

Physical and Cognitive Development in Young Adulthood

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Emerging Adulthood



A time of psychological maturing

- People are no longer teens
- But have not yet become full adults

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Health Status in Young Adulthood



- Most young adults are healthy (95%)
- Accidents are the leading cause of death
- However, too many
 - Overweight
 - Exercise too little

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Genetic Influences on Health

Many disorders have roots in genetics:

- Obesity
- Some cancers – lung, prostate, and breast
- High cholesterol



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Preventative Measures for Health

- Regular screening tests
- Pap smears, self-exams of breasts
- Good posture (carpal tunnel syndrome)
- Physical activity
- Sleep



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Diet and Nutrition

- Proper Diet
 - Limited saturated fats
 - Limited red or processed meats
 - 5 fruits and 5 vegetables each day



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Risks to Health in Young Adulthood

- Obesity/overweight
- Infrequent physical activity
- Smoking
- Alcohol use or abuse
 - Especially risky during college years
- Use or abuse of other substances



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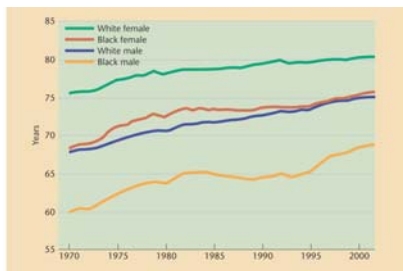
Indirect Influences on Health



- SES
- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
 - Women have a higher life expectancy
 - Genetic protection from second X chromosome
- Relationships
 - Social Integration
 - Social Support

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Life Expectancy by Sex and Race



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Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)



- Physical and emotional discomfort two weeks prior to menstruation
- Symptoms:
 - Fatigue and headaches
 - Swelling and tenderness of breasts
 - Bloating, nausea, cramps
 - Anxiety, depression, irritability, mood swings

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STDs



- 15 million become infected each year
- Highest rates are among teens and young adults
- Genital herpes and gonorrhea are on the rise
 - Syphilis is less prevalent

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HIV



- 39.4 million worldwide living with HIV
- Sub-Saharan Africa is the worst affected
 - Especially among women
 - Contracted via heterosexual sex
- In the US most cases occur through:
 - Shared needles
 - Unprotected sex among gay or bisexual men
 - Only 1% from infected blood transfusions

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Infertility

- Inability to conceive a baby after 12-18 months of trying
- Experienced by 7% of US couples
- Most common cause – Low sperm count
- In women, common causes include:
 - Failure to produce ova, or abnormal ova
 - Mucus in the cervix
 - Endometriosis

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Cognition in Adulthood: Reflective Thinking

- Active and persistent consideration of information or beliefs
- Questioning supposed facts
- Emerges between 20-25 years
- Cortical regions with enriched myelination



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Postformal Thought



- Ability to deal with:
 - Uncertainty and inconsistency
 - Contradiction
 - Imperfection and compromise
- Draws on:
 - Intuition
 - Emotion
 - Logic

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Components of Postformal Thought

- Shifting Gears
- Problem definition
- Process-product shift
- Pragmatism
- Multiple solutions
- Awareness of paradox
- Self-referential thought

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Schaie's Life-Span Model of Cognitive Development

Stage	Age
1. Acquisitive	Childhood and Teens
2. Achieving	Late Teens – Early 30s
3. Responsible	Late 30s – Early 60s
4. Executive	40s – Middle Age
5. Reorganizational	Middle Age – Late Adulthood
6. Reintegrative	Late Adulthood
7. Legacy Creating	Advanced Old Age

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Sternberg's Triarchic Theory of Intelligence

1. **Experiential**
 - Creative Insight
2. **Contextual**
 - Practical Intelligence or problem solving
3. **Componential**
 - Analytical
 - The only kind of the the three usually tested by IQ tests

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Tacit Knowledge

Know-how, savvy, or common sense

- ❑ Self-management
- ❑ Management of tasks
- ❑ Management of others



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Emotional Intelligence (EI)

- The ability to recognize and deal with one's own feelings and the feelings of others
- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship management

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Culture and Moral Reasoning

- Kohlberg's Moral Dilemmas
- Examples of cultural bias:
 - ❑ Buddhist monks score low because of their principles of nonviolence and cooperation
 - ❑ The premise of the dilemma is unbelievable to Chinese villagers

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Gender and Moral Reasoning

- Gilligan found Kohlberg's dilemmas gender biased
 - ❑ Favor masculine justice views over feminine compassion
- Other research has not found gender bias

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The College Transition

- US college enrollment at record high
- One-fourth of all 18-29 year olds
- Mostly due to increasing numbers of females
 - ❑ 56% of undergraduates



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Adjusting to College

Key Factors to Adjustment:

- Financial support
- Emotional support
- Adaptability
- High aptitude and problem solving skills
- Engaged in studies and social environment



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Cognitive Growth in College

Thinking progresses from:

Rigidity → Flexibility → Freely chosen commitments

- Ultimately, commitment within relativism



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Completing College

- Only 1 out of 4 who start college have a degree within 5 years
- Completing College depends upon:
 - Motivation and aptitude
 - Ability to work independently
 - Social integration and support
 - Fit between school and student



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Cognitive Growth at Work



- **Substantive Complexity of Work**
 - The degree of thought and independent judgment required
 - A person's flexibility in coping with cognitive demands
- **Spillover Hypothesis**
 - Cognitive gains from work carry over to nonworking hours

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Combining Work and School

- Working part-time can help students organize their time and learn work habits
- But, more than 15-20 hours per week can have a negative impact



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Adult Education and Work Skills

- Almost half of Americans not in school full time are in work-related adult education programs
- Technological skills increasingly important



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Literacy Training

- **Literacy** - using printed and written information to function in society
- Nearly 50% of US adults are not literate
- Illiteracy is common among women in developing countries



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Some Measures to Ease School-to-Work Transition

- Improve dialogues between schools and employers.
- Make school and work schedules compatible.
- Increase availability of part-time work.
- Let employers design work-study programs.
- Improve training of vocational counselors.