Adolescence
Identity

Chapter 4

Identity is composed of many pieces!

Vocational/career identity
Political identity
Religious identity
Relationship identity
Achievement, intellectual identity
Sexual identity
Cultural/ethnic identity
Interest
Personality
Physical identity

Some Contemporary Thoughts on Identity

It is a lengthy process
More gradual and less cataclysmic than Erikson’s term crisis implies (Baumeister, 1991)
Complex process neither begins nor ends with adolescence (Côté, 2006; Kroger, 2007; Marcia & Carpendale, 2004)
For the first time, physical, cognitive, and socioemotional development advance to the point at which the individual can sort through and synthesize childhood identities and identifications to construct a viable path toward adult maturity (Marcia & Carpendale, 2004)
Erikson’s Identity vs. Role Confusion

Who Am I? The Search for Gender Identity

1. 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 concepts of what boys and girls are like
   – Try to behave in ways consistent with these concepts

Cultural and Ethnic Identity

- Ethnic identity - a basic aspect of the self that includes a sense of membership in an ethnic group, along with the attitudes and feelings related to that membership.
- 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
- Bicultural identity - adolescents identify in some ways with their ethnic group and in other ways with the majority culture (Phinney, 2006; Whitesell & others, 2006).
Emotional Development

Emotion
A feeling, or affect, that occurs when a person is in a state or an interaction that is important to him or her, especially to his or her well-being (Campos, Frankel, & Camras, 2004).

Emotional Development

– Early adolescence is a time when emotional highs and lows occur more frequently (Rosenblum & Lewis, 2003)
– Moodiness is a normal aspect of early adolescence
– Most adolescents eventually emerge from these moody times and become competent adults
– For some adolescents, intensely negative emotions can reflect serious problems

Hormones, Experience, and Emotions

– As adolescents move into adulthood, their moods become less extreme, perhaps due to their adaptation to hormone levels over time (Rosenblum & Lewis, 2003).
– Both hormonal changes and environmental experiences are involved in the changing emotions of adolescence
Marcia’s Theory

- Disagreement with Erikson:
  - No identity resolution
  - No identity confusion
- States two factors are involved in the attainment of a mature identity
  - Exploration
  - Commitment
  - To an identity in a variety of life domains
    - Friendships, gender roles, occupation;
    - Intimate relationships, occupation, politics

Commitment

The part of identity development in which adolescents show a personal investment in what they are going to do

Exploration

- Time of upheaval/explanation of old choices and values
- The outcome of a crisis is commitment to a certain value or role
Marcia’s Four Identity States

• Identity Diffusion
• Identity Foreclosure
• Identity Moratorium
• Identity Achievement

Marcia’s Identity Statuses

Identity Diffusion: (Lowest level of identity) Person has not experienced a crisis or made any commitments

Identity Foreclosure: Person has not experienced a crisis but has made a commitment

Identity Moratorium: Person is in a crisis but commitments are absent or vaguely defined

Identity Achievement: (Highest level of identity) Person has undergone a crisis and has made a commitment
Marcia’s Four Statues of Identity

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Exploration? (crisis)</th>
<th>Commitment?</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Identity Achievement (Highest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Identity Foreclosure</td>
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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
Friendship & Sexual Behavior

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

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

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