



Unit V- Old Age

Lifespan Development Psychology

Old Age- Content

- Old Age: characteristics and development tasks of old age, adjustment to physical changes, motor abilities mental abilities interest, hazards to personal and social adjustments in old age.adjustments to vocational, retirement, family life, loss of a spouse, remarriage cohabitation, and single hood in old age - living arrangements for the elderly - geographic mobility, vocational and family - life hazards.

OLD AGE

Old age refers to ages nearing or surpassing the life expectancy of human beings, and is thus the end of the human life cycle



Terms and euphemisms for old people include:
old people (worldwide usage),
seniors (American usage),
senior citizens (British and American usage),
older adults (in the social sciences),
the elderly, and elders (in many cultures—including the cultures of aboriginal people).



*Late adulthood is the time of life after **age 65**. Psychologist Erik Erikson identified the critical conflict at this point in life as 'Ego Integrity vs. Despair.' This involves reflecting on one's life and either moving into feeling satisfied and happy with one's life or feeling a deep sense of regret*

OLD AGE

1. Adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health.
2. Adjusting to retirement and reduced income.
3. Adjusting to death of spouse. Establishing an explicit affiliation with members of one's age group.
4. Establishing satisfactory physical living arrangement.
5. Adapting to social roles in a flexible way.

Cohabitation

1. Seeking for love and care
2. Companionship
3. Satisfying their needs
4. Proximity



Cohabitation

1. The state of living together and having a sexual relationship without being married. "Couples increasingly prefer cohabitation to marriage"
2. The state or fact of living or existing at the same time or in the same place.

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Characteristics of Old age

- Old age is the closing period in the life span. Age sixty is usually considered the dividing line between middle and old age. Chronological age is a poor criteria to use in marking off the beginning of old age because there are such marked differences among individuals in the age and better aging actually begins. Because of better living conditions health care, most men and women today do not show the mental and physical signs of aging until early seventies. The characteristics of old age are far more likely to lead to poor adjustment than to good and to unhappiness rather than to happiness. That is why old age is even more dreaded than middle age.

Characteristics of Elderly People and How to Deal With Them

1. Sensory Impairment

Frequently, older adults suffer from problems with vision, hearing, and taste. It can be due to the biological process of aging or illness, or injury. It is pretty standard for older people to report difficulties in recognizing faces, distinguishing colors, and experiencing pain; such symptoms may be very distressing for their family members and friends. These symptoms are because changes are happening in the brain as a person ages.

2. Dementia

- Dementia is the loss of cognitive function (i.e., thinking) that is characteristic of aging, particularly in older adults 65 or older. In most cases, dementia is caused by diseases (e.g., Alzheimer's disease) but may also be due to other causes such as head injuries, strokes, or Parkinson's disease. Dementia is usually characterized by significant impairment in daily living activities and communication.

Characteristics of Elderly People and How to Deal With Them

3. Stroke

- Although strokes are not as standard as dementia and mild cognitive impairment, they can have a devastating impact on an older person's life. A blockage causes a stroke in an artery, which causes the brain to stop receiving oxygen. It may be because of a blood clot, or ischemia, which means that the blood vessels supplying the brain have clogged.

4. Alzheimer's Disease

- Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a neurodegenerative disease because of loss of memory and the ability to learn new things, causing difficulty with speaking and thinking. It is the most common form of dementia and affects about 8.5 million Americans or one in four people over age 65. The incidence of AD increases with age, with affected individuals becoming increasingly more mentally impaired as they grow older.

Characteristics of Elderly People and How to Deal With Them

5. Physical Impairments

- Older adults may become physically disabled when they suffer a stroke. They cannot walk independently or suffer an illness such as Parkinson's disease or arthritis that renders them unable to perform their everyday life activities.

6. Communication Difficulties

- Communication difficulties can occur for a variety of reasons. Some people with dementia speak differently than they were used to, such that friends and family face problems understanding them. Others have hearing difficulties that make it impossible for them to communicate with caregivers or other people who are not in the same room. It is also possible that the patient has aphasia and cannot form words properly because the brain has lost some of its power to control speech muscles.

Characteristics of Elderly People and How to Deal With Them

7. Social Problems

- Older people may experience social problems as a result of their illness or accident. They may become isolated and fearful, or they may fail to recognize friends and family members. Social isolation may lead to changes in behavior, such as increased anger or depression. As a result, social isolation should be prevented where possible so that the older adult can have regular contact with other people.

8. Pain

- Pain is a significant factor in the lives of most older adults. Many have a history of chronic pain or significant accidents which have caused them to be in constant pain. Some people do not report their pain because they are shy or believe that they do not deserve acknowledgment. Pain is also more common in older patients than younger ones and is likely to have various causes such as arthritis and cancer.

9. Diverse Communication Needs

- Communication needs will vary depending on the patient. Some people need to speak with others to express their thoughts and feelings or ask questions. Others may take a long time to collect their ideas and be better understood if given time before expressing themselves verbally.

Old age – Personal and social adjustments

The time at which old age begins is still ill defined. Sixty years is taken as the arbitrary dividing line.

Age divisions during old age:

- a. **The young -old (60-69 years)** This is a transition period marked by many adjustments such as retirement and declining strength, sharp reduction in expectation and behaviours.
- b. **Middle-aged old (70-79 years)** This period is characterized by increasing deaths of friends and spouse, reduced participation in home and community activities, increasing health problems, contracting social world.
- c. **Old (80-89 years)** In this period, assistance is needed in maintenance of social contacts, there may be many health problems and some may become institutionalized or may lead a very sheltered life.
- d. **Very old (90 years and above)** Health problems are more severe and serious with very limited activity in this period.

Challenging Areas That Require Adjustments during Old Age

There are several challenges in different areas of old age which require adjustments and intervention. For the purpose of better understanding it can be discussed at four levels- biological, psychological, sociological or psychological or behavioural.

- **Biological aging and its challenges**– It includes changes in sensory- motor performance, muscle strength, brittleness of skeletal structure, visual acuity and decreased reaction time and balance. These are examples of bio-logical aging which may influence attitude and behaviour.
- **Psychological aging and its adjustments** – This consists of a general decline in the mental abilities that accom-pany old age.
- **Sociological aging and its challenges** – It refers to changes in social roles- loss of spouse, vulnerability to dis-ease, compulsory or voluntary retirement, loss of income and loss of status
- **Psycho- social aging and its challenges** – It refers to systematic changes in personality needs, expectations and behaviours as well as changes in roles and changes in relation to others.



Specific Psychological Problems Faced By Old People

- Feeling of inadequacy.
- Lack sense of belonging and acceptance.
- Economic insecurity.
- Changing social attitudes
- Feeling of loneliness, uncertainty, restlessness.
- Feeling tired and depressed.
- High on anxiety.
- Low self-esteem and worthlessness

Adjustments in old age

Some of the adjustments people have to make as they move into old age include:

Health adjustment: One of the threats to the elderly is prolonged illness. The aging body is highly vulnerable to ravaging diseases and injury. The psycho-logical stressors of old age can also provoke psychological disorders.

Adjustment to retirement

Retirement is separation from a sphere of activity that has provided special social order, economic remuneration, personal identity and prestige for many years. The abrupt termination of one's livelihood may be a great threat to the old people; a welcome relief to some from tedious thankless jobs or a natural conclusion of one's successful career. It may provide more time for some to pursue their dreams and pleasurable activities.

Coping with the Problems Faced During Old Age

Different people adopt different coping strategies to meet their life challenges. Some of the effective coping strategies may be summarized as follows:

1. The elderly need to develop an attitude of flexibility so that they may adapt to life's pressures and problems of old age.
2. They need to recognize that they have to explore new ways of coping with their life events.
3. The elderly need to make greater use of "information seeking" and of "problem solving" rather than withdrawing or isolating.
4. They need to enhance their self-confidence, self reliance, develop healthy attitude about their strengths and weaknesses as well as learning and maintaining effective coping skills
5. Participate in various group activities such as joining clubs and certain organizations for informal social interaction is very helpful for the aged.\
6. Involvement in grand parenting helps the elderly satisfy many of their personal and emotional needs.

Loss of Spouse in Old Age

- When your spouse dies, your world changes. You are in mourning—feeling grief and sorrow at the loss. You may feel numb, shocked, and fearful. You may feel guilty for being the one who is still alive. At some point, you may even feel angry at your spouse for leaving you. All of these feelings are normal. There are no rules about how you should feel. There is no right or wrong way to mourn.
- When you grieve, you can feel both physical and emotional pain. People who are grieving often cry easily and can have
- Trouble sleeping
- Little interest in food
- Problems with concentration
- A hard time making decisions
- In addition to dealing with feelings of loss, you also may need to put your own life back together. This can be hard work. Some people feel better sooner than they expect. Others may take longer.



Remarriage Cohabitation

Cohabitation has been increasing among older adults over the past decade. Despite the growth in cohabitation, research on this population remains limited. It is well established that the married enjoy better health than the unmarried, and while previous research has considered the psychological well-being of older cohabitators, it is less clear whether cohabitation provides physical health benefits. It is also unclear how cohabitators compare with the married and unpartnered on parent-child relationships. These omissions are notable because families play a key role in the lives of older adults

Using 2008 and 2010 Health and Retirement Study data, I assess psychological well-being and physical health differences between continuously married, remarried, cohabiting, divorced, widowed, and never married older adults. Second, I examine how cohabitators compare to the continuously married, remarried, divorced, and widowed on relationships with adult children

Adjusting to Retirement

While retiring can be a reward for years of hard work, it can also trigger stress, anxiety, and depression. These tips can help you cope with the challenges, find new purpose, and thrive in your retirement.

Many of us spend years picturing our ideal retirement—whether it's traveling the world, spending more time with family and friends, pursuing hobbies such as painting, gardening, cooking, playing golf, or fishing, or simply enjoying the freedom to relax and take it easy for a change. But while we tend to give lots of thought to planning for the financial aspects of retirement, we often overlook the psychological impact of retiring from work.

Instead of feeling free, relaxed, and fulfilled, you feel bored, aimless, and isolated. You may grieve the loss of your old life, feel stressed about how you're going to fill your days, or worried about the toll that being at home all day is taking on your relationship with your spouse or partner. Some new retirees even experience mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

The truth is that no matter how much you've been looking forward to it, retiring from work is a major life change that can bring stress as well as benefits. In fact, some studies have linked retirement to a decline in health. One ongoing study found that retired people, especially those in the first year of retirement, are about 40 percent more likely to experience a heart attack or stroke than those who keep working.

Singlehood in Old age

Ending up alone during their last days is indeed something not many want to experience. While a lot of people get married and stay married because they want to, enough of them do so and tolerate an unpleasant life because they are scared of loneliness. When people remarry too, they tend to lower their standards after a point in time because of the “something is better than nothing” resignation.

Life is much happy and peaceful when everything falls in place, and most singles get that. Which is why you see many people hesitating to let go of the freedom, despite the odds of loneliness heavily stacked against them. People like me, we've got a second chance in life, and it's only fitting that we don't want to trade it for anything lesser. So while we acknowledge the fear, we don't act on impulse.

Living Arrangements for the elderly

Living arrangements for the elderly depends upon the various situations and background of the person. Below are the few listed arrangements

- Taken care by the children and grandchildren. Elders reside along with them.
- Taken care by nurse with monetary help from children, living separately in same country or other country.
- Staying in old age homes
- Couples taking care of each other and having good financial background to appoint helpers.
- Most of the elders have been abandoned by children and suffer to occur even basic needs.
- Taken care by Trust which gets support from various organizations.

Geographic Mobility

- There are two types of mobility that play important roles in the lives of young adults, geographic and social. Geographic mobility means going from one place to another. This is done more often for vocational than for social reasons.
- How it affects young adults will be explained in the following chapter in the discussion of vocational adjustments.
- Geographic mobility almost always accompanies social mobility.

Adjustment to Singlehood

Needs for living arrangement

existing at the same time or in the same place.



Living Arrangements for the Elderly

Some condition influencing
choice of living
arrangements for the elderly

- ☐ Economic status
- ☐ Marital status
- ☐ Health Status
- ☐ Ease of caring for
- ☐ Children
- ☐ Desire for companionship
- ☐ climate

-- An elderly married couple lives alone.

-- An elderly person, whether male or female, lives alone in his / her own home.

-- Two or more elderly people - brother / sister, brother, sisters, or friends - live together in a non-marital relationship.

-- An elderly widow or widower lives with a married child.

--An elderly person lives in a home for the elderly, in a hostel or in a club.

Vocational Hazards in old age:

- Exclusion from work due to lack of vocational opportunities or unemployment even though one wants to work.
- Prevention from working.
- Retirement, especially when it is involuntary, or early, due to conditions over which the individual has no control or is unprepared for.

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Family Life Hazard of old age

- Sexual deprivation.
- Loneliness, especially when there is a loss of spouse due to divorce or death.
- Changes in living arrangements those are often involuntary.
- The necessity for making role changes due to changes in health, economic status or living conditions.

There are 04 criteria commonly used to assess adjustment to old age on the part of both men & women:

1. The quality of behavior patterns, whether active or involuntary change.
2. Changes in emotional behavior.
3. Personality changes.
4. Self-satisfaction or happiness.



Thank You