

Chapter 18

Late Adulthood: Emotional and Social Development

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 18 takes a close look at the period of late adulthood and the psychosocial domain. Several important topics are covered, including:

- The psychosocial domain. The psychosocial tasks of later adulthood are described, as viewed by Erikson and Peck. Major personality patterns of late adulthood are introduced. Research data are also presented from an examination of the relationship between self-concept and life satisfaction in later adulthood.
- Theories of adjustment to aging. Several theories describing changes in the elderly in terms of the changes in their social environment are examined. These include (1) disengagement theory, (2) activity theory, (3) role exit theory, (4) social exchange theory, and (5) trait theory.
- Family. Topics include being single, and the effects of siblings and grandchildren on the elderly.
- The psychosocial aspects of aging. Several topics are covered in this section, beginning with retirement, changing marital relations, and kin and friendship ties. Data dealing with the roles and functions performed by grandparents are then presented. A close examination is made of different types of institutional, home, and day care for the elderly. Finally, the significance of personal control and choice in influencing the well-being of elderly nursing home residents is discussed.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Present the four areas of research called for by the Vitality for Life proposal.
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2. Discuss the American stereotype of elderly people.
3. List positive and negative attitudes toward the elderly.
4. Describe the views of Erikson and the task and crisis in development in late adulthood.

12. Briefly summarize the research data dealing with voluntary and involuntary retirement.

13. Discuss the following living arrangements for the elderly.

alone

assisted living

with children

institutions

retirement communities

adult group homes

14. Cite the data dealing with the following aspects of grandparenting.

demographic statistics

roles performed

themes

custodial role

three-generation household

15. Assess the significance of the following factors in the selection of institutional care.

demographics

living conditions

quality of life

16. Discuss elder abuse and its effects on society.

WEB SITES

The following Web site sites deal with some of the concepts and issues presented in Chapter 18. Additional resources can be found on the text's Web site at <http://www.mhhe.com/crandell18>.

Alliance for Aging Research Advisory Panel
Eldercare Locator
<http://www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare/Public/Home.asp>

Research on Aging (Journal)
Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology
Workforce Aging in the New Economy
<http://www.wane.ca/links.htm>

APA Division 20: Adult Development and Aging
<http://apadiv20.phhp.ufl.edu/>

APA and Clinical Geropsychology
National Institute on Aging
<http://www.nia.nih.gov/>

SELF-TESTS

Matching

Match the following key terms with their definitions:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| a. activity theory of aging | e. integrity vs. despair | i. social exchange theory of aging |
| b. adult day care | f. life review | j. selective optimization with compensation |
| c. disengagement theory of aging | g. modernization theory | k. wisdom |
| d. elder abuse | h. role exit theory of aging | |
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- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. ____ a reminiscence and sharing of family history from one generation to another | 7. ____ states that as an elderly person's level of activity declines, so do feelings of satisfaction, contentment, and happiness |
| 2. ____ acts of commission and omission that cause unnecessary suffering to older persons | 8. ____ the notion that the status of the aged tends to be high in traditional societies and lower in urbanized, industrialized societies |
| 3. ____ expert knowledge about life in general and good judgment and advice about how to conduct oneself in the face of complex, uncertain circumstances | 9. ____ the stage in which individuals recognize that they are reaching the end of life |
| 4. ____ long-term care support to adults who live in the community, providing health, social, and support services in a protective setting during any part of the day | 10. ____ the view that people enter into social relationships because they derive rewards from doing so—economic, sustenance, recognition, a sense of security, love, social approval, gratitude, and so on |
| 5. ____ refers to the life span model where we are adjusting to our standards of expectation | 11. ____ views retirement and widowhood as the termination of the participation of the elderly in the principal institutional structures of society—the job and the family |
| 6. ____ states that elderly people maintain a fairly stable level of activity for as long as possible and then find substitutes for those activities they are forced to relinquish | |

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the response that best completes or answers each of the following statements and questions.

Factual Questions

1. According to Erik Erikson, those in late adulthood are confronted with which task that might lead to wisdom?
 - a. isolation vs. socialization
 - b. outwardness vs. inferiority
 - c. integrity vs. despair
 - d. trust vs. mistrust

2. According to Peck, an elderly person who sees himself as having multiple dimensions and as pursuing new ways of finding a sense of satisfaction is demonstrating
 - a. disengagement
 - b. ego differentiation
 - c. body transcendence
 - d. ego transcendence

3. What does Peck say happens to men and women who equate pleasure with physical comfort and well-being?
 - a. They do not succumb to their physical aches, pains, and disabilities.
 - b. They refuse to become preoccupied with bodily health.
 - c. They are affected significantly by the decline in their health and strength.
 - d. They find human relationships and creative mental activities to be more fulfilling.

4. By “ego transcendence,” Peck means that the elderly
 - a. come to see themselves as living on after death through their contributions—children, work, etc.
 - b. do not succumb to becoming preoccupied with their declining health
 - c. adapt easily to their new stage in life
 - d. come to realize that they are multidimensional and not just workers

5. According to Neugarten’s research on personality and patterns of aging, what term does she use to describe those people who place a premium on staying young, remaining active, and refusing to grow old?
 - a. focused
 - b. reorganizers
 - c. integrated
 - d. holders-on

6. In Neugarten’s study of personality patterns in the aged, she describes the disintegrated elderly as
 - a. revealing defects in psychological and thought processes
 - b. well-functioning individuals with a complex inner life and intact cognitive abilities
 - c. striving, ambitious, achievement-oriented individuals
 - d. having strong dependency needs and eliciting responsiveness from others

7. Older people have more favorable self-concepts if they
 - a. live in their private homes
 - b. are healthy and relatively affluent
 - c. were happy and emotionally stable in their younger years
 - d. all of these

8. The Harvard graduates' longitudinal study found that which of the following personality traits are associated with those making the best emotional adjustments in their later years?
 - a. spontaneity and creativity
 - b. ability to make friends easily
 - c. scholarly and theoretical traits
 - d. organization, dependability, and sincerity

9. Research suggests that being close to one's siblings while in college
 - a. has little effect on well-being in later adulthood
 - b. is a variable that more strongly predicts emotional well-being in later adulthood than having had a successful career
 - c. is a weaker predictor of emotional well-being in later adulthood than having had a good marriage
 - d. is associated with psychological depression and high divorce rates in later adulthood

10. According to which of the following theories does a gradual and mutually satisfying process occur in the course of aging in which society and the individual prepare in advance for incapacitating disease and death?
 - a. role exit
 - b. disengagement
 - c. social exchange
 - d. activity

11. According to activity theory, as people age they
 - a. lose their master status as younger people take over their roles
 - b. volunteer more to stay active
 - c. decrease social interaction (a result of society withdrawing from the aging person)
 - d. attempt to extract from society a more favorable distribution of benefits and privileges for themselves

12. The role exit theory, formulated by Blau and supported by Rosow, states that as Americans age, they
 - a. have decreasing interaction with society
 - b. increasingly volunteer to fill in the "gaps" in their time
 - c. lose their basic identity by losing opportunities to be socially useful
 - d. seek integration through more solitary activities

13. The social exchange theory of aging suggests that the elderly find themselves in a state of increasing vulnerability because
 - a. they have less to offer society
 - b. role loss is a stressful experience
 - c. increasing numbers of elderly individuals are retiring early
 - d. as an elderly person's activity level declines, so do feelings of satisfaction, contentment, and happiness

14. The _____ theory assumes that the position of the aged in pre-industrial, traditional societies is high because the aged tend to accumulate knowledge and control through their years of experience.
- activity
 - disengagement
 - modernization
 - social exchange
15. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, by the year 2000 only one in _____ men 60 years and over will be working.
- two
 - four
 - six
 - ten
16. Many Americans view the practice of compelling workers to retire as a
- way of ensuring more jobs for young adults
 - long-term solution to inflation
 - curtailment of basic rights
 - way of improving future life prospects for the elderly
17. Surveys conducted by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) found that how many older workers and retirees would delay retirement if they could work fewer hours instead of retiring?
- 5 to 20 percent
 - 25 to 50 percent
 - 50 to 75 percent
 - 76 to 100 percent
18. Which of the following is an accurate finding about American retirees?
- More retirees are going back to college.
 - More retirees are doing preplanning.
 - Involuntary retirees have more satisfaction after retirement.
 - Most retirees regard retirement with optimism and plan for it.
19. Based on most research of satisfaction in a lifetime of marriage, researchers suggest that, graphically, it resembles
- a broken line, – – , with breaks in satisfaction with companionship throughout the marriage
 - like a W, with lots of ups and downs during marriage and with satisfaction varying at times
 - like a U, with greater satisfaction at the beginning and later years of marriage
 - like an S, “go with the flow,” where satisfaction varies from time to time
20. Which of the following factors appears to contribute to improved marital relationships in later years?
- Problems with issues such as in-laws and sex have often been resolved.
 - Grown children are more likely to show appreciation and affection toward their elderly parents and ask less of their parents.
 - Each partner enjoys spending much more time with his or her spouse.
 - Grandchildren are more likely to help out with chores that the couple cannot perform.

21. Approximately what percentage of couples both retire at the same time (based on the National Longitudinal Survey of Mature Women)?
- 5 percent
 - 10 percent
 - 15 percent
 - 25 percent
22. It's _____ rather than _____ who researchers find receive marriage's greatest mental and physical benefits; and older _____ individuals are healthier than _____ individuals.
- men, women; single, married
 - men, women, married, single
 - women, men; married, single
 - women, men; single, married
23. Which of the following statements concerning the current generation of grandparents is accurate?
- More youngsters have living grandparents, particularly grandmothers.
 - Grandparents have less money.
 - Grandfathers report greater satisfaction with grandparenting than grandmothers.
 - The main role for grandparents is that of surrogate parents.
24. According to your text, most nursing homes
- have an adequate, qualified staff
 - are owned by private proprietors and are operated for profit
 - are rarely used by the terminally ill who require intensive nursing care
 - are more economical than services such as adult day care and "meals on wheels"
25. Nursing home residents who were told by an administrator that they were responsible for caring for themselves and for shaping the home's policies
- became more depressed than comparable residents
 - were rated as healthier than comparable residents
 - were overwhelmed by their responsibilities and refused to assume them
 - expressed a preference to be physically and emotionally dependent
26. Langer and Rodin's study in a nursing home found that patients who were given a choice and asked to make decisions
- fell into psychological depression by virtue of the stress
 - exhibited helplessness in the face of making decisions for themselves
 - began to take over and order the staff about
 - were actually healthier than the control group

Conceptual Questions

1. Someone scoring high on positive affect would likely have experienced which of the following?
- read the news that day
 - be living with others
 - be in several clubs
 - all of these

2. An elderly man tells you, “I live every day as if it were the first day of my life, because it might be the last.” People say that he does the best he can with the tools he has. This statement indicates a satisfactory resolution of
- body transcendence vs. body preoccupation
 - ego differentiation vs. work-role preoccupation
 - ego transcendence vs. ego preoccupation
 - generativity vs. stagnation
3. Your grandfather is a retired corporate executive and has become involved in a retired senior volunteer program that helps people start new businesses. He claims he doesn’t want to become an old “fuddy-duddy” in a rocking chair—he’s going to remain in control of his life! Your grandfather is a(n)
- reorganizer
 - disintegrated type
 - passive-dependent type
 - armored-defended type
4. Which of the following situations is most likely to happen to someone in later adulthood?
- When given a questionnaire measuring life satisfaction, a group of 60-year-old men score lower than a group of 30-year-old men.
 - When given a questionnaire measuring life satisfaction, a group of 30-year-old men get nearly the same average score as a group of 60-year-old men.
 - Your grandfather tells you that his retirement years are far worse than he expected them to be and that he is bored.
 - A group of 30-year-old men express less satisfaction with their life accomplishments than a group of 60-year-old men.
5. Charles, a 57-year-old member of your local Rotary Club, has quit the organization after being a member for 30 years. Now he hardly even associates socially with the men he used to see each day. We can most reasonably conclude that
- his behavior would be more likely to occur in someone much older than he is
 - his behavior is a normal way of acknowledging that organizations need “new blood”
 - as people get older, they disengage from activities in which they no longer feel useful
 - he resigned because he felt that the club didn’t want old members, and he didn’t want to be a burden
6. William grew up as an only child and never married. He is very scholarly and was a literature major in college. He spent his career analyzing the language of Shakespearean works, traveled the world, and was renowned in his field. One can predict, now that he has retired, that
- he will die within a year
 - his emotional health and life satisfaction will improve
 - he will become more social
 - his emotional health and life satisfaction will probably decrease
7. All through her life, Deborah and her siblings have remained close (throughout adolescence, college years, raising their families, etc.). What do research studies predict about Deborah’s adjustment to her later adult years? She will
- experience more difficulty adjusting because she will most likely have health problems
 - probably have fewer friends because she’s remained close to her siblings
 - most likely retain the capacity to recover from adversity and go on with her life
 - probably experience poor emotional health and lower life satisfaction

8. Mr. Bennett, a retired corporate executive and former active community leader, was recognized for his contributions to his community with a banquet in his honor a year ago. Since that time, however, he has chosen to spend more time fishing, visiting his grandchildren, and “catching up” on the reading he put off for years. Mr. Bennett’s change in activities supports which theory of adjustment?

- a. disengagement
- b. activity
- c. role exit
- d. modernization

9. According to the predictions of activity theory, an elderly woman who sits in her apartment and watches television all day

- a. will not be as happy as an elderly woman who keeps herself occupied with a variety of tasks and social activities
- b. does so because she feels that slowing down is an inevitable and desirable result of aging
- c. is preparing herself for the “ultimate disengagement” of incurable, incapacitating disease
- d. can be happy with reduced activity levels as long as her health is stable

10. Which of the following individuals should have the highest reported life satisfaction?

- a. a 60-year-old man who retired because of chronic emphysema
- b. a college professor who retired because he reached the mandatory retirement age of 70
- c. an automobile worker who retired because he was about to be laid off
- d. a legal secretary who retired when her law firm implemented a better pension plan

11. Dr. Parsley retired at age 70 after working 45 years as a professor and researcher for a prestigious private university. Upon retirement, he was given professor emeritus status and told he could still be affiliated with the university; however, he had to move everything out of his office immediately to make room for a young colleague. He will have to do his own secretarial and “go-fer” work, pay for his own copies at the copy machine, and pay for any phone calls he makes from the college. He’s stunned by the loss of privileges, and his self-esteem plummets. Which theory of adjustment to aging seems to be in effect?

- a. role exit
- b. social exchange
- c. activity
- d. disengagement

12. Many middle management workers today in the United States who are near retirement age are being “let go” through corporate downsizing. These skilled workers always felt they would have a secure, comfortable position with their “blue chip” firms in exchange for loyalty, dependability, and hard work. Now that the companies look at the “bottom line” only and can easily discard them, this comes as a devastating blow. Which theory of adjustment seems to apply in this case?

- a. role exit
- b. social exchange
- c. activity
- d. modernization

13. Which of the following statements about retirement is accurate?
- Many of today's workers can expect to live another 5 to 10 years.
 - Some workers actually work well into their 70s and 80s.
 - The majority of workers wait until they are 65 before they retire.
 - Only a small percent of post-retirement work is full time.
14. The American stereotype about retirement is
- it's a very satisfying feeling to retire and finally be able to do what you want to do
 - it's a negative feeling to retire because one's self-esteem has, for many years, been tied to one's role at work
 - retirement is demoralizing, and workers should continue to work as long as they are physically able
 - it's a great milestone to retire because one finally gets the respect he/she deserves
15. The best geographical way to describe the relationship between length of marriage and marital satisfaction would be to draw a
- hill
 - plateau
 - series of hills and valleys
 - valley
16. Mrs. Marvin, a retired widow, relies on a certain person to be her confidant, chauffeur, etc., and to be available to her whenever she needs help. Most likely, what relationship does the helper have to Mrs. Marvin?
- son
 - daughter
 - grandchild
 - sibling
17. An elderly person may feel lonely, isolated, and depressed. Which of the following individuals is most likely to be experiencing these symptoms?
- an elderly widow who went to live with her son's family in a distant city
 - an elderly widower who can be seen playing cards every day with a group of men at the senior citizens center
 - a widower who takes daily walks with a longtime acquaintance
 - an elderly lifelong bachelor who lives by himself
18. Your elderly mother fell down on the icy pavement in front of her car and broke her arm. The best course of action would be to
- put her in a hospital so that her recuperation will progress more rapidly
 - hire a full-time housekeeper for her because she will not be capable of caring for herself alone
 - place her in a residential care facility where her physical and psychological needs can be taken care of
 - let her recuperate at home and provide her with support when and where needed

19. Which of the following elderly persons would be the least likely candidate to be placed in a residential nursing home?

- a. a homeless person with no family and nowhere else to go
- b. an elderly victim of Alzheimer's disease who is incontinent
- c. an elderly man who has been paroled after a long imprisonment
- d. an elderly person recovering from major cancer surgery

20. Your mother was alert and talkative when she entered a nursing home. One month later she appears lethargic, and her medical problems have gotten worse. Which of the following descriptions would apply to this home?

- a. Your mother was told upon entering "Don't worry, sweetie, we'll take good care of you; we'll even tell you when it's time to go to bed."
- b. Your mother was told that the staff would take care of her physical needs, but she would be responsible for keeping her room arranged.
- c. Your mother was told that the nursing home would provide recreational activities; but if she wasn't satisfied, she would have to voice her concerns.
- d. Your mother was told upon entering the home that she could decorate her room in any way she saw fit.

Essay Questions

1. Your 85-year-old father and mother just want to be left alone. They say, “We want to enjoy our final years together. We’ve given enough time to raising children and working. We don’t see this as selfish.” How would you feel?
2. “Everyone approaches aging the same way. They go out with a whimper.” Discuss the different aspects of aging as viewed against this picture of aging.
3. When and why would a person choose to live in a nursing home instead of with family? You might want to investigate the historical beginnings and social acceptance of nursing homes.

ANSWERS FOR SELF-TESTS

Matching

- | | | |
|------|------|-------|
| 1. f | 5. j | 9. e |
| 2. d | 6. c | 10. i |
| 3. k | 7. a | 11. h |
| 4. b | 8. g | |

Multiple Choice

Factual

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. c | 10. b | 19. c |
| 2. b | 11. c | 20. a |
| 3. c | 12. c | 21. d |
| 4. a | 13. a | 22. b |
| 5. b | 14. c | 23. a |
| 6. a | 15. b | 24. b |
| 7. d | 16. c | 25. b |
| 8. d | 17. b | 26. d |
| 9. b | 18. a | |

Conceptual

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. d | 8. a | 15. d |
| 2. c | 9. a | 16. b |
| 3. d | 10. d | 17. a |
| 4. b | 11. b | 18. d |
| 5. a | 12. b | 19. a |
| 6. d | 13. b | 20. a |
| 7. c | 14. b | |

