ADOLESCENCE

• G. Stanley Hall: Period of storm and stress. First to study adolescence.
• Zeitgeist: spirit of the age, trend of thought & feelings in a period.
  – Transition from childhood to adulthood
  – Begins at onset of puberty
    • When reproductive system matures
    • Increase in production of sex hormones
    • Rapid growth
  – Lasts until ~age 20
Physical Development in Adolescents

Adolescere: To grow up

- Timing of puberty varies
  - Menarch: Landmark of puberty. Begins as early as 8 (girls)
  - Girls enter puberty about two years before boys
  - Average age of sexual maturity is 13 years
  - First menstrual cycle (12-13 years)
  - Preceded by growth spurts
  - Development of secondary sexual characteristics

Boys’ body image tends to be more positive than girls’ in puberty

Early-maturing adolescents may have advantages
  - E.g., more confidence, higher expectations from others, independent, relaxed, physically attractive
  - Some are at a disadvantage if treated as an outsider

Late Maturing: anxious, talkative, attention seeking

Stress of maturing early/late may encourage development of coping skills

Physical Development

- Girls
  - Early Maturing: negative connotations—lack self confidence, anxious
  - Late Maturing: seen more positive—physically attractive, sociable, leaders at school. More prone to depression
Cognitive Development

Most adolescents are in Piaget's Formal Operational Stage

• Can think abstractly and form hypotheses:
  • Systematic, scientific thinking, problem solving, deductive reasoning
  • May lead some to be argumentative
  • Adolescent egocentrism develops

Between-Group Differences

Parenting Style

Children of authoritative parents achieve more in school

• Caring warmth and firm discipline
• More influential for White American teens

May be due to differences in attitudes

> Asian Americans taught to fear consequences of a poor education
> African Americans more likely to believe in positive outcomes despite a poor education

Brain Development

• Brain imaging research reveals that continued pruning of unused synapses in the cerebral cortex occurs in adolescence as do accelerated growth and myelination of stimulated neural fibers.
Brain Development

• Neurons become more responsive to excitatory neurotransmitters, leading to more intense reactions to both stressful events and pleasurable stimuli which in turn encourages a drive for novel experiences during this period.

Brain Development

• Alterations in neurotransmitter activity in adolescence may lead to susceptibility to certain disorders
  – Mood disorders
  – Eating disorders
  – Sleep disorders

Between Group Differences

• Parenting styles:
  – Authoritative parents: children achieve more in school
• Parent-child relationships: increased conflict, increased arguing in No. American subcultures.
Emotional and Social Development

1. Development of Self-Esteem
   a. Ethnic Identity
      – Feelings about and sense of membership in an ethnic or cultural group
      – Can be a source of cultural connection
      – Can also be a source of alienation
   b. Involvement in Athletics
      – Higher achievement
      – Better body image
      – Healthier weight
      – Lower stress

Emotional Development

• Moodiness: linked to increased number of life events including:
  – Difficulty with parents
  – Disciplinary problems at school
  – Breaking up w/ significant others
  – More evident between 12-16 years of age

Depression

The most common psychological disorder in adolescence: feeling sad, frustrated, hopeless about life, loss of pleasure in most activities, sleep and appetite disturbances, changes in concentration and energy.
15-20% of teenagers have 1 or more major depressive episodes, girls 2x more than boys
Suicide

- Suicidal teenagers often show other symptoms
  - E.g., substance abuse, antisocial behavior
- Adults are more likely to commit suicide
- Adolescents are more likely to attempt suicide
  - Girls more likely to attempt suicide
  - Boys more likely to commit suicide
  - Whites more likely to commit suicide than African Americans or Latinos
  - Native Americans have highest rates

Leading Causes of Death

- Motor vehicle collisions
- Homicides
- Suicides

Suicide

- Take suicidal talk seriously and seek professional help
- Adolescent suicide rates for all ethnic groups are increasing

HELP!
Erikson’s Stage Theory
Identity
Stage 5: Adolescence
Identity vs. Role Confusion
» Growth and turmoil of adolescence creates an “identity crisis”
» Crisis is resolved by forming an identity
» Failure to form an identity leads to confusion about adult roles and an inability to cope with demands of adulthood

Erikson’s
Identity vs. Role Confusion
Who Am I? The Search for Gender Identity
Gender Identity:
• A person’s sense of being male or female
• Some sense of gender identity develops by age 3
• At about 4 or 5, children realize gender identity is permanent

Gender Identity
During adolescence, gender intensification may occur
— Exaggerated orientation toward maleness or femaleness
— Usually short-lived
Gender Schema Theory
— Children develop shorthand concepts of what boys and girls are like
— Try to behave in ways consistent with these concepts
Gender Roles & Stereotypes

Gender roles have changed in the last century

**Androgynous behaviors** more common
- A blend of stereotypically male and female characteristics
- Androgynous individuals tend to feel more fulfilled and competent

But we still live in a gendered society

Friendship & Sexual Behavior

- Most teenagers have 3–5 good friends
- Up to 29% of adolescents’ time is spent with friends
- In adulthood, only 7% of time
- Having or not having friends has important consequences
  - Children and adolescents who have friends tend to be more socially competent
  - Friendship sets the stage for adult intimacy

In adulthood, friendships differ by gender
- Women and men talk about different things
- Women find friendships more satisfying
- Men still experience and seek intimacy and support in friendships

Intimacy and shared values are key
Friendship & Sexual Behavior

Sexual intimacy seen as an important and normal part of growing up for American teens
- Premarital heterosexual activity has become increasingly common
- Adolescents are having sexual experiences at younger ages

Friendship & Sexual Behavior

Increased awareness of the problems of teen pregnancy
- Teen mothers:
  - Are more likely to smoke
  - Are less likely to receive prenatal care
  - Have limited educational and employment opportunities
- Comprehensive programs that teach abstinence AND contraception reduce risks of teen pregnancy

ADULTHOOD
Adulthood

Physical Changes

1. Fitness
   - Both psychological and physical
   - Peak physical fitness is between the ages of 18 and 30
   - Gradual decline after age 30
   - Women at greater risk for osteoporosis
   - However, most adults maintain good health

Sexual Changes

- Normal stress in adulthood can affect sexual desire
- In the 30s and 40s
  - Sexual desire often increases for women
  - Men achieve erection less rapidly

Menopause occurs around age 50

- Cessation in menstruation and ovulation caused by hormonal changes
- Often seen as a transition
  - No longer have to deal with birth control issues
  - May be viewed as the end to youthful femininity
  - However, rarely associated with psychological problems
Sexual Changes

At about the same age, men’s testosterone levels decrease
- Ejaculations become weaker and briefer
- Sexual desire decreases

Older adults continue to engage in and enjoy sexual activity
Lack of sexual activity usually due to lack of a partner or a disabling medical condition

Cognitive Changes

- Up to age 65, there is little decline in learning or memory
- Some decline in math abilities and memory after age 60

Social & Personality Development

Personality remains stable over time
“Supermom” phenomenon for working women
- Often makes working moms feel overburdened
Erikson

**Stage 6: Young Adulthood**
Intimacy vs. Isolation
– Young adults must commit to lasting intimate and caring relationships
– The alternative is isolation

**Erik Erikson**

**Stage 7: Middle Adulthood**
Generativity vs. Stagnation
– People become aware of their mortality
– Concern shifts to the next generation
– Midlife transition/ Midlife crisis
– Empty Nest syndrome
– Failure leads to stagnation and self-absorption

**Erikson**

**Stage 8: Ego Integrity vs. Despair**
– Integrity: No regrets
– Late adults conduct a life review
– Successful resolution leads to a feeling of fulfillment
– Failure leads to regret, inability to accept death leads to despair
Review of Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development

• See handout

Levinson’s Life Structure

– Does not see life as a journey toward a specific goal

– Specifies four developmental eras
  • Correspond to different developmental stages and tasks
  • Specific tasks in each era may differ between individuals

Levinson’s Life Structures

Era 1: Adolescence (ages 4–17)
  – People enter the adult world, but are still immature and vulnerable

Era 2: Early Adulthood (ages 18–45)
  – First major life choices are made
  – Midlife crisis occurs at the end of this era
    • Caused by the realization that if life must be changed, it must be changed soon
    • More appropriately called a midlife transition
Levinson’s Life Structures

Era 3: Middle adulthood (ages 46–65)
– Career and family are well-established
– People either feel:
  • Satisfaction and self-worth
  • A sense that much of life has been wasted

Era 4: Late adulthood (ages 65 and on)
– Many people relax, enjoying the fruits of their labor
– Children and grandchildren become the focus of attention

Evaluating Erikson’s & Levinson’s Theories

Levinson’s theory has a more rigid timetable than Erikson’s
Both are hard to
  • Evaluate experimentally
  • Apply in making predictions about future behavior
Levinson’s original study was based mainly on a small sample of middle-class men

LATE ADULTHOOD
Late Adulthood

Growing older is affected by cultural attitudes and stereotypes
- In many Asian and African cultures, the elderly are given great respect
- In the United States, youth is more valued

About 12% of the U.S. population is 65 years of age or older

Late Adulthood

Current life expectancy in the US
- Women 80 years, men 73 years.
- There are also racial/ethnic differences in life expectancy

Ageism

Prejudice against the elderly, and the discrimination it leads to
Very common, especially in the media
- Disrespect for older people
- Assumptions about frailty

The less capable someone appears, the more he or she is likely to be treated disrespectfully
Health in Late Adulthood

Many elderly lead healthy lives
Various health changes do occur
• Changes in sleep patterns
• Arthritis and osteoporosis may develop
• Cardiovascular and digestive changes
• Immune system less effective

Dementia

Impairments in mental functioning
• Progressive
• Loss of function in at least two areas
NOT a problem of normal aging
• Result of abnormal disease processes

Dementia

Symptoms
• Memory loss
• Loss of language skills
• Personality changes

Types
• Reversible
  – Caused by malnutrition, alcoholism, and toxins
  – Usually affect younger people
Dementia

Types

• Irreversible
  – Multiple infarct dementia
    » Caused by 2 or more small strokes, blockage in the arteries
    » Headaches, dizziness, confusion
    » Medical treatment can slow course
  – Alzheimer’s disease
    » Involves memory loss, language deterioration, poor visual/spatial skills, and an indifferent attitude

Alzheimer’s Disease

Accounts for 50% of the cases of progressive memory loss. It is irreversible and ends in death

  – The exact cause is unknown
  – No cure

Delirium

• Reduced ability to maintain attention to external stimuli
• Acute (sudden) onset
• Caused by brain tumors, alcohol, drugs, malnutrition
• Symptoms
  • Disturbances in the sleep wake cycle
  • Memory Impairment
• Treatable
Phases of Retirement

- Pre-retirement: positive, begin to separate themselves emotionally from their job, fantasize about retired life
- Honeymoon: Separated from job, try to fulfill pre-retirement fantasies
- Disenchantment: Honeymoon is over, retirement structure fails, sad, depressed
- Reorientation: rebuild a new structure
- Stability: happy with themselves & family
- Termination: Unhappy, depend on family, can’t take care of themselves

Death & Dying

Some individuals experience a terminal drop in health
- Rapid drop in intellectual functioning the year before death
- Can not be used to predict death, however

7 out of 10 older adults die of heart disease, cancer, or stroke

Thanatology
- The study of the psychological and medical aspects of death and dying

Causes of Death

1. Heart Disease
2. Cancer
3. Stroke
5 Stages of Death & Dying
Kubler-Ross
• Denial: “No! Not me!”
• Anger: “Why me?”
• Bargaining: “Yes, But..”
• Depression: “Yes me.” Mourns loss
• Acceptance: “Yes me, but let’s move on.” Devoid of feelings, neither happy or sad.

Death
Euthanasia: Encouraging good easy death.
- Passive: Takes no extraordinary life prolonging measures, no machines, drugs, transfusions, IV feedings
- Active: Hastened by the use of drugs & other medical procedures
Living Wills: document which states whether an individual wants to die by natural death or with life sustaining equipment

Medical Concept of Death
Types of Death:
– Clinical Death: Heart stops, no breathing
– Cerebral Death: Death of the cortex
– Brain Death: All parts of the brain stop functioning