any part of one's obligations or duties to an elder
- *Self-neglect* - behaviors of a depressed, frail, or mentally incompetent elderly person that threaten his or her own health or safety
- A seventh category has been added by the American Medical Association: *Violating personal rights* - violating an older person's rights to privacy or to make his or her own personal and health decisions.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN LATE LIFE

Theories of Social Contact and Social Support

- *Social convoy theory:* Theory of aging, proposed by Kahn and Antonucci, which holds that people move through life surrounded by concentric circles of intimate relationships or varying degrees of closeness, on which people rely for assistance, well-being, and social support.
- *Socioemotional selectivity theory:* Theory, proposed by Carstensen, that people select social contacts throughout life on the basis of the changing relative importance of social interaction as a source of information, as an aid in developing and maintaining a self-concept, and as a source of emotional well-being.

Benefits of Social Relationships

The Multigenerational Family

- *Lineal:* Family style in which the emphasis is on intergenerational obligations, with power and authority lodged in the older generation.
- *Collateral:* Family style in which the emphasis is on egalitarian relationships, with flexible household structures.

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CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Long-Term Marriage

Divorce and Remarriage

Widowhood

Single Life

Gay and Lesbian Relationships

- *Status*: A way of viewing homosexuality as a characteristic of the self.

Friendships

NONMARITAL KINSHIP TIES

Relationships with Adult Children—or Their Absence

Relationships with Siblings

Becoming Great-Grandparents