Adulthood and Old Age
Chapter 5

Section 1

Adulthood is a time of —it involves shifting and outlooks on life from adolescence and throughout the remainder of life.

Physical Changes

• Two theories about why our bodies age:
  • A in our
  • Our cells have that limit the number of times our cells can

• After the age of the process of physical decline slowly begins.
  • Appearance changes such as
  • The change requiring more stimulation. Increased risk of

• Three of the most common causes of death in early adulthood are:

Other causes of early
• Drug abuse

• Violence

• Between the ages of 45 and 50, every woman experiences a stage called the climacteric, which includes
Studies have shown that the negative effects of menopause are greatly exaggerated.

Men do not experience a physical change equivalent to menopause, but they do experience many psychological changes.

- Researchers have proposed that the success or failure of a marriage depends largely on two factors:
  - How couples handle conflicts
  - How often couples share intimate and happy moments

Cognitive Changes
- An adult’s reaction time on a test does slow down with age.
- The ability to comprehend new material and to think flexibly improves with years and experience.

Social and Personality Development
- An individual’s character—his or her style of adapting to situations—is relatively stable over the years.
- However, people do face many changes in their lifetime and must

- Levinson’s Theory of Male Development:
  - Entering the Adult World
  - The Age-Thirty Crisis
  - Settling Down
  - The Midlife Transition: Generativity and Stagnation
  - Middle Adulthood
• While most women do not tend to face a midlife crisis they might experience:
  – Empty Nest syndrome
  – Depression in

Section 2
Old Age

Attitudes Toward Aging
Most of our attitudes are based on a model of

This view can be blamed on

• Myths:
  • Old people are sick, , and are victims of
  • They withdraw from life and sit around Old people are

Changes in Health
• Good health in adolescence and adult life carries over into old age.
• About 35% of the elderly have at least one
• The four most prevalent diseases in the elderly are:
  • The major causes of death among the elderly are:
• The quality of health care for the elderly is inferior to that of the general population.
  • Reasons:
    – The elderly in the lower socioeconomic class tend not to take care of themselves or seek out treatment.
    – Some doctors prefer to care for younger patients with acute diseases.

Changes in Life Situation
  The most devastating transition for anyone is the

• Friends and family may also abandon the widowed person due to their own grief or the person’s new single status.
• Depression is common amongst older adults.
• Symptoms such as weight changes, feelings of worthlessness, extreme sadness, inability to concentrate, and thoughts of death and suicide are often cited.
• Many older people continue to learn and develop skills more than ever before.

Changes in Sexual Activity
• The majority of people over the age of 65 continue to be interested in sex, and healthy partners enjoy sexual activity into their 70s and 80s.
• The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.

• Reasons some older people do not engage in sexual activity:
  • Poor health
  • Death of a spouse
  • Societal attitudes

Adjusting to Old Age
• Many of the changes the elderly face make their adjustment to everyday life more difficult because they represent a loss of control over their environment.
This gradual loss of control may involve both physical changes and
• Older people can maintain a more positive self-image and a sense of control if their help them with their options.
• Organizations such as the AARP help the elderly voice their opinions about unfair treatment.

Changes in Mental Functioning
• There is in intelligence and memories of the elderly than most people think.

• John Horn proposed two types of intelligence:
  • —this type of intelligence refers to the ability to and learning in appropriate situations.
  • —this intelligence refers to the ability to problems and to generate new hypotheses.

• A small percentage of people develop
• The most common form is

Section 3
Death and Dying

Adjusting to Death

• Thanatology:

• Elisabeth Kubler-Ross conducted a study on how the react to death.

• Kubler-Ross identified five stages of dying:
—they may assert that the doctors are incompetent or the
— they may alienate themselves at this stage.
— this is a short stage where the patient attempts to
— they are depressed that they will lose everybody and everything.
— they accept death and may experience a

- Some patients may go through the stages in a different order, repeat stages, or stay in one stage.

  A movement to restore the dignity of dying revolves around the concept of a

- In hospice, doctors do not try to but to improve the quality of life.
  Another form of hospice service is