



Faculty of Education and Social Work

Units

SOCW 3551

Human Development

ONLINE AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

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Unit 1: An Introduction to the Field of Human Development

Overview

Welcome to SOCW 3551: *Human Development*. This unit introduces you to the field of human development and, more specifically, human development in the social environment. Knowledge of human development issues across the lifespan is essential for effective social work practice, and this course provides you with both an overview of major lifespan development theories from a mainstream, Western approach, and contrasting approaches from Aboriginal and anti-oppressive perspectives. This opportunity to critically evaluate mainstream perspectives with contrasting approaches will assist you to develop and demonstrate critical thinking skills in your emerging social work practice.

Topics

Unit 1 is divided into 3 topics:

Topic 1: An Orientation to Lifespan Development

Topic 2: Key Issues and Questions

Topic 3: Aboriginal Perspectives

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Define the term “lifespan development,” including its scope and breadth.
- Examine the different influences on lifespan development that impact human beings.
- Define physical, social, cognitive and personality dimensions of lifespan development.
- Explore key issues in development, for example, nature vs. nurture, impact of trauma/abuse on development.
- Define the terms “normative human development” and “Western approaches to human development.”
- Compare and contrast two different approaches to lifespan development: Western scientific perspectives and Indigenous life-cycle teachings.

Activity Checklist

Here is a checklist of the learning activities you will be completing in Unit 1. You may find it useful in planning your work.

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the case studies presented and answer questions in a learning journal. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Chapter 1 in <i>Discovering the Lifespan</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the <i>Review, Check, and Apply</i> at end of each section. (ungraded) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read “Introduction: Digging Up the Medicines” in <i>Life Stages and Native Women</i> and view the interview with Richard Wagamese. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Critical Analysis questions for this unit in your learning journal. (ungraded) |
| | <p>Additional Learning Activities: (ungraded)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>REVEL</i>: Log on to the lab and view the resources available, such as videos, simulations, flashcards, etc. <i>Simulation</i>: Log in to <i>My Virtual Life</i> and experience the impact of parental decision-making on child development. <i>Interview</i>: Ask a family member or friend about their understanding of human development. <i>Personal Learning Journal</i>: Explore questions and issues raised in this unit and complete the reflection questions. <i>Unit 1 Discussion Board</i>: Share your thoughts with your peers. |
| | <p>Assignment 1: Short Answers (15%) – you can begin this assignment now</p> |

Resources

Anderson, K. (2011). *Life stages and Native women: Memory, teachings and story medicine*. Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press.

Feldman, R. S., & Landry, O. (2017). *Discovering the lifespan*. (2nd ed.). Toronto: Pearson.

Wagamese, R. (2012). *Indian horse*. Madeira Park, BC: Douglas & McIntyre.

Introduction

This unit provides you with an orientation to the major questions raised in the field of human development, including the nature vs. nurture debate, along with definitions of physical, cognitive, and social and personality development. As the course also emphasizes the use of critical thinking skills, you will have the opportunity to develop and enhance this area throughout the course. In this first unit, a number of key concepts are introduced through the readings and video: these include the definitions of lifespan development, the scope and breadth of the field, cultural dimensions, and key questions. In addition, the link between Indigenous identities, life stages, and gender will be explored from an Aboriginal perspective.

Two concepts are important to understand at the beginning of the course: *normative approaches to lifespan development* and *Western approaches to lifespan development*. Normative approaches focus on developmental milestones that children should reach at certain ages, for example, walking or talking. These norms are based on a large sample of children and the average age they reach the milestone. (This will be discussed in later chapters of Feldman and Landry.) Western approaches refer to the major theorists discussed in later units who have developed explanations and perspectives on lifespan development from a scientific standpoint. You are encouraged to compare and contrast the information provided in the readings, videos, and from your own experience to develop a critical, questioning approach to this area of study. These issues will be explored further in the next unit.

Case Studies

Before engaging with the topics for this unit, read the following two case studies and answer the questions provided; this is a good opportunity for you to start a learning/reflective journal of the course materials and your responses to the readings and videos. As your thinking about the learning resources develops over the course, you may want to reread your journal to chart the evolution of your reflective comments on the key issues covered in the course.

Case Study 1:

Paula is a 24-year-old single parent to Kyle, aged 7. Paula lives in low-income housing and is on income assistance. She has no contact with Kyle's father or any financial support from him. Kyle has been diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). He is in grade 2 but is unable to read and write at grade level. The school principal has informed Paula that Kyle must take the medication prescribed for him by his pediatrician to address his hyperactivity or he will be removed from the school. Paula is refusing to give him the medication because she says it changes his personality and makes him lethargic and unable to learn.

Questions:

- What do you see as the key developmental issues in this case study?
- What larger social issues are raised in this study?
- What further questions would you want to ask Paula, Kyle, his teacher, and his doctor?

Case Study 2:

Anna is a 15-year-old First Nations teen, living with a White foster family. She currently has no contact with her immediate family or her band; she has lived with family on reserve sporadically since birth, but she has spent most of her life in the foster care system. She is refusing to go to school or follow family rules, and her foster parents are concerned that she is involved in alcohol and drug use. They worry that she may be vulnerable to being sexually exploited. They have asked for assistance from family support workers.

Questions:

- What do you see as the key developmental issues in this case study?
- What issues specific to the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada may have impacted Anna's current situation?
- What further questions would you want to ask Anna, her foster parents, her biological family, and her band?

Note that these questions, as well as other *Critical Analysis* questions, are unmarked and are for your personal reflection and study. You are encouraged to write your answers in a personal learning journal. Also feel free to discuss any topics with your peers in the Unit Reflection discussion board.

Topic 1: An Orientation to Lifespan Development

We all have ideas about how our personality, temperament, and abilities were (and continue to be) shaped by a variety of influences: our parents, our genes, our culture, our ethnicity, our gender. This is not an exhaustive list of influences and impacts, and many people would add others or discuss a combination of factors that have influenced their adult lives. In the field of social work, where many practitioners work with children and families, the influence of family on child development is an important area to examine critically and to understand the complexities of working with diverse clients and client groups.

This unit addresses a number of areas to get you started thinking about what lifespan development research consists of and the link between lifespan development and the practice of social work. You will learn definitions of lifespan development, the scope of the field, cultural dimensions, and the impact of cohorts on social development.

Critical Analysis

After reading “Key Issues and Questions” in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following questions:

- What kind of patterns of development do scientists explore in lifespan development research?
- What different questions are asked about development from the perspective of researchers focusing on physical, cognitive, and personality development?
- How are these dimensions of lifespan development affected by cultural, racial, and ethnic differences?
- What kinds of cohort effects had an impact on your parents’ and grandparents’ childhood?

Topic 2: Key Issues and Questions

The topic of lifespan development encompasses a huge array of factors, from individual variations and cohort effects to cultural dimensions and many other issues. Throughout history, there have been very different philosophical approaches to childhood development and parental roles, which will be discussed in Unit 2. In addition, there are a number of key questions posed by current developmental researchers. These include the interaction of continuous and discontinuous change perspectives, gauging the impact of environmental events on development, and viewing lifespan development as an integral part of an entire life rather than limited to childhood and adolescence.

The major question, however, that continues to challenge researchers and the general public is the relative influence of nature and nurture on development. Although this is a complex area of research and discussion, there are profound implications for social workers in addressing the issue of whether characteristics, traits, and abilities are largely inherited and predetermined from parents (nature) or whether the social and physical environments shape behaviour and development (nurture). Although this issue has not been definitively resolved, it is an important issue for social workers to consider in such areas as attachment and bonding, overcoming early trauma, and mental health and addiction.

Critical Analysis

Complete the *Review, Check, and Apply* questions at the end of the sections in Chapter 1 in *Discovering the Lifespan*. As you read, consider the following questions:

- What is the importance for social workers in viewing development as a continuous process throughout life?
- Feldman and Landry use the example of the potential environmental impact on fetal development of rubella in early pregnancy. What do you think the impact of poverty may be on fetal development throughout pregnancy?
- Why do you think there is a great emphasis in Western approaches on the nature/nurture debate?

Topic 3: Aboriginal Perspectives

Aboriginal perspectives on lifespan development differ in many ways from Western approaches, as you will learn from the following Anderson reading and the Wagamese interview. The challenge for Aboriginal researchers to develop their own perspectives on development is to recover knowledge and experience that was “lost” through the impact of colonization, exemplified by the residential school and its objectives to destroy the language, religion, and culture of Aboriginal peoples. Knowledge of traditional teachings has, however, been recovered and rediscovered by a number of Aboriginal researchers.

Critical Analysis

Kim Anderson’s Life Cycle Teachings

Introduction

In her book *Life Stages and Native Women*, Kim Anderson explores the Anishinaabe life cycle teachings, what she terms “digging up the medicines.” Anderson interviews Elders in Algonquin communities in order to assist in the healing and decolonizing process. Her approach is grounded within an explicit Aboriginal perspective that focuses on women’s life stages as a means to uncover the “non-patriarchal and non-hierarchical social structures of many land-based Indigenous societies” (p. 4). She argues that the specific gender roles and responsibilities of girls and women in Anishinaabe traditional societies contributed not only to their health and wellbeing but also to that of the entire community. She divides the life cycle teachings into four areas: pregnancy, infancy, and toddlers; childhood and youth; young and middle-aged women; and finally, elderly women.

Note that in this course, the term 'Elder' is usually reserved for the Aboriginal distinction, whereas older adults, or seniors are used to describe the age group. The exception will be in Unit 10 where we will discuss elder abuse.

Instructions

Read "Digging Up the Medicines" in *Life Stages and Native Women*. Consider the following questions:

- Why is it important for Aboriginal researchers to develop their own perspective on life cycle theories?
- Anderson argues that recovering traditional knowledge of life cycle teachings and Aboriginal women's roles in community is important in the decolonizing process. Can you give an example of how life cycle teachings and Aboriginal women's empowerment may be linked?
- How might your analysis be different now about Case Study 2?

Richard Wagamese on Gender Roles

Introduction

Richard Wagamese is an Ojibway author and journalist who has been writing for over thirty years. Throughout the course you will be watching an interview with Richard in which he addresses significant topics related to social development. His book, *Indian Horse*, offers a unique perspective and remarkable insight, and although it is not required reading, it will give you a greater understanding of some of the themes in this course.

Instructions

View the two videos that explore changes in the Aboriginal community and the effects on gender roles. As you watch, consider the following questions:

- Richard Wagamese talks about the impact of absent fathers on the developmental processes of Aboriginal boys. Are there equivalent impacts for boys and young men from other cultures if they are raised without fathers?
- Compare/contrast Richard Wagamese's discussion of the importance of gender-specific roles in Aboriginal communities with Western ideas of gender equality and choice regarding gender roles?

Watch the following clips:

1. Traditional Teachings and Gender Roles
http://barabus.tru.ca/socw3551/socw3551_01.html

2. Recapturing Women's Roles

http://barabus.tru.ca/socw3551/socw3551_02.html

Before moving on to the learning activities for this unit, be sure to complete the Critical Analysis questions, as well as the Review, Check, and Apply questions in your textbook.

Additional Learning Activities

After viewing the resources for this unit, including the textbook and videos, choose one or more of the following optional learning activities to enhance your comprehension of this subject. The activities are ungraded, but they are intended to assist you as you complete your assessments for this course.

1. *REVEL*: Log on to the lab and view the resources available, such as videos, simulations, flashcards, etc.
2. *Simulation*: Log onto [MyVirtualLife](#) and monitor the impact of parental decision-making on a child's development.
3. *Interview*: Choose a family member or friend at a different life stage from your own and discuss their understanding of human development with them. Do their experiences and ideas fit with the definitions and descriptions provided in the readings? If not, why not, in your opinion?
 - Note that this activity in particular may be a valuable resource for the assignments in this course.
4. *Personal Learning Journal*: Start a personal learning journal in which you explore the questions that arise for you from the material you study in each unit. You may also want to compare and contrast the readings and other materials with your own experiences, both personal and professional, in working and living with families. Note that this ungraded activity may provide useful practice as you prepare for the assignment.
5. *Discussion*: Feel free to share your thoughts about the concepts in this unit with your peers by posting to the **Unit 1 discussion board**. Note that this board will *not* be graded, but it may be an excellent resource, in particular for Assignments.

Please remember that all students and Open Learning Faculty Members can read your postings and expect to see respectful communication.

Note also that a more informal discussion space called the "Student Café" has been set up for you to easily communicate with other learners in the course.

Assessment

Assignment 1: Short Answers A (15%)

For Assignment 1, you are asked to answer 15 questions using brief sentences or point form (1 mark each). A maximum of 50 - 100 words per question. These questions cover Chapters 1 through 5 of your textbook and are also provided as an editable document for you to complete. You can work on this assignment as you go through the units and submit it after Unit 6.

Summary

In this unit, you have been introduced to some of the key concepts of lifespan development. These concepts include definitions of lifespan development, along with discussion of its breadth and depth. Important issues have also been explored, for example, the nature vs. nurture debate. The exploration of Aboriginal approaches to lifespan development has allowed you to compare and contrast differing perspectives and critically evaluate both Western approaches and Aboriginal perspectives. The next unit further develops these concepts; five frameworks from Western theorists are discussed along with critical issues in scientific research. In addition, Aboriginal approaches to research life cycle teachings are addressed.

Unit 2: Theoretical Frameworks and Research Methods

Overview

This second unit continues your orientation to the field of human development in the social environment by introducing you to five major Western theories about lifespan development. These theories range from individual approaches (psychodynamic, behavioural, and cognitive) to broader approaches (contextual and evolutionary). In addition, you will learn about research methods, including correlational studies and experiments. Ethical issues in developing scientific experiments using human participants are also explored in-depth, using two examples of unethical and damaging studies. In contrast, you will also develop an understanding of Aboriginal approaches to research, including oral history traditions, the role of ethnography, relationship building, and research responsibilities. This foundational information will also assist you to develop critical awareness about complex issues within lifespan development research in the 21st century.

Topics

Unit 2 is divided into 3 topics:

Topic 1: Theoretical Perspectives on Lifespan Development

Topic 2: Research Methods

Topic 3: Aboriginal Methodologies

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe the five major Western theoretical perspectives on human growth and development: psychodynamic, behavioural, cognitive, contextual, and evolutionary.
- List the key figures in each perspective;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the methodologies of scientific human development research.
- Analyze key ethical issues in research.
- Explain Aboriginal methodologies and approaches to research and how they differ from Western scientific methodologies.

Activity Checklist

Here is a checklist of the learning activities you will be completing in Unit 2. You may find it useful in planning your work.

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Chapter 1 in <i>Discovering the Lifespan</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the <i>Review, Check, and Apply</i> at end of each section. (ungraded) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Mosby's article, "Administering colonial science: Nutrition research and human biomedical experimentation in Aboriginal communities and residential schools, 1942–1952." |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the <i>MyPsychLab</i> video <i>Robert Guthrie: Before Informed Consent</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Chapters 1 and 2 in <i>Life Stages and Native Women</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Critical Analysis questions for this unit in your learning journal. (ungraded) |
| | <p>Additional Learning Activities: (ungraded)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>MyPsychLab</i>: View the videos <i>Mechanisms of Evolution</i> and <i>Erik Erikson</i>. <i>Personal Learning Journal</i>: Explore issues raised in this unit and complete the reflection questions. <i>Research</i>: Find a research paper on an area of human development and analyze the ethical considerations detailed by the author(s). <i>Unit 2 Discussion Board</i>: Share your thoughts with your peers. |
| | <p>Assignment 1: Short Answers (15%) – you can continue to work on this assignment</p> |

Resources

Anderson, K. (2011). Weaving the stories. In K. Anderson, *Life stages and Native women: Memory, teachings and story medicine* (pp. 15–26). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Anderson, K. (2011). People and stories. In K. Anderson, *Life stages and Native women: Memory, teachings and story medicine* (pp. 27–37). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Feldman, R. S., & Landry, O. (2017). *Discovering the lifespan*. (2nd ed.). Toronto: Pearson.

Mosby, I. (2013). Administering colonial science: Nutrition research and human biomedical experimentation in Aboriginal communities and residential schools, 1942–1952. *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 46(91), 145–172. DOI: 10.1353/his.2013.0015

MyPsychLab. (n.d.). *Robert Guthrie: Before Informed Consent*. [Video].

Introduction

This unit provides you with an overview of five major Western theoretical perspectives on lifespan development. The five frameworks are in many ways interconnected, as later approaches often built on earlier research and models. Each perspective was developed, however, using different theoretical underpinnings, and each one focuses on a different aspect of development (for example, physical growth, cognitive development). Looking at different perspectives will assist you to develop a more in-depth understanding of the complexity of human development, including the interaction of psychological, social, environmental, and cognitive factors throughout the lifespan. It is also important to learn how human development research is (and was historically) undertaken so that you can gain an understanding of how some of the major approaches were formed. Equally valuable to the development of a Critical Analysis of Western scientific approaches is the discussion about research ethics when human beings participate in experiments.

This unit also provides you with a critical counterpoint to Western approaches to development through a description of Aboriginal lifespan research. This contrasting approach focuses not on scientific experimentation but on learning from oral history traditions and ethnography. Ethical considerations are also discussed in terms of relationships and collective responsibilities, in contrast to scientific exploration. These contrasting ethical obligations provide a good example for you to reflect on how you envision the development of your social work practice.

Topic 1: An Orientation to Lifespan Development

We think it self-evident today that children and adults are quite different in terms of their development and maturation, but in the 17th century, children were considered to be simply smaller versions of adults—with all the responsibilities and duties that adulthood entailed. Childhood as a concept did not exist within the Western tradition. Gradually, childhood came to be seen as separate from adulthood, and the

needs of children were then also viewed as different in scope, as it was acknowledged that children took time to mature physically, psychologically, and cognitively. Adult roles also changed as childhood expanded beyond infancy to a considerably longer period of time. In the 21st century, adulthood is again being redefined as more young adults remain living in their parents' home and delaying marriage until later in their 20s.

The field of lifespan development emerged to theorize how children matured from infancy to adulthood in terms of several factors, including psychological, behavioural, and cognitive growth. In addition to these three frameworks, you will also learn about contextual and environment approaches to lifespan development. These five perspectives will provide you with a basis for a Critical Analysis of how social workers might approach the field of human development by using a variety of perspectives to support children and families to reach their developmental goals.

Critical Analysis

Read "Theories and Hypotheses: Posing Developmental Questions" in *Discovering the Lifespan* and complete the *Review, Check, and Apply* questions. As you read, consider the following questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between the five main theoretical perspectives on lifespan development?
- Why do you think some approaches focus only on childhood development (for example, Piaget) and others focus on development across the lifespan (for example, Erikson)?
- How do the two broader perspectives, contextual and environmental, complement (or contrast with) the individual approaches of the physical, psychological, and cognitive theories?
- Which framework or combination of frameworks and theorists fits best with your understanding of lifespan development?

Topic 2: Research Methods

With so many questions about lifespan development yet to be answered definitively, it is important for you to consider how research can assist in furthering knowledge and understanding in many areas. The scientific methodology used by researchers to test hypotheses and formulate theories falls into two distinct categories: correlational research (identifying associations between two factors) and experimental research (identifying causal relationships). Both are key to increasing theoretical and practical (or applied) knowledge about human development. In addition, developmental

research can be used to inform public policy in a number of areas that are important for social work practitioners (see Feldman & Landry, p. 29).

One major area of concern for researchers in the human development field, however, is how to conduct research on human participants in an ethical manner. In the past, research on human subjects has not always been conducted ethically, as you will learn from the video, *Robert Guthrie: Before Informed Consent*, and Ian Mosby's article on the nutritional experiments on Aboriginal children in residential schools in the 1940s and 1950s. The Tuskegee experiment described by Robert Guthrie involved African American men as participants in an experiment at a Veterans Hospital in the Southern US that lasted from the 1930s to the 1970s. The experiment was designed to track the progression of syphilis on the study subjects, and the men were not treated for the disease. They had provided no informed consent and did not know they were diagnosed with the disease. The impacts of these unethical experiments still reverberate today in the US and in Aboriginal communities. While there are checks and balances in place today that should mitigate against unethical research on human subjects, as social workers we need to develop a critical, questioning approach to research using human participants.

Critical Analysis

1. Read the last sections of Chapter 1 (Research Methods) in *Discovering the Lifespan* and complete the *Review, Check, and Apply* questions.
2. Read the article by Ian Mosby, "Administering colonial science: Nutrition research and human biomedical experimentation in Aboriginal communities and residential schools, 1942–1952.."
3. Go to [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) and select *Robert Guthrie: Before Informed...* to view the Robert Guthrie video on informed consent.

After viewing the above resources, consider the following questions:

- What are some of the differences between correlational and experimental studies?
- When making changes to public policy on social programs, what kinds of research do you think would be valuable to consider?
- What ethical considerations do you consider vital to safeguard the interests of human participants in experiments? Explain why you have chosen these particular elements of a research design.
- What connections can you draw between the Tuskegee experiment in the US in the 1930s and 1940s and the nutritional experiments performed on Aboriginal children in residential schools in Canada in the 1940s and 1950s?

- What are the implications for research involving diverse populations?

Topic 3: Aboriginal Methodologies

The approach that Anderson takes to researching Aboriginal women's life stage development is very different from the Western frameworks you studied in Topic 1. Firstly, Anderson is as concerned with the process of oral history as she is with the outcome of her research, and unlike researchers from a scientific, Western standpoint, Anderson places or locates herself within the research as both subject and object, that is, as an Aboriginal woman trying to rediscover and reclaim her traditional history. She rejects ideas of scientific objectivity being an essential component of research knowledge.

Anderson also provides a discussion around the responsibilities of researchers in Aboriginal communities to build relationships with participants, to understand the collective rather than individual nature of knowledge within communities, and to ground research within the history of the colonialization of Aboriginal peoples, exemplified by the loss of culture and language in the residential school system. Finally, Anderson provides anonymity for those participants who request it, but she also gives short biographies of her main contributors (with their permission) so that readers have a greater context about the day-to-day lives of the elders in the project. This approach allows you to contrast scientific, experimental Western approaches with qualitative, feminist Aboriginal research, not to decide which one is more "valid", but to gain an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

Critical Analysis

Kim Anderson's Life Stages

As you read chapters 1 and 2 in the Anderson text, consider the following questions:

- Why do you think that Anderson consulted ethnographical and autobiographical material in addition to interviewing elders about women's life stages?
- According to Anderson, what is the difference between developing a history of Aboriginal peoples that chronicles events and developing an oral history that documents an Aboriginal worldview?
- Reflect on the responsibilities of researchers working with Aboriginal peoples to build relationships and take responsibility for knowledge sharing. How does this contrast with the responsibilities of researchers within the Western approach to develop ethical research designs?

- What risks might there be to applying Western theories such as Kohlberg's work to Aboriginal people?

Additional Learning Activities

Choose to explore one or more of the following optional learning activities to enhance your comprehension of this subject:

1. *Videos*: Go to [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) and watch *Mechanisms of Evolution* available under Episode 1. Choose one of the two following concepts explored in the video—natural selection or genetic drift—and explain how the concept applies to human evolution. Next, watch the video, *Erikson*. Do you agree or disagree with Erikson's thesis that when couples marry at a young age, their marriage is less likely to succeed because they haven't developed their own identity as an adult, one of the tasks of adolescence/young adulthood?
2. *Personal Learning Journal*: In your personal learning journal, reflect on your own adolescence and early adulthood. What was the point at which you felt you had reached adulthood: high school graduation; employment; cohabiting with a partner; moving out of your parents' home? These are only a few examples.
3. *Research*: Locate a research paper from a peer-reviewed journal on an area of human development that interests you. Read the ethical considerations detailed by the author(s) of the paper and compare them to the principles in the textbook, *Thinking Critically About "Expert" Advice*. In your opinion, do the author(s) of the research paper clearly articulate these principles in the design of their research study? Are there areas that have been missed?
4. *Discussion*: Feel free to share your thoughts about the concepts in this unit by posting to the **Unit 2 discussion board**. Note that this board will *not* be graded.

Assessment

Assignment 1: Short Answers A (15%)

Continue to complete the worksheet. This assignment is due at the end of Unit 6.

Summary

In this unit, you have been introduced to a number of critical concepts in lifespan development, from five major Western frameworks to Aboriginal perspectives, and from scientific experimental approaches to ethical issues in research. We have

explored different ways of explaining developmental growth from Western perspectives that focus on one or more aspects of human development, for example, cognitive maturation, along with Aboriginal approaches to a more holistic and collective idea of identity and community belonging. These contrasts allow you to develop a questioning, critical approach to the field of human development.

In addition, you have learned about major ethical issues that can arise in experimental research within the area of human development, and specifically the experiments performed on African American men in the US and Aboriginal children in Canada in the first half of the 20th century. These examples of ethical misconduct in research have allowed us to critically evaluate the role of researchers and research in this field. With this foundation of critical material now covered, Unit 3 moves into the next part of the course where you will learn about each developmental stage across the lifespan. Unit 3 starts this part of the course with a discussion of conception, the interaction of heredity and environment, prenatal development, birth, and newborn behaviour.

Unit 3: Biological Beginnings

Overview

The first two units of this course laid the groundwork for discussions around the scope of lifespan development and approaches to theorizing developmental issues from Western and Aboriginal perspectives, using a critical analytical approach to the material presented. Continuing from this foundation, we are now shifting into the next part of the course, where you will learn about each developmental stage in turn, from birth to death. Unit 3 focuses on the start of life: conception, the interaction of heredity and environment, prenatal development, birth, and newborn behaviour. You will also learn about Aboriginal approaches to the first part of the four stages of the life cycle; this encompasses conception and family planning, prenatal care and birth, and infancy to toddlerhood. You will develop an understanding of normative child development in this stage of life from a biological perspective, as well as a critical awareness from a social work perspective of the challenges to biological definitions of “normal”.

Topics

Unit 3 is divided into 4 topics:

Topic 1: Prenatal Development

Topic 2: Prenatal Growth and Change

Topic 3: Birth and the Newborn Infant

Topic 4: Aboriginal Approaches – From Conception to Walking

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe prenatal development from a biological perspective, including the interaction of genetics and the environment on conception, pregnancy, and birth.
- Describe some of the controversies surrounding prenatal testing for abnormalities, including ethical questions relating to genetic counselling.
- Evaluate the impact of environment on prenatal and maternal health.
- Describe the capabilities of newborns in a variety of areas, including physical, sensory, and social competence.
- Develop an understanding of Aboriginal approaches to conception, pregnancy, and infancy.

- Develop a critical awareness of the cultural dimensions of Aboriginal and Western biological approaches to conception, pregnancy, and infancy.

Activity Checklist

Here is a checklist of the learning activities you will be completing in Unit 3. You may find it useful in planning your work.

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 2 “The Start of Life” in your textbook. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the <i>Review, Check, and Apply</i> at end of each section. (ungraded) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 3: “The Life Cycle Begins: From Conception to Walking” in <i>Life Stages and Native Women</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View the video <i>Pregnancy and Prenatal Care across Cultures</i> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Critical Analysis questions for this unit in your learning journal. (ungraded) |
| | <p>Additional Learning Activities: (ungraded)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Videos:</i> View the following three videos: <i>A Preference for Sons, Genetic Counseling, and Babies</i>. 2. <i>Personal Learning Journal:</i> Explore issues raised in this unit and complete the reflection questions. 3. <i>Simulation:</i> Log on to <i>MyVirtualLife</i> and choose your options around birthing and raising a newborn; 4. <i>Case Study:</i> Read the scenario and answer the questions. 5. <i>Unit 3 Discussion Board:</i> Share your thoughts with your peers. |
| | <p>Assignment 1: Short Answers (15%) – you can continue to work on this assignment</p> |

Resources

Anderson, K. (2011). *Life stages and Native women: Memory, teachings and story medicine*. Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press.

Feldman, R. S., & Landry, O. (2017). *Discovering the lifespan*. (2nd ed.). Toronto: Pearson.

MyPsychLab. (n.d.). *Pregnancy and Prenatal Care across Cultures*. [Video].

Introduction

This unit starts the process of in-depth learning about each stage of lifespan development. You will learn about the biological processes involved in conception, prenatal development, and birth, along with the capabilities of newborn infants. The role of genes in prenatal development is discussed, including how traits are inherited from parents, and the impact of genetic disorders on development. Some of the issues raised in the readings include questions about the role of genetic counselling in assisting parents to make decisions about conception and pregnancy, and the interaction of heredity and environment. In addition, you will learn about environmental impacts on prenatal development, including maternal physical health and the impact of maternal substance use on fetal development. From a social work perspective, it is important to develop an understanding about issues that affect prenatal development so that you can provide appropriate supports to families.

This unit also raises issues around the interaction between personality characteristics and cultural norms. This is exemplified in Anderson's discussion of traditional teachings that focus on the development of a sense of identity within community as an integral part of Aboriginal culture. This sense of identity is nurtured from conception onwards so that trust in community can be developed from the beginning. Caring for young children was considered a collective enterprise that involved not only biological parents but also the entire community, in contrast to Western norms, and the health of children was linked to the health and well-being of the entire community. These differing approaches to developmental issues, both prenatal and postnatal, provide you with an opportunity to reflect on ethical questions that may arise for you both personally and professionally.

Topic 1: Prenatal Development

While each one of us is a unique human being, we are all influenced by the interaction of heredity and the environment in the development of personality traits and characteristics. This topic focuses on the area of behavioural genetics, and you will learn how behaviour is influenced by heredity, as well as possible consequences of genetic disorders on fetal development. The genetic code, our genes and chromosomes stored in our DNA, is unique to each individual (except for monozygotic or identical twins). In your readings you will learn how genetic information is transmitted to offspring through the mixing and matching of traits, for example, hair and eye colour. There are also genetic abnormalities or mutations

that can be passed on from one generation to the next, and these may result in physical and cognitive developmental delays, for example, Down's syndrome. Genetic counselling is available to assist parents or potential parents in making informed decisions about starting a family, although from a social work perspective there are inherent ethical and philosophical dilemmas in the counselling process around the underlying premise of "difference" defined as "deficiency" compared to normative standards.

This topic also provides further information for you to reflect on the nature vs. nurture debate (or the interaction of heredity and environment), for example, in the areas of personality, physical traits, and intelligence. Cultural differences may also play a part in the development of certain characteristics, along with religious affiliation, gender biases, and environmental impacts. While there is a great deal of research in this area of nature vs. nurture, there are no definitive answers as to which is the more important or influential on human development.

Critical Analysis

Read "Prenatal Development" in *Discovering the Lifespan* and complete the *Review, Check, and Apply* questions. As you read, consider the following questions:

- Describe how genetic information is transmitted from parents to offspring and how traits are mixed and matched in prenatal development;
- Describe how inherited and genetic disorders are passed from one generation to the next;
- What are some of the ethical issues that arise for you in the genetic counselling field?
- What are your emerging thoughts on the relative influence of heredity and environment on human characteristics, particularly in the area of psychological disorders and intelligence?

Topic 2: Prenatal Growth and Change

The prenatal period is a time not only of biological development from germination to the fetal stage, but also a time when environmental factors can influence development, both positively and negatively. This topic focuses on the onset of development from the moment of conception to the onset of labour. You will learn about the three prenatal stages: the germinal stage, the embryonic stage, and the fetal stage. At all three stages, there are risks of damage from genetic or environmental factors that could lead to miscarriage or abnormalities in development.

This topic examines in some detail the environmental threats to fetal development and possible interventions. You will learn about teratogens (drug or viral factors) that may influence development, bearing in mind that the most severe damage to prenatal development is often in the first weeks of gestation when women may not be aware that they are pregnant. Other environmental factors that are very important in determining prenatal health include maternal diet, age, prenatal support, health, and drug and alcohol use. As a social worker, you may be working with women and families who need support and counselling in some of these areas, and knowledge and understanding about risk factors and interventions are important.

Critical Analysis

1. Read “The Prenatal Environment: Threats to Development” in *Discovering the Lifespan* and complete the *Review, Check, and Apply* questions.
2. Go to [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) and watch the video *Pregnancy and Prenatal Care across Cultures*.

Consider the following:

- Describe what happens during the prenatal stages of development from a biological perspective.
- Describe some of the ethical issues that arise around surrogacy, in vitro fertilization, and sex selection.
- What is the impact of social circumstances on prenatal development, for example, poverty and lack of family support? What role can social workers play in working with pregnant women who lack social supports?
- What do you see as the role of fathers in influencing the prenatal environment?
- How do the pregnant women in the video make use of traditional knowledge alongside modern medical approaches? Do you see a contradiction between the two approaches?

Topic 3: Birth and the Newborn Infant

The birth of a long-awaited baby is usually a joyful time for parents, and in this topic, you will learn about the normal process of labour and delivery, along with different questions to consider for expectant parents in terms of where childbirth will take place, who will be present at the birth, and whether pain-reducing drugs will be used. In addition, we will address some birth complications, including their causes, effects, and treatments. There can, however, be complications at birth that

affect both the mother and child. Examples of birth complications include premature and postmature babies, Caesarean deliveries, and infant mortality. You will also learn about maternal complications, for example, postpartum depression.

Once babies are born, however, there is a new set of questions to answer around newborn capabilities. In your readings you will learn about the physical competencies of newborns, focused on reflexes, their sensory capabilities, and early learning capacity. Newborn babies are, of course, learning all the time, and this section focuses on discussions of psychological approaches to learning: classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and habituation.

Of great interest to parents is another aspect of learning: social competence, or how babies respond to others. The social competency of babies (and adults of course) is crucial to the development of healthy bonds and attachment to caregivers that promote trust and security in infants. As a social worker, you may be involved in supporting parents who have been unable to form attachments with their newborn infants because of birth complications, parental drug or alcohol use, or separation for other reasons. Understanding the mechanisms that lead to healthy attachment is, therefore, very important for social work practitioners.

Critical Analysis

Read “Birth and the Newborn Infant” (pp. 65–81) in *Discovering the Lifespan*, and complete the *Review, Check, and Apply* questions. As you read, consider the following:

- Describe the choices that are available for women in Canada in terms of where and how they give birth.
- What are the pros and cons of childbirth being seen as increasingly medicalized over the past century?
- What do you think the implications are for the change in beliefs around the competencies of infants in terms of childrearing and childcare?
- Why do you think there is increasing controversy around the topic of circumcision for newborn male infants?

Topic 4: Aboriginal Perspectives

Aboriginal approaches to pregnancy and childbirth focus on the importance of new life in the continuing health and wellbeing of the community (that is, the collective), as opposed to Western approaches that focus on the nuclear family and its responses to the challenges of childbirth and child rearing (that is, the individualistic).

Anderson describes the onus on Algonquian parents to live “upright” lives to ensure the health of their children and grandchildren, and she addresses as well the

importance of midwives and older women and their responsibilities to ensure not just the health of the mothers and children they deliver, but also to maintain in a broader sense the cultural norms of their community.

This topic covers a longer period of development than Western perspectives, which are divided into shorter periods based on biological categorizations, and you will learn about Anishinaabe approaches to family planning, pregnancy, birth, postnatal care, infancy, and toddlerhood. This stage of development from an Aboriginal perspective encompasses far more than only biological issues; there are also significant responsibilities to provide an infant and mother with spiritual care and integration into community along with physical care and nurturing. Each stage from pregnancy to birth to naming and finally to walking involves ceremonies to mark transitions to a new part of life. While Anderson describes a traditional life that may not be possible for many First Nations people in Canada to maintain in the 21st century, as a social worker it is important to understand traditional practices and their underlying philosophies so that you can support parents in their choices around child rearing.

Critical Analysis

Kim Anderson: From Conception to Walking

Read Chapter 3: “The Life Cycle Begins: From Conception to Walking” in *Life Stages and Native Women*. Consider the following:

- Describe the cultural importance of “maintaining the life line” within Algonquian communities.
- What are the major differences between collectivist approaches to pregnancy and childbirth and individualistic approaches?
- Describe the significance in terms of infant development of the Algonquian emphasis on keeping a baby close to family members at all times and Western approaches to separate babies in cribs and bedrooms apart from parents.
- What kinds of issues do you think would be important for social workers to consider in providing supports to First Nations families caring for infants and toddlers?
- Think about your own culture and other cultures in your community. How are they similar to or different from the Aboriginal perspective?

Additional Learning Activities

You may choose to explore one or more of the following optional learning activities to enhance your comprehension of this subject:

1. *Videos:*
 - Watch the [MyPsychLab video](#) *A Preference for Sons*. The video explores the preference for sons in several different countries in terms of culture, religion, and tradition. What factors do you think drive the Western preference for sons?
 - Watch the [MyPsychLab video](#) *Genetic Counseling*. The video describes various reasons why parents or potential parents might choose genetic counseling. What are some of the ethical dilemmas presented in the video in terms of testing for potential heart disease, mental health disorders, etc.?
 - Watch the documentary film *Babies* (2010). How would you characterize the developmental differences between the four babies followed in the film from birth to one year of age (Namibia, the US, Japan, and Mongolia)? Were these differences simply cultural or were there other factors involved, for example, rural vs. urban life, poverty vs. wealth?
This video is available [online](#). If the link is broken, please search online or you can purchase it through iTunes.
2. *Personal Learning Journal:* In your personal learning journal, reflect on your own family. Where were you born—in a hospital or at home? If you have children of your own (or friends or family members with children), where were they born and what decisions were made about the birth? After reading the material from this unit, would you change any of the decisions?
3. *Simulation:* Log on to *MyVirtualLife* and choose your options around birthing and raising a newborn.
4. *Case Study:* Read the following scenario and answer the question below:

Consider that you are a young woman, age 37, who has just had her second child, a boy. Your first child is just three years old and your husband, who is very supportive, has not been working for the last six months. He has just started a job on shift work at the nearby mine. You are happy for him, but a little worried about how you will manage with two young children. You have no family in town, except for a sister-in-law. You work, but are currently on maternity leave. You have been living in this city for only the past 13 months and don't know many people.

In your practice as a helping professional, how would your consideration of the three areas of adjustment and understanding the underlying issues, help you support new mothers?

5. *Discussion:* Feel free to share your thoughts about the concepts in this unit by posting to the *Unit 3 Discussion Board*. Note that this board will *not* be graded.

Assessment

Assignment 1: Short Answers A (15%)

Continue to complete the worksheet. This assignment is due at the end of Unit 6.

Summary

This unit has introduced you to the first stages of lifespan development, from conception to birth. You have learned about the impact of genetic factors on normal and abnormal development, and the interaction of heredity and environment. While the biological foundations of conception and birth are crucial for understanding a variety of issues within the field of development, there are other areas that are equally important to consider in terms of the cultural and social foundations of society, from family units to larger communities. You have also explored the competencies and qualities of newborn behaviours to develop an understanding of the complex, reciprocal interaction between infants and caregivers that leads to attachment and bonding. This reciprocity is essential to developing healthy relationships from infancy onwards.

You have also explored the dimensions of Aboriginal perspectives on conception, childbirth, and infancy, which focus on collectivist principles of community integration and wellbeing rather than individualistic principles around the nuclear family unit. The holistic approach focuses on the entire social system, including spiritual and community connection, whereas the Western approach tends to categorize development into discrete areas of psychological, cognitive, and behavioural areas. You will explore this more fully in subsequent units dealing with developmental stages. Unit 4 focuses on infancy (birth to 2 years of age), by detailing the physical, cognitive, and social and personality development of infants.

Unit 4: Infancy

Overview

This unit continues the chronological study of each developmental stage in turn. In this unit, you will learn about infancy, the stage from birth through the first two years of life. This is a time of tremendous growth and change for both infants and their parents, which you probably already know from parenting your own children or observing friends or family members parenting their children. The topics in the unit are divided into three areas of study: firstly, physical and motor skills development; then cognitive development, including key elements of Piaget's theory; and finally, social and personality development, including theories around attachment, which is a key area of knowledge for social work practice with families. Although you will learn the stages of normative development, you will also have an opportunity to critique and reflect on some of the challenges to the categorization of normal development, including cultural differences and environmental influences. In addition, the information you learn in this unit will assist you in your critical analysis of Western approaches and their categorizations of human growth and development.

Topics

Unit 4 is divided into 3 topics:

- Topic 1: Physical Development in Infancy
- Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Infancy
- Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Infancy

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe the process of physical development in infancy and the developmental tasks that infants accomplish in this period.
- Describe the process of cognitive development in infancy, including Piaget's sensorimotor stage and critiques of Piaget's theory, as well as theories around intelligence and language acquisition.
- Describe the process of social and personality development in infancy, including attachment theories and temperament.
- Analyze the issues raised by providing norms for development milestones, that is, to compare individual performance to group averages.

- Analyze similarities and differences in developmental stages between Western approaches and Aboriginal approaches.

Activity Checklist

Here is a checklist of the learning activities you will be completing in Unit 4. You may find it useful in planning your work.

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Chapter 3: "Infancy" in <i>Discovering the Lifespan</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the <i>Review, Check, and Apply</i> at end of each section. (ungraded) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to <i>MyPsychLab</i> and view the videos <i>Breastfeeding across Cultures</i> and <i>Object Permanence across Cultures</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Critical Analysis questions for this unit in your learning journal. (ungraded) |
| | <p>Additional Learning Activities: (ungraded)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Videos:</i> Go to <i>MyPsychLab</i> and view the videos <i>Infant Fine Motor Skills Development and Social Referencing</i>. <i>Personal Learning Journal:</i> Explore issues raised in this unit and complete the reflection questions. <i>Simulation:</i> Go to <i>My Virtual Life</i> and continue to raise your virtual child through infancy. <i>Unit 4 Discussion Board:</i> Share your thoughts with your peers. <i>Case Studies:</i> Read the case studies and answer the questions presented. |
| | <p>Assignment 1: Short Answers (15%) – you can continue to work on this assignment</p> |

Resources

Feldman, R. S., & Landry, O. (2017). *Discovering the lifespan*. (2nd ed.). Toronto: Pearson.

Optional:

MyPsychLab. (n.d.). *Breastfeeding across Cultures*. [Video].

MyPsychLab. (n.d.). *Object Permanence across Cultures*. [Video].

Introduction

The readings and activities in this unit will provide you with an overview of infant development in several areas. Firstly, you will learn about the enormous physical growth that takes place from birth to two years of age, including not just body size but also the nervous system and the brain. Physical development also involves motor skills development, and you will learn about the importance of nutrition in healthy growth. We will also consider cognitive development and the key elements of Piaget's theory, including critiques of his stages-of-development approach and the elements of the sensorimotor stage. Another important area in this unit focuses on the development of language in infants; there are a number of different theories about how children acquire language and the process of language development.

You will also learn about infants in their environment and the influence of culture in developing sociability. The individual temperament of infants is mediated by the social environment in which they are raised. As you read this section, you may want to consider the influences of your own social environment when you were a child, and how that has impacted your upbringing and adult life. From the broader issue of the interaction of social environment on infant development, this section also discusses the role of attachment and bonding between infants and parents or other caregivers. This is an important area for you to learn about, as social workers often work in roles to support families to develop healthy relationships. Finally, you will have an opportunity to compare and contrast Aboriginal and Western approaches to infant development.

Topic 1: Physical Development in Infancy

Infancy is a time of rapid growth and development in a number of areas. This topic concentrates on physical development in terms of growth and stability. You will learn how the human body and nervous systems develop over the course of the first 24 months of a child's life, how the environment can affect development, and the expected developmental tasks at this stage. In addition, we will discuss motor development and the role of reflexes, along with a critique of the universality of these traits in terms of evident ethnic and cultural differences, not only in the area of reflexes but also in broader motor skills development.

Another major topic in terms of infant development is the impact of nutrition on healthy growth, and you will learn how malnutrition affects development, as well as current debates on breastfeeding vs. bottle-feeding. The final area covered in this topic is also controversial: how much do infants see, hear and feel? This area is one in which researchers hold contrasting views on whether sensations are initially separate systems or integrated systems. This is an important area for you to consider

when working with families with a child with a sensory impairment, either visual or auditory. There is evidence that children born with a sensory impairment may develop extraordinary abilities in other senses and, as a social worker, you may be working with families to help them stimulate the development of their child's senses.

Critical Analysis

1. Read "Physical Development in Infancy" in *Discovering the Lifespan* and complete the *Review, Check, and Apply* questions.
2. Go to [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) and view the video, *Breastfeeding across Cultures*

Consider the following:

- Describe the process of physical development in infancy and the developmental tasks that infants accomplish in this period.
- Feldman and Landry state that environmental influences impact brain and neuron development. What role could social workers play in supporting families to provide early environmental stimulation for infants?
- Describe the importance of good nutrition in infant development in the context of the breastfeeding vs. bottle feeding debate.
- Describe the sensory and perceptual capabilities that infants possess.
- What are some of the drawbacks to using developmental norms developed from studies of groups of Caucasian infants from middle and upper class socioeconomic strata when assessing infants from different cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups?

Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Infancy

The first two years of an infant's life are filled with rapid advances in development in several areas. This unit addresses cognitive development in infancy, that is, how infants learn about and understand their world. You will learn about Piaget's theoretical approach to cognitive development, as well as some challenges to his theory. We will discuss the sensorimotor stage, as developed by Piaget to explain the earliest stage of cognitive growth. The six substages show increasing developmental complexity from Substage 1, "Simple reflexes," to Substage 6, "Beginnings of thought." You may find Table 3-4 (provided in *Cognitive Development in Infancy* in *Discovering the Lifespan*) useful as a reference guide to these substages of the sensorimotor stage.

TABLE 3-4 PIAGET'S SIX SUBSTAGES OF THE SENSORIMOTOR STAGE

| Substage | Age | Description | Example |
|--|---------------------------|---|--|
| Substage 1: Simple reflexes | First month of life | During this period, the various reflexes that determine the infant's interactions with the world are at the centre of its cognitive life. | The sucking reflex causes the infant to suck at anything placed in its lips. |
| Substage 2: First habits and primary circular reactions | From 1 to 4 months | At this age infants begin to coordinate what were separate actions into single, integrated activities. | An infant might combine grasping an object with sucking on it, or staring at something with touching it. |
| Substage 3: Secondary circular reactions | From 4 to 8 months | During this period, infants take major strides in shifting their cognitive horizons beyond themselves and begin to act on the outside world. | A child who repeatedly picks up a rattle in her crib and shakes it in different ways to see how the sound changes is demonstrating her ability to modify her cognitive scheme about shaking rattles. |
| Substage 4: Coordination of secondary circular reactions | From 8 to 12 months | In this stage infants begin to use more calculated approaches to producing events, coordinating several schemes to generate a single act. They achieve object performance during this stage. | An infant will push one toy out of the way to reach another toy that is lying, partially exposed, under it. |
| Substage 5: Tertiary circular reactions | From 12 to 18 months | At this age infants develop what Piaget regards as the deliberate variation of actions that bring desirable consequences. Rather than just repeating enjoyable activities, Infants appear to carry out miniature experiments to observe the consequences. | A child will drop a toy repeatedly, varying the position from which he drops it, carefully observing each time to see where it falls. |
| Substage 6: Beginnings of thought | From 18 months to 2 years | The major achievement of Substage 6 is the capacity for mental representation or symbolic thought. Piaget argued that only at this stage can infants imagine where objects that they cannot see might be. | Children can even plot in their heads unseen trajectories of objects, so that if a ball rolls under a piece of furniture, they can figure out where it is likely to emerge on the other side. |

Critiques of Piaget not only address the stage categorizations of his theory but also the universality of his theory across cultures and time. The basis for his theoretical approach came from close and detailed observation of his own children, and subsequent research on more diverse populations does not support the timelines that Piaget proposed for each stage. Nevertheless, he remains an important theorist in terms of describing cognitive development, although current researchers tend to focus on information-processing approaches to cognitive development. You will learn about this more recent approach to understanding how infants process information and how infant intelligence is measured.

Another very important area to consider in infant development is how and when children learn to speak. You will learn in this unit the processes by which children acquire language, from early prelinguistic communication (for example, babbling) to first sentences. We will also discuss theories of language development—that is, learning theory vs. nativist approaches—and the cultural dimensions of parent interaction and vocalization with infants. You may want to reflect on your personal or professional interaction with young children and your observations of the differences in language acquisition and mastery of speech within this group.

Critical Analysis

1. Read “Cognitive Development in Infancy” in *Discovering the Lifespan* and complete the *Review, Check, and Apply* questions.
2. Go to [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) and view the video, *Object Permanence across Cultures*.

Consider the following:

- Describe Piaget’s approach to cognitive development, and in particular the sensorimotor stage, the earliest stage of cognitive growth.
- What are some of the critiques detailed in Feldman and Landry of Piaget’s theory of development, using object permanence as an example?
- Compare and contrast Piaget’s approach with the more recent information-processing approaches to cognitive development. What are their similarities and differences?
- Describe the fundamentals of language acquisition in infancy and the development of communication from prelinguistic modes to full sentences.
- Define the two major theories about the origin of language development, and critique each approach’s strengths and weaknesses.

Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Infancy

New parents often describe the personality of their babies as soon as they are born. Have your parents ever told you how you acted as a child? You may have done this yourself when talking about your own child, or a family member or a friend's child. You may have used terms, such as quiet, fussy, content. In this unit, we will discuss social and personality development in infancy, including temperament and personality. You will start by learning about how infants experience emotions, along with a discussion around stranger anxiety and the cultural dimensions of this period of development. In addition, you will learn about the development of self or how infants know who they are, a crucial component of self-awareness.

The next section focuses on how infants form relationships, with a discussion of the main tenets of attachment theory. As a social worker, you may be working with families to provide support and education on relationship building, and knowledge of theoretical and research approaches to this area is important. You will also learn about cultural differences in attachment and bonding, and these considerations are also important for you to understand when working with diverse clients.

The third section of this topic focuses on differences among infants. This includes personality development and temperament, and whether these both remain stable over a lifetime. Table 3-9 (p. 135) provides a clear reference chart of the dimensions of temperament. Finally, you will also learn about gender differences in parenting and the considerable debate over the impact of gender differences. Again, you may want to frame these questions within the nature vs. nurture debate discussed in earlier units.

Critical Analysis

After you read "Social and Personality Development in Infancy" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, complete the *Review, Check, and Apply* questions.

Next, consider the following questions:

- Describe how infants experience emotions and how emotional expression emerges and develops throughout infancy.
- Describe how social referencing builds a context for infants to understand others' behaviours.
- Describe attachment theory and its importance in developing healthy relationships throughout life.
- Describe the categories of temperament and their impact on child-rearing.

- Reflect on how temperament and personality differ among cultures, with particular reference to Chapter 3: “The Life Cycle Begins: From Conception to Walking” in *Life Stages and Native Women*.

Additional Learning Activities

You may choose to explore one or more of the following optional learning activities to enhance your comprehension of this subject:

1. *Videos*: Go to [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) and watch the video *Infant Fine Motor Skills Development across Cultures*. This video explores the two principles of reaching and grasping in infancy across a variety of cultures. Compare the universal approach of the video to Feldman and Landry’s discussion of developmental norms in Module 3.1 of *Discovering the Lifespan*.
Next, watch the video *Social Referencing*. This short video demonstrates aspects of social referencing. List the principles of social referencing and how they connect (or not) with the video demonstration.
2. *Simulation*: Log onto *MyVirtualLife* and decide on your child-rearing approach. What would the consequences of these decisions be?
3. *Personal Learning Journal*: In your personal learning journal, reflect on the different attributes in terms of physical, cognitive, and social and personality development that infants demonstrate, and how those attributes might develop differently in individualistic and collectivist communities.
4. *Discussion*: Feel free to share your thoughts about the concepts in this unit by posting to the Unit 4 Discussion Board. Note that this board will *not* be graded.
5. *Case Studies*: Click on the following link (Available in your online course material) and analyze the two case studies presented. This activity will help you in the assessments for this unit.

Assessment

Assignment 1: Short Answers A (15%)

Continue to complete the worksheet. This assignment is due at the end of Unit 6.

Summary

This unit introduced you to the tremendous surge in growth and development that infants experience from birth to two years of age. This growth takes place in several areas: physical, cognitive, and social and personality development. It is important to note that growth is individualistic in nature, so that every infant develops at a

different pace at different times. You have learned the basis of normative developmental models, as well as critiques of this system to evaluate growth. In addition, you have explored the theoretical foundations for speech and language acquisition, attachment and bonding, and sociability in infants. This unit also introduced you to Piaget's theory and how it is applied to infant development in the sensorimotor stage. Understanding Piaget's theoretical approach as well as critiques of his model is important; many social workers work with children and families in a variety of capacities, and they may be providing assessments, education, support, and/or counselling to families.

You will continue to explore these three aspects of development: physical, cognitive, and social and personality development, in the following units. Unit 5 focuses on early childhood and preschool years, ages two to six. Again, this is a period of rapid growth and development in all three domains, and you will learn several theories about cognitive development in addition to Piaget, as well as discussing social and environmental impacts on development, for example, maltreatment, health, and cultural differences in parenting.

Unit 5: Early Childhood and Preschool Years

Overview

Unit 5 discusses the area of early childhood and preschool development, from ages two to six. This is a time when children develop increasing competence in many areas, for example, physical abilities that include climbing stairs and opening doors. In addition, children are able to increase their ability to use symbolic thinking, in Piaget's preoperational stage, and they increase their language and vocabulary skills significantly. Finally, preschool children are also forming a much more developed sense of self, including gender identity. You will learn about Erikson's approach to development and the initiative-versus-guilt stage. In this stage of development, however, there are many variations in parenting norms; sometimes these differences may be influenced by cultural or socio-economic factors, and sometimes there may be individual factors, for example, family norms around parenting. When reading the chapter for this unit and viewing the videos, you may want to think back to your own childhood and the parenting strategies used by your parents and reflect on whether you would choose to develop the same parenting approach as your own parents or, if you have children, whether you have already made those choices and why.

Topics

Unit 5 is divided into 3 topics:

Topic 1: Physical Development in the Early Childhood and Preschool Years

Topic 2: Cognitive Development in the Early Childhood and Preschool Years

Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in the Early Childhood and Preschool Years

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe the process of physical development in the early childhood and preschool years and the developmental tasks that children accomplish in this period.
- Describe the process of cognitive development in the early childhood and preschool years, including Piaget's preoperational stage and critiques of Piaget's theory, as well as Vygotsky's theory of the social aspects of development and learning.
- Describe the process of social and personality development in the early childhood and preschool years, including the development of self-concept, gender identity and social relationships, as well as Erikson's initiative-versus-guilt stage.

- Compare and contrast different parenting styles and analyze the impact that these different styles may have on children, including the impact of maltreatment and abuse.
- Analyze similarities and differences in parenting approaches from a cultural perspective, including between Western and Aboriginal approaches.

Activity Checklist

Here is a checklist of the learning activities you will be completing in Unit 5. You may find it useful in planning your work.

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 4: “The Early Childhood and Preschool Years” in <i>Discovering the Lifespan</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the <i>Review, Check, and Apply</i> questions at end of each section. (ungraded) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View the videos <i>Language Development across Cultures</i> and <i>Theory of Mind across Cultures</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View the video <i>Hyper Parents and Coddled Kids</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Critical Analysis questions for this unit in your learning journal. (ungraded) |
| | <p>Additional Learning Activities: (ungraded)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Personal Learning Journal:</i> Explore issues raised in this unit and complete the reflection questions. 2. <i>REVEL:</i> Log on to the lab and view the resources available, such as videos, simulations, flashcards, etc. 3. <i>Personality Quest:</i> Take an online personality test. 4. <i>Early Childhood Education Research:</i> Research the various types of early childhood education programs in your province. 5. <i>Cognitive Development Review:</i> Read the section in your text entitled “Cognitive Development” and match the terms. 6. <i>Unit 5 Discussion Board:</i> Share your thoughts with your peers. |

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|---|
| | <p>Assignment 1: Short Answers (15%) – you can continue to work on this assignment</p> <p>Assignment 2: Reflection on Childhood Development</p> |

Resources

Feldman, R. S., & Landry, O. (2017). *Discovering the lifespan*. (2nd ed.). Toronto: Pearson.

[Hyper Parents and Coddled Kids](http://www.cbc.ca/player/Shows/Shows/Doc+Zone/2009-10/ID/1405930535/). (2010). [Video]. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/player/Shows/Shows/Doc+Zone/2009-10/ID/1405930535/>

Optional:

MyPsychLab. (n.d.). *Language Development across Cultures*. [Video].

MyPsychLab. (n.d.). *Theory of Mind across Cultures*. [Video].

Introduction

This unit provides you with an overview of the developmental tasks toddlers and preschoolers complete during the four-year period from two to six. Firstly, you will learn about physical development during this stage; children go through periods of tremendous change and growth during these years, from learning toilet training to developing fine motor skills and demonstrating either left- or right-handedness. We will also discuss cognitive development in the preschool years, including Piaget's preoperational stage (and critiques of this model) and Vygotsky's approach, which focuses on the social aspects of development and learning. You will also look further at language development in these early years, along with broad social issues, for example, the impact of media on development and research studies on the effectiveness of early childhood education.

In terms of social and personality development in the preschool years, a variety of areas are covered. You will learn about the development of self, including Erikson's stage of initiative-versus-guilt, which takes place from ages three to six. Other areas you will discuss include gender identity development, effective parenting, cultural differences, child abuse, and aggression in preschoolers. These are important aspects for you to discuss and reflect on, as social workers often have a role in supporting families and children to develop healthy social relationships. In addition, many social workers work as child protection workers, investigating abuse and maltreatment of children, and you may want to research this area further if you are planning a social work career working with families in a delegated agency, either a

provincial government child protection agency or an Aboriginal family services agency.

Topic 1: Physical Development in the Early Childhood and Preschool Years

Preschoolers go through enormous physical growth and development in this stage. This includes significant changes in body shape and structure, fueled by healthy nutrition. You will also learn about impact of poor nutrition along with illness in slowing development. From your own personal or professional experience, you may want to consider broad societal norms about preschoolers and food, and the link between overeating in this life stage and obesity in later life. There is also a link between brain growth, which is rapid during this period, and cognitive development, including brain lateralization. We will discuss differences in lateralization related to gender and culture.

You will also learn about the further development of fine and gross motor skills. You may find Table 4-1 helpful in categorizing gross motor skills development in early childhood. This is also the period of time in Western societies when toilet training becomes an important issue, sometimes because children who are not toilet trained may not be accepted into preschool programs. You may want to reflect on the societal norms that have an important impact on developmental stages. Finally, this is also the stage in which children progress significantly in their development of fine motor skills, for example, using cutlery, tying shoelaces, or playing a musical instrument. Again, consider the cultural components of these definitions of fine motor skills when you are reading the textbook and consider what other definitions may be useful determinants of competence in non-Western cultures.

Critical Analysis

Read “Physical Development in the Preschool Years” in *Discovering the Lifespan* and consider the following:

- Describe the process of physical development in the early childhood and preschool years, and the developmental tasks that preschoolers accomplish in this period.
- Feldman and Landry discuss the impact of toilet training on preschoolers. What role do you see that cultural norms in Western society play on this topic?
- Describe the importance of good nutrition in this stage of development and some of the impacts of poor nutrition on growth and development.

- In a continuation of the nature vs. nurture debate, what are the implications for preschoolers who enter school without the fine motor skills expected of them, for example, cutting with scissors, tying shoelaces, or using utensils?

Topic 2: Cognitive Development in the Early Childhood and Preschool Years

Another important aspect of development during this period is cognitive growth. Learning both Piaget's theory (the preoperational stage) and Vygotsky's approach (the zone of proximal development and scaffolding) will allow you to analyze the theories and provide a critique of both approaches to development. Piaget's theory focuses on the development of symbolic thought, and the ability of preschoolers to understand the principles of conservation of matter and transformation. Vygotsky's approach, on the other hand, fits more easily into Aboriginal perspectives, as Vygotsky viewed culture and society as building blocks to cognitive development.

Language acquisition is also rapid during this stage, and children learn the rudiments of grammar, social speech, and pragmatics, along with a tremendous increase in vocabulary. You will also discuss the impact of the media on social development, including television watching for preschoolers. Finally, you will discuss the impact of early childhood education programs and the effectiveness of childcare. These are very important issues for parents, and you may want to consider how the availability of quality daycare and preschool programs can impact families both positively and negatively.

Critical Analysis

1. Read "Cognitive Development in the Preschool Years" in *Discovering the Lifespan*.
2. Go to [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) and view the videos *Language Development across Cultures* and *Theory of Mind across Cultures*.

Consider the following:

- Describe Piaget's approach to cognitive development, and in particular the preoperational stage.
- Compare and contrast Vygotsky's approach to cognitive development with Piaget's.
- Describe the growth and development of language acquisition in the early childhood and preschool years, including private and social speech.

- Identify the similarities and differences in the acquisition of language skills and theories around understanding thinking processes in the two videos. How do *you* account for these differences across cultures?
- From a social work perspective, what do you see as the main issues for parents and children in Canada today in terms of access to quality daycare and preschool programs?

Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in the Early Childhood and Preschool Years

This unit focuses on psychosocial development, that is, children's understanding of themselves and others within the context of social behaviours and relationships. You will learn about the emergence of self-concept and identity in preschoolers reflected in Erikson's stages of development, which move from autonomy-versus-shame to initiative-versus-guilt in the preschool years. Children in this period appear to be in conflict between wanting to act independently of their parents yet feeling guilty if they are unsuccessful in their endeavours. You may want to reflect on the cultural context of this stage along with Erikson's depiction of each developmental stage as a dichotomy of tasks to be completed before moving on to the next one. We will also discuss gender identity and the social context in which it is developed. The video, *Hyper Parents and Coddled Kids*, will also provide you with a context for a Critical Analysis of Western models of parenting.

In addition, you will learn about the relationships that preschoolers develop during this period with family and friends, as well as current research on moral development and aggression in preschoolers. The role of television in the development of aggression in preschoolers is an important area of research for social workers to consider, including possible longitudinal effects that may carry over into adulthood. Finally, you will also learn about parenting styles, the cultural contexts of parenting, and the impacts of child abuse, both physical and psychological. As a social worker, supporting and educating parents about the importance of effective parenting is an important role, and whether you work in a child welfare agency or other social service agency, it is crucial for you to know both theoretical issues and current research in this area.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Social and Emotional Development in the Preschool Years" in *Discovering the Lifespan* and after viewing the video [Hyper Parents and Coddled Kids](#), consider the following:

- Describe the development of self-concept in the preschool years using Erikson's theory of initiative-versus-guilt stage.
- Feldman and Landry describe biological and cognitive theories to explain how gender identity is developed in this period. Think back to your own early childhood years; which theory or combination of theories fits with your understanding of the development of gender identity?
- Compare and contrast the four major parenting styles detailed by Feldman and Landry.
- Describe the major types of child abuse and theories around their underlying causes.
- Does the documentary apply only to middle and upper-middle class parents? What pressures does this competitive environment create for families without the means to provide this kind of "coddling" for their children?
- Reflect on your own childhood. After viewing the video, compare and contrast your childhood and your parents' approach to parenting with the parents interviewed in the video.

Additional Learning Activities

You may choose to explore the following optional learning activities to enhance your comprehension of this subject:

1. *Personal Learning Journal*: In your personal learning journal, reflect on cultural differences in childrearing philosophies. You may use the Anderson textbook to highlight the differences between collectivist and individualist cultures, the Feldman and Landry textbook, fiction or non-fiction books you have read, and your own experiences. What are your most important values and beliefs about parenting, and how will these values impact your emerging social work practice?
2. *REVEL*: Log on to the lab and view the resources available, such as videos, simulations, flashcards, etc.
3. *Personality Quest*: Search online for a personality test and take the test. Do you think that the test accurately reflects your personality today? Do you think that your personality has changed from childhood (for example, are you now an extrovert or introvert and has this trait remained stable across your development)?
4. *Early Childhood Education Research*: Research the various types of early childhood education programs in your province. Click on the following PDF

- (Available in your online course material) for more instructions about this activity.
5. *Cognitive Development Review*: Read the section in your text entitled “Cognitive Development” and then try the following [Matching Exercise](#) (opens in new window).
 6. *Discussion*: Feel free to share your thoughts about the concepts in this unit by posting to the *Unit 5 Discussion Board*. Note that this board will *not* be graded.

Assessment

Assignment 1: Short Answers A (15%)

Continue to complete the worksheet. This assignment is due at the end of Unit 6.

Assignment 2: Reflection on Childhood Development (15%)

(Available in your online course material)

Summary

This unit covers a four-year period, from ages two to six, when huge changes take place in terms of physical, cognitive, and social and personality development in preschoolers. Children move from a great reliance on adults to meet their daily needs to independence in areas such as dressing themselves, toilet training, and feeding themselves, along with developing friendships and social relationships. You have learned about physical and brain development in this stage, as well as Piaget and Erikson’s theories of the tasks and accomplishments that children should achieve in this developmental stage. Other areas discussed include cultural components of parenting, as well as broader societal issues, for example, the influence of daycare and preschool on development. You have also been introduced to some of the factors that influence parenting styles along with a discussion of parenting problems, for example, child abuse and maltreatment. Social workers need to be informed and knowledgeable about parenting issues so that they can provide the appropriate supports to families and children

The next unit continues this discussion of childhood development, focusing on middle childhood, from six to twelve years of age. In this stage, children not only experience significant physical growth, but they also develop tremendous growth in cognitive and social awareness through the six years of formal schooling that they undergo in Western societies. You will also consider the effects of gender on access to education around the world and the effects of learning disabilities on children’s social and personality development at this stage. This stage of development is

crucial to understanding some of the tensions and upheavals that come with adolescence and young adulthood.

Unit 6: Middle Childhood

Overview

Unit 6 addresses middle childhood, the ages between six and twelve when children make great strides in a number of areas, including their physical, cognitive, and social and emotional development. Feldman and Landry discuss the milestones of normative development in these areas, for example, Piaget's concrete operational stage and Erikson's industry-versus-inferiority stage, but they also provide a counterpoint to normative development in their discussions of childhood obesity, special needs children, gender issues in education, and moral development. You will learn about Gilligan's critique of Kohlberg's study of moral development in girls and boys in which girls' moral judgment was typically scored at a lower level than boys', and there is a further reading from Gilligan for you to gain a greater understanding of the issues around gender differences. Again, this is a good topic to use to review the nature vs. nurture debate that we have discussed in several previous units. Finally, you will also study Aboriginal approaches to middle childhood, and Anderson's chapter will provide you with another counterpoint to dominant Western norms.

Topics

Unit 6 is divided into 4 topics:

- Topic 1: Physical Development in Middle Childhood
- Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood
- Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Middle Childhood
- Topic 4: Aboriginal Approaches to Middle Childhood

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe the process of physical development in middle childhood and the developmental tasks that children accomplish in this period.
- Describe the process of cognitive development in middle childhood, including Piaget's concrete operational stage and critiques of Piaget's theory, as well as Vygotsky's approach to cognitive development and classroom instruction.
- Describe the process of social and personality development in middle childhood, including the development of self-esteem, moral development, and social relationships, as well as Erikson's industry-versus-inferiority stage.
- Analyze and critique Kohlberg's and Gilligan's approaches to moral development within a gender context.

- Analyze similarities and differences in developmental tasks in middle childhood from a cultural perspective, including between Western and Aboriginal approaches.

Activity Checklist

Here is a checklist of the learning activities you will be completing in Unit 6. You may find it useful in planning your work.

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 5: “Middle Childhood” in <i>Discovering the Lifespan</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the <i>Review, Check, and Apply</i> at end of each section. (ungraded) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 4: “The ‘Good Life’ and the ‘Fast Life’: Childhood and Youth” (pp. 65–83) in <i>Life Stages and Native Women</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Images of Relationship” from <i>In a Different Voice</i> by Carol Gilligan. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View video: <i>School and Education in Middle Childhood</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Critical Analysis questions for this unit in your learning journal. (ungraded) |
| | <p>Additional Learning Activities: (ungraded)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Video:</i> View the video <i>Être et Avoir</i> and complete the critical questions. 2. <i>Personal Learning Journal:</i> Explore issues raised in this unit and complete the reflection questions. 3. <i>Simulation:</i> Go to <i>My Virtual Life</i> and continue to raise your virtual child through middle childhood. 4. <i>Moral Development Case Study:</i> Read the case study and answer the questions presented. 5. <i>Movie Time!</i> Choose a movie that focuses on family dynamics and analyze the various developmental stages. 6. <i>Unit 6 Discussion Board:</i> Share your thoughts with your peers. |

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|---|
| | Assignment 1: Short Answers (15%) – you can now complete this assignment |

Resources

Anderson, K. (2011). The 'good life' and the 'fast life': Childhood and youth. In K. Anderson, *Life stages and native women: Memory, teachings, and story medicine* (pp. 65–83). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Feldman, R. S., & Landry, O. (2017). Middle childhood. In R. S. Feldman & O. Landry, *Discovering the lifespan*. (2nd ed.) (pp. 188–221). Toronto: Pearson.

Gilligan, C. (1982). Images of relationship. In *a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development* (pp. 24-63). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

MyPsychLab. (n.d.). *School and education in middle childhood*. [Video].

Wagamese, R. (2012). *Indian horse*. Madeira Park, BC: Douglas & McIntyre.

Introduction

Unit 6 covers middle childhood, the years between six and twelve, when children enter into formal schooling. This is also a period when children often become more independent from their parents and focus on friendships and school activities to a greater degree. You will learn about the physical aspects of growth in this period, with a focus on nutrition and childhood obesity. We will also discuss children with special needs, including sensory difficulties, learning disabilities and psychological challenges. Piaget's concrete operational stage will also be discussed, along with critiques of his model, and Vygotsky's approach to cognitive development and classroom instruction. You will also learn about current research and theories on intelligence and educational achievement.

Erikson's stage of industry-versus-inferiority is also discussed in social and personality development. Much of this section is placed within the context of gender, including access to education and moral development. You will learn about Kohlberg's sequence of moral reasoning and Gilligan's critique of his model through a gender-specific lens. Other important issues discussed in this unit include the impact of divorce on children, multigenerational, blended and gay and lesbian families, and socio-economic issues. Finally, you will learn about traditional Aboriginal approaches to this life stage to give you a context for the Critical Analysis of both Western and Aboriginal approaches to child-rearing. The focus in this unit on providing a counterpoint to normative Western models of development will assist you as a social worker to provide support to a broader range of diverse families.

Topic 1: Physical Development in Middle Childhood

Middle childhood is a time of continuing growth in both physical and motor skills development. Many children master complex new skills in this period, for example, playing a musical instrument or a team sport. Their emerging physical competence is more gradual throughout this period than the sustained growth spurts of early childhood and adolescence. Think back on this period in your own childhood and reflect on your interests at that time: sports, music, dance. Were you more focused on individual interests (learning to play an instrument) or group interests (team sports) and why? You will also learn about factors that can have an important impact on children's physical and motor development in this period, for example, health, fitness, and obesity.

In addition, we will discuss other areas of concern in this stage, for example, psychological disorders which may emerge during this period. There is increasing controversy over the use of adult medication to treat psychological disorders in children, and as a social worker, you may be working with families with children who have been diagnosed with significant psychological disorders or, as a Child and Youth Mental Health Social Worker, you may be working with children with this diagnosis. It is important to read current research in this area, as this area has changed significantly over the last ten years. Finally, you will learn about children with special needs, including sensory difficulties, learning disabilities, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The focus in this section is on how to address the challenges that special needs children face in the context of their educational achievement.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Physical Development in Middle Childhood" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- Describe the process of physical development in middle childhood and the developmental tasks that children accomplish in this period.
- What roles do nutrition and obesity play in normative development at this stage?
- Compare and contrast the approaches detailed in Feldman and Landry to the treatment of psychological disorders in children. Which approach(es) do you support?
- Describe the most prevalent forms of special needs in children in this stage. What kinds of supports do you think are important to provide to children with special needs (**and their families**) in terms of their education and social relationships?

Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood

Cognitive development also undergoes significant change in this period of the school years. Once formal schooling begins, children are introduced to reading and writing, and along with these skills, they develop language competency to express themselves fluently, both orally and in writing. Educational success at this level is often an indicator of future educational attainment, which can provide challenges for children (and their parents) who are not achieving at their grade level. Piaget documented the emergence of logic and reasoning abilities in this age group, calling this stage the concrete operational stage. You will also learn about Vygotsky's approach to cognitive development and classroom instruction, which focuses on children as active participants in learning rather than passive receptors of information.

We will also discuss current research on educational trends worldwide, including the gender gap in education, in which girls in some countries are less likely to receive formal schooling and for shorter periods of time than boys. You will also learn about the impact of cultural diversity on educational goals. Finally, we will discuss the controversial issue of intelligence testing. You will learn about intelligence tests, including critiques of testing methodologies and cultural dimensions of testing. You will also discuss the concepts of intellectual disabilities and intellectual giftedness. This section gives you a broad overview of some of the complex and challenging issues facing parents, educators, social workers, and counsellors in terms of children and education, normative benchmarks, and individual difference.

Critical Analysis

1. Read "Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood" in *Discovering the Lifespan* and answer the *Review, Check, and Apply* questions.
2. Go to [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) and view the video *School and Education in Middle Childhood*.

Consider the following questions:

- Describe Piaget's approach to cognitive development, and in particular the concrete operational stage.
- Compare and contrast Vygotsky's approach to cognitive development and education with Piaget's.
- Describe current educational trends. To what extent was diversity discussed in your education in elementary school? Identify the primary goals of education from your perspective.

- Compare and contrast the different forms of intelligence testing for children. Identify the pros and cons of this form of testing.
- After viewing the video, reflect on the differences you observed among the children and families. How were the cultural, gender, socio-economic status, and rural vs. urban expressed in terms of educational issues?

Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Middle Childhood

This topic deals with broad issues that stem from an emerging sense of self that is grounded in middle childhood in complex ideas of psychological traits rather than earlier ideas of physical attributes. You will learn about how this psychosocial change is affected by educational success, self-esteem, and cultural issues within the context of Erikson's industry-versus-inferiority stage. Other important issues for children in this stage include the role of friendship in development. As you will read in Feldman and Landry, friends provide an increasing influence on children, as at this stage friendships involve much more than simply playmates. Friends also provide emotional support and trust, and peer relationships become increasingly important throughout this stage. Think back to your own childhood and your friendships in elementary school. Are you still in contact with some of those early friends? What aspects of their friendship were important to you at that time? Although friends become more important in this period, family is also influential, and you will learn about the impact of divorce, single parenting, and blended families on children's development.

In addition, we will discuss children's moral development in this period. Feldman and Landry discuss the work of Kohlberg, a developmental psychologist, who researched children's moral judgments at different ages. He developed a chart of the sequence of moral development from preconventional morality to postconventional morality (please see Table 5-1 for further details). Gilligan, who worked with Kohlberg, provides a critique of his approach, which suggested that boys typically scored higher than girls on the tests of moral judgment. Gilligan suggested that the differences between girls and boys in terms of moral reasoning lay more in social expectations of roles than in terms of moral judgment. She reasons that boys relate morality to justice, while girls see morality as caring for others. This is still a controversial issue, and there are further critiques of both Kohlberg and Gilligan in recent research that suggest that there may not be as pronounced a difference between girls' and boys' reasoning as both researchers suggested.

Critical Analysis

1. Read “Social and Emotional Development in Middle Childhood” in *Discovering the Lifespan* and answer the *Review, Check, and Apply* questions.
2. Read “Images of Relationship” (Available in your online course material)in *In a Different Voice* (pp. 24–63).

Consider the following:

- Describe the development of self-concept in middle childhood using Erikson’s theory of industry-versus-inferiority stage.
- Describe the stages of friendship in this stage and the importance of peer relationships in middle childhood.
- Describe some of the challenges of family life and its impact on children, including poverty, divorce, single parenting. As a social worker, you may be working with families and children to provide support services to them. Reflect on your own biases and values around what constitutes a “normal” family.
- Compare and contrast Kohlberg and Gilligan’s theories about moral development in children. Reflecting on the nature vs. nurture debate that we have discussed in several units, how much do you think socialization (or nurture) influences moral development in boys and girls?

Topic 4: Aboriginal Approaches to Middle Childhood

This topic describes the “good life” or middle childhood stage from an Aboriginal perspective. Children in this stage of the traditional life cycle are given a great deal of freedom and autonomy while self-discipline and responsibility are also stressed. This focus on both independence and interdependence within the community has some similarities to Erikson’s task of industry-versus-inferiority within his stages of psychosocial development. However, the underlying principle of collectivism as expressed in Aboriginal communities is not included in Western theories, as researchers tend to focus on individualism as the goal of successful maturity and development. In contrast, Anderson details community responsibilities in raising children, along with approaches to discipline and teaching. You will also learn about the concept of reciprocity in relationships with family and community members.

Anderson also discusses discipline within traditional Aboriginal communities, and the role of storytelling and rituals to provide examples and teachings around culture. You will also learn about the role of praise as well as shaming in disciplinary techniques. You may want to reflect on your own childhood or that of your children, and how discipline was instilled by parents, family, and teachers.

Anderson also discusses how self-discipline and self-reliance would be encouraged by families through an approach of non-interference. Within a traditional life, children also had significant responsibilities around work as well as play. Finally, Anderson links the cultural and spiritual beliefs of Aboriginal peoples to children's development through her discussion of the connection to land and children's need to learn about the animals they share the land with.

Critical Analysis

When reading pages 65–83 in *Life Stages and Native Women*, consider the following:

- Describe the major tenets of the “good life” as detailed by Anderson
- Why was it important in a traditional lifestyle for Aboriginal children to learn to be still and silent at certain times?
- Compare and contrast Erikson's industry-versus-inferiority stage with Anderson's depiction of Aboriginal middle childhood.
- Western approaches to child development focus on the role of play and formal schooling in supporting developmental tasks to be addressed at each stage of childhood. Anderson discusses the role of work, self-reliance, and self-discipline in Aboriginal developmental norms. Compare and contrast the two approaches to developmental tasks: can these two approaches be integrated?

Indian Horse by Richard Wagamese

This is the time to start reading the novel, *Indian Horse*. While this is not a required reading, this novel will enhance your learning and provide you with new insights into the impact of abuse on the development of boys and men. The first-person narrator is Saul Indian Horse, who provides a retrospective account of his life while he is in a clinic to treat his alcoholism. His early life with his traditional grandmother is described in detail; after her death, the next phase of his life in residential school is detailed, along with the cultural dislocation and physical and sexual abuse suffered by the children in the school.

Saul's relationship with hockey (which is both a positive and negative influence in his life) is related to his social and personality development as young Aboriginal boy in an institutional setting that attempts to destroy Aboriginal identity. The racism and violence that he experiences in the broader community when his Aboriginal hockey team plays against Caucasian teams are described as devastating in impact. Finally, the book discusses his descent into alcoholism and eventual route to recovery and hope.

While reading the book, consider the following questions:

- Saul's relationship with his grandmother who provides traditional teaching is profoundly different from his relationship with his parents. He ends up separated from his parents after the death of his brother; what do you think would have happened if his parents had remained with him?
- How is Saul changed by his love for hockey and his skill as a player?
- What is the impact of racism within the hockey world on Saul's development as a troubled adolescent boy and young man?
- How does Saul's final revelation about his experience in residential school influence his later struggles with dislocation from culture and substance abuse?
- How does the book's resolution provide hope for change for adults who have experienced profound losses and abuse in their childhood?

Additional Learning Activities

You may choose to explore the following optional learning activities to enhance your comprehension of the stage of middle childhood:

1. *Video*: View the video *Être et Avoir*, a documentary about a schoolteacher in a one-room school in rural France. His students range in age from five to 12. What is his educational philosophy? How does this fit (or not) with Erikson and Piaget's approaches to the tasks inherent in the middle childhood years?
 - This video is available online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uc1V_1PcDYA. Note that you may need to change the captions to English. If the link is broken, you may want to search online, or purchase through itunes or YouTube.
2. *Personal Learning Journal*: In your personal learning journal, reflect on your own elementary school years or that of your children. How did friendships with peers evolve? What similarities and differences did you observe in friendships between girls and boys? How would *you* account for the differences?
3. *Simulation*: Go to *My Virtual Life* and continue to raise your virtual child through middle childhood.
4. *Moral Development Case Study*: Read the case study (Available in your online course material) and answer the questions presented.
5. *Movie Time!* (Available in your online course material) Choose a movie that focuses on family dynamics and analyze the various developmental stages.
6. *Discussion*: Feel free to share your thoughts about the concepts in this unit by posting to the *Unit 6 Discussion Board*. Note that this board will *not* be graded.

Assessment

Assignment 1: Short Answers A (15%)

Complete the worksheet and submit it to your Open Learning Faculty Member.

Summary

This unit addressed the middle childhood years, from six to twelve, and the significant changes that take place in terms of physical, cognitive, and social and personality development. You have learned about the gradual increase in competence and abilities fostered by formal schooling that children who fit normative models of development experience in this period. Fluency in reading, writing, and oral communication are hallmarks of this period. In addition, you have learnt about Piaget's concrete operational model and Erikson's industry-versus-inferiority stage. We have also discussed Aboriginal approaches to the developmental tasks of children in this stage, and placed this approach within the context of Western developmental norms. Finally, you have learned about moral development in children at this stage and the controversies surrounding Kohlberg and Gilligan's gendered approaches to moral development. This is a useful issue to analyze within the context of the nature vs. nurture debate.

The next unit addresses the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood: adolescence. This is a period of major changes and upheaval in terms of physical, cognitive, and social and personality development. Physical development in this stage can bring many challenges to adolescents in terms of body image, nutrition, eating disorders, substance abuse, and sexual activity. Peer relationships also gain increasing importance, while family relationships undergo significant changes. In Western societies, formal schooling is also an important factor in adolescents' lives, and you will have an opportunity to compare adolescent lives in different cultures and communities with Western normative values.

Unit 7: Adolescence

Overview

This unit covers the developmental stage of adolescence, a period of great change and transformation in this transitional period between childhood and adulthood. This stage covers the years from thirteen to twenty, and during this period, adolescents experience rapid physical growth and maturity, along with significant changes in cognitive, as well as social and personality development. You will learn about puberty and sexual maturation in girls and boys and how they differ, along with threats to normative adolescent development, for example, eating disorders, substance abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases. This period of time is, as you are aware, a time of experimentation and risk-taking for many adolescents, and there may be conflicts with parents, teachers, and peers. You will also learn about Piaget's formal operations stage of cognitive development, as well as the increasing complexity of adolescent thinking about themselves in terms of self-concept and self-esteem, and some of the challenges to healthy self-concept in adolescence. Erikson encapsulates this as identity-versus-identity confusion. In addition, we will discuss sexual maturity, sexual behaviour, and teenage pregnancy in adolescence.

As a counterpoint to Western approaches to adolescence as a time of confusion, challenge, and changing relationships, you will also learn about Aboriginal approaches to adolescence and maturity, including the differences in relationships within collectivist communities where individualism is not necessarily seen as an important goal to attain during the teenage years. You will, in addition, consider gender and sexual diversity in adolescence, particularly as observed in Aboriginal cultures and the impact of diversity within a historically marginalized group. Finally, you will have an opportunity to reflect on your own adolescence or that of close family or friends. Was this period one of conflict and confusion or was it a period of continued closeness to family and gradual maturity? Was it neither of these approaches but a different experience altogether?

Topics

Unit 7 is divided into 4 topics:

Topic 1: Physical Development in Adolescence

Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Adolescence

Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Adolescence

Topic 4: Aboriginal Approaches to Adolescence

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe the process of physical development in adolescence, including sexual maturation for girls and boys, the impact of eating disorders, and other threats to adolescents' well-being.
- Identify the process of cognitive development in adolescence, including Piaget's formal operations stage and its impact on school performance.
- Evaluate the process of social and personality development in adolescence, including Erikson's identity-versus-identity crisis stage, and Marcia's approach to identity development.
- Analyze how sexuality develops in adolescence and the impact of early sexual behaviours and teenage pregnancy on adolescents.
- Describe Aboriginal approaches to adolescence and the differences between collectivist communities and individualist societies.
- Compare and contrast Western normative approaches with Aboriginal approaches to adolescence through a lens of sexual diversity and difference.

Activity Checklist

Here is a checklist of the learning activities you will be completing in Unit 7. You may find it useful in planning your work.

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 6: "Adolescence" in <i>Discovering the Lifespan</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the <i>Review, Check, and Apply</i> at end of each section. (ungraded) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Markstrom's article, "North American Indian Perspectives on Human Development," pp. 46–84. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Alaers' article, "Two-Spirited People and Social Work Practice: Exploring the History of Aboriginal Gender and Sexual Diversity," pp. 63–79. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View video: <i>Adolescent Conflict across Cultures</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Critical Analysis questions for this unit in your learning journal. (ungraded) |

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|--|
| | <p>Additional Learning Activities: (ungraded)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Videos:</i> Go to <i>MyPsychLab</i> and view the videos, <i>Body Image and Peer Pressure Parts I and II</i>, and complete the critical questions. 2. <i>Personal Learning Journal:</i> Explore issues raised in this unit and complete the reflection questions. 3. <i>Interview:</i> Talk to a family member or friend who is an adolescent. What kinds of challenges do they describe facing in their progress towards maturity? Are their challenges similar to the ones you faced? 4. <i>Men in the Media:</i> Find examples of how the media portrays “attractive men.” 5. <i>Youth Culture in TV:</i> Watch a popular movie or television series with a focus on youth issues. 6. <i>Identity Development:</i> Think back to your own adolescence and reflect on the questions presented. 7. <i>Unit 7 Discussion Board:</i> Share your thoughts with your peers. |
| | <p>Assignment 3: – you can begin this assignment now</p> |

Resources

Alaers, J. (2010). Two-spirited people and social work practice: Exploring the history of Aboriginal gender and sexual diversity. *Critical Social Work* 11(1), 63–79.

Anderson, K. (2011). The ‘good life’ and the ‘fast life’: Childhood and youth. In K. Anderson, *Life stages and native women: Memory, teachings, and story medicine* (pp. 83–96). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Feldman, R. S., & Landry, O. (2017). Middle childhood. In R. S. Feldman & O. Landry, *Discovering the lifespan*. (2nd ed.) (pp. 188–221). Toronto: Pearson.

Markstrom, C. A. (2008). North American Indian perspectives on human development. In C. A. Markstrom, *Empowerment of North American Indian girls: Ritual expressions at puberty* (pp. 46–84). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

MyPsychLab. (n.d.). *Adolescent conflict across cultures*. [Video].

Wagamese, R. (2012). *Indian horse*. Madeira Park, BC: Douglas & McIntyre.

Introduction

Unit 7 covers adolescence, the period between 13 and 20 years old. These seven years are often seen as problematic and turbulent in Western society, and you may recall your own adolescence in these terms. However, although there are tremendous physical, cognitive, and social and personality changes during this period, not every teenager experiences difficulties. Some adolescents find the challenges in this period of maturity to be manageable and energizing. In this unit, you will learn about physical and sexual maturation, and challenges to normative development stages, for example, drug and alcohol use. We will also discuss Piaget's formal operations stage of cognitive development, along with school performance. Erikson's identity-versus-identity confusion is also discussed in tandem with the emergence of more complex concepts around self-esteem and self-confidence. You will also learn about Marcia's approach to identity development, which is an update of Erikson's model. Finally, we will discuss family and peer relationships, along with sexual behaviour in adolescence.

This unit will also assist you in developing an understanding of difference and diversity by examining Aboriginal approaches to adolescence (the Anderson and Markstrom readings), which place this stage in a different cultural context of collectivist principles. Further, you will learn about Aboriginal approaches to gender and sexual diversity in the Alaers article, and you will be able to compare and contrast normative models with issues of diversity within already marginalized communities. As a social worker, you may be working with families experiencing problems with their teenage children or with adolescents themselves who have left the family home, and a thorough knowledge and understanding of developmental issues, including diversity, is an important part of providing assistance to families.

Topic 1: Physical Development in Adolescence

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical growth spurts and sexual maturation. You will learn in this topic about the physical changes that adolescents undergo as well as the consequences of early and late maturation, which are quite different for girls and boys. Thinking back to your own adolescence, you may recall significant differences in physical and sexual maturity among students in the same grade/cohort in high school. There are implications for adolescents in both early and late maturation, including loss of self-esteem for early maturing girls and late maturing boys.

Physical and sexual development can be influenced by a number of factors, including adolescent nutrition. Both eating disorders, for example, anorexia nervosa and bulimia, and obesity are areas of concern within this developmental stage, and

we will discuss the biological and environmental factors that influence these significant health concerns. You will learn about other issues that also have an impact on adolescents' wellbeing, particularly drug, alcohol, and tobacco use. Finally, we will discuss sexually transmitted diseases and their impact in adolescence. These are important areas for social workers to understand when working with this population, and reflection on your own challenges in adolescence may assist you to understand more fully the issues that your clients are facing.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Physical Development in Adolescence" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- Describe the process of physical and sexual maturity in adolescence for both boys and girls.
- What are some of the factors that impact eating disorders and obesity in adolescence?
- Describe the following threats to adolescents' wellbeing: drugs, alcohol, tobacco use, and sexually transmitted infections.
- Compare and contrast the impact of early and late maturation for boys and girls. What are the long-term consequences for adolescents as they move into adulthood?

Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Adolescence

Cognitive development proceeds at a rapid pace in adolescence as teenagers develop more sophisticated and complex theories of thinking about themselves and their own thought processes. They gradually shift from a focus on concrete thinking to an ability to analyze abstract concepts and hypothesize about future events. Piaget describes this period as the formal operational stage. You will learn about some of the consequences of this ability to use logic to perform abstract thinking, including increased challenges for parents and teachers in the face of argumentation and critical evaluation. We will also discuss information-processing perspectives on cognitive development, including metacognition, as well as adolescent egocentrism and its impact on behaviour and attitudes. You may want to consider some of the impacts of egocentrism on adolescents, for example, how family and peer relationships may be changed by distorted thinking patterns.

We will also discuss cognitive processes and their impact on school performance, in both high school and university. In addition, broader societal issues, for example, poverty, have a major impact on academic success, and there are significant consequences, both immediate and longitudinal, for adolescents who do not

complete high school. In your role as a social worker, you may be working with disadvantaged adolescents or adults, whose lives have been changed by school drop out. You may be supporting women who left school when they became pregnant, adolescents with learning disabilities, or men and women whose socio-economic status made it difficult for them to complete high school.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Cognitive Development in Adolescence" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- Describe Piaget's approach to cognitive development in adolescence, and in particular the formal operational stage.
- Compare and contrast the information-processing approach to cognitive development and education with Piaget's.
- Describe the consequences of adolescent egocentrism on teenagers' relationships with family, teachers, and friends.
- Analyze the immediate and long-term consequences of early school leaving through the lens of gender and socio-economic status.

Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Adolescence

Social and personality development in adolescence is a time of change and, frequently, turmoil, as adolescents develop a greater sense of who they are through further maturation of ideas of self-concept, self-esteem, and identity formation. As adolescents become more aware, however, of their strengths and weaknesses, and become more accurate assessors of themselves, they may move from being self-confident and happy pre-teens to adolescents whose self-esteem and self-confidence drop significantly. Erikson describes this search for understanding of self as identity-versus-identity confusion (please see Table 6-2 for a chart of Erikson's stages). You will also learn about Marcia's approach to identity development (an updated version of Erikson). Marcia characterizes adolescence as a period of crisis vs. commitment, and he developed four categories of identity in adolescence: identity achievement, identity foreclosure, moratorium, and identity diffusion. You will also learn in this topic about psychological pressures during adolescence, including depression and suicide.

This topic also deals with questions of relationships during adolescent. Peer relationships tend to take on more significance, while family and parental relationships may be strained as adolescents search for autonomy. You will also learn about the impact of popularity and peer pressure within adolescent

relationships. This is also a period of sexual experimentation and exploration, and you will learn about the impacts of dating, sexual relationships, and teenage pregnancy. Sexual orientation and challenges facing adolescents who identify as LGBTQ are also discussed in terms of the impact on relationships with peers, family, and community.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Social and Emotional Development in Adolescence" in *Discovering the Lifespan* and after viewing the video *Adolescent Conflict across Cultures* from [MyPsychLab Video Series](#), consider the following:

- Describe the development of self-concept in adolescence using Erikson's theory of identity-versus-identity confusion stage, and compare to Marcia's reworking of Erikson and the categories of identity formation in adolescence.
- Describe the factors that lead to psychological difficulties in adolescence, particularly depression and suicide.
- Adolescence has been described as a time of conflict and confusion in the development of identity and self. From a social work perspective, analyze parenting differences as a factor in the development of adolescent autonomy.
- After viewing the video, compare and contrast differences in culture, community, and family composition in the development of conflict and autonomy in adolescence.

Topic 4: Aboriginal Approaches to Adolescence

This topic focuses on Aboriginal approaches to adolescent development in contrast to normative Western models. Anderson describes adolescence (the "fast life") in traditional Aboriginal communities as a time of quest, contribution to family and community, and preparation for spiritual or moral responsibility. Both Anderson and Markstrom discuss the role of adolescent girls in Aboriginal communities, and the delineation of childhood and maturity through ritual and ceremony, usually at the time of a girl's first menstruation. Once these ceremonies are fulfilled, girls are welcomed into the circle of adult women, and they are expected to take on responsibilities commensurate with that status. Both Markstrom and Anderson discuss the coexistence of interdependence with individualism within Aboriginal communities and how these seemingly contradictory concepts contribute to identity formation.

In addition, you will learn about the history of the terms used to explain sexual and gender diversity in the Alaers article. Alaers contrasts Western attitudes to diversity with Aboriginal approaches from the pre-European contact to the present day. She

contrasts European concepts of sex and gender roles (the dichotomy of male/female) with the more fluid concepts of Aboriginal societies, where at least six different gender roles were identified. She also documents contemporary language and definitions of gender diversity in Aboriginal communities, particularly focused on the term “two-spirits”, and she addresses in some depth the experiences of homophobia and rejection felt by some Aboriginal two-spirited men and women within their own communities. She also discusses the implications for social work practice with two-spirited people, and this is an important area for you to reflect on how you would approach working with members of this population in your own social work practice.

In this section you will also watch an interview with Richard Wagamese that explores the impacts of cultural loss on Aboriginal communities for adolescents. Although his novel, *Indian Horse*, is optional reading, the concepts discussed will assist you in your understanding of this unit.

Critical Analysis

1. Read “The ‘Fast Life’: Moving into Adolescence” (pp. 83–96) *Life Stages and Native Women*.
2. Read “North American Indian Perspectives on Human Development” (Available in your online course material) by Carol Markstrom.
3. Read the Alaers article, “Two-Spirited People and Social Work Practice: Exploring the History of Aboriginal Gender and Sexual Diversity.” (Available in your online course material)

Consider the following:

- Describe the major tenets of the “fast life” as detailed by Anderson.
- How do Anderson and Markstrom describe the contradiction between the coexistence of interdependence with individualism with Aboriginal communities?
- Describe the historical and contemporary language used to identify sexual and gender diversity, as detailed in Alaers article.
- From a social work perspective, what are some of the challenges and opportunities for effective social work practice with Aboriginal clients who identify as diverse in terms of gender or sexuality? What programs or policies would you like to see introduced to assist and support gender and sexual diversity within Aboriginal communities?

Richard Wagamese on Adolescence and Cultural Loss

In this series of clips, Richard Wagamese discusses the importance of the all-male hockey environment in *Indian Horse* and how this helped Saul to find a place where he belongs. The author describes how all male-bonding experiences add a powerful element in the development of boys and adolescents in contrast to gang culture, which provides a false sense of belonging and identity. He also focuses on the idea of cultural loss and dislocation in his own life during his adolescent years and the melancholy and emptiness he experienced as a teenager.

Consider the following questions when watching the videos:

- Richard Wagamese uses the terms “detached” and “displaced” to describe the impact of cultural loss on Aboriginal youth. How do you think that technology can assist in regaining culture?
- Wagamese describes his own dislocation from culture when, as a young First Nations child, he was removed from his family and community during the Sixties Scoop and placed for adoption with a Caucasian family. How does he relate his own experience of “cultural loneliness” to Aboriginal youth’s involvement in gang culture?
- What other kind of all-male bonding experiences apart from team sports might be helpful to build self-esteem and a sense of belonging in adolescent boys?
- Wagamese links cultural loneliness to depression and melancholy in adolescence. What kinds of knowledge and information would be useful for you to explore when working with adolescent boys?

1. The Challenges For Aboriginal Adolescent Boys
http://barabus.tru.ca/socw3551/socw3551_03.html
2. The Dislocation of Culture for the Sixties Scoop Children
http://barabus.tru.ca/socw3551/socw3551_04.html
3. The Absence of Fathers and the Alienation of Elders from Traditions.
http://barabus.tru.ca/socw3551/socw3551_05.html
4. The Importance of Traditional Gender Roles in Aboriginal Communities
http://barabus.tru.ca/socw3551/socw3551_06.html
5. The Impact of Violence and Racism on Aboriginal Boys Development
http://barabus.tru.ca/socw3551/socw3551_07.html
6. The Importance of Location and Land and their Impact on Healing
http://barabus.tru.ca/socw3551/socw3551_08.html
7. The Dangers of Assimilation and the Need for Traditional Teachings
http://barabus.tru.ca/socw3551/socw3551_09.html

Additional Learning Activities

You may choose to explore the following optional learning activities to enhance your comprehension of this subject:

1. *Videos*: Go to [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) and view the short videos *Body Image and Peer Pressure Parts I and II*. Describe the pressures Kianna faces from media representations, peers, and her family to conform to a particular body image as normal. What do you think the long-term consequences of seeking idealized body images may be for adolescent girls? Do the same pressures exist for adolescent boys?
2. *Personal Learning Journal*: In your personal learning journal, reflect on the pressures to fit in and be perceived as normal in adolescence. Contrast this pressure with the adolescent task to become differentiated as an individual from family, friends, and community. What problems may arise from these conflicting approaches?
3. *Interview*: Talk to a family member or friend who is an adolescent. What kinds of challenges do they describe facing in their progress towards maturity? Are their challenges similar to the ones you faced?

For detailed instructions for the next three activities, please see the following link. (Available in your online course material)

4. *Men in the Media*: Find examples of how the media portrays “attractive men.”
5. *Youth Culture in TV*: Watch a popular movie or television series with a focus on youth issues.
6. *Identity Development*: Think back to your own adolescence and reflect on the questions presented.
7. *Discussion*: Feel free to share your thoughts about the concepts in this unit by posting to the *Unit 7 Discussion Board*.

Assessment

Assignment 3: Short Answers B (15%)

For Assignment 3, you will answer the following 15 questions in brief sentences or point form (1 mark each). A maximum of 50 - 100 words per question. These questions cover Chapters 6 through 10 of your textbook and are also provided as an editable document for you to complete. You can work on this assignment as you go through the units and submit it after Unit 11.

Summary

In this unit, you learned about the challenges and conflicts inherent in adolescent development. We discussed physical, cognitive, and social and personality development in this period, all of which undergo significant changes during adolescence. We have also explored these changes within the context of Piaget's formal operational stage of cognitive development and Marcia's concepts of identity development. In addition, the role of identity-versus-identity confusion, as discussed by Erikson, provides a context for the sometimes painful transition to an increased awareness of self-concept in this period. You also learnt about risk factors in adolescence, from peer pressure to early sexual experimentation, and from drug and alcohol use to psychological problems. Finally, you also learned about Aboriginal approaches to adolescence, and the roles that adolescents may assume in traditional communities, which are quite different from Western normative models. Further discussions of difference included sexual and gender diversity within Aboriginal communities, from both an historical and a contemporary perspective. It is important for social workers to understand not only current issues within marginalized communities (and examine their own biases and values in this regard) but also to understand broader, historical contexts around the oppression of people labelled as different.

The next unit moves into the early adult stage, from 20 to 40 years of age. Many cultures expect transitions to marriage, raising children and career advancement in this period. Although there is a tendency to assume that development is somehow complete at the end of adolescence, this unit continues to explore the physical, cognitive, and social and personality development of young adults. Before reading the Feldman and Landry chapter, you might want to reflect on your own personal history; for example, at what point did you decide that you were an adult? Was it when you left your family home permanently (economic and social independence), when you went to university or post-secondary education or when you entered into a permanent relationship? These are by no means exclusive categories, and you may have had several periods in your life when you met these milestones and then returned to your family home, to be able to afford post-secondary education, for example. This unit explores these concepts of independence and adulthood in several categories.

Unit 8: Early Adulthood

Overview

In this unit, you will learn about early adulthood, the stage that lasts from 20 to 40 years of age. This is a lengthy period to cover, and within it, many adults experience significant life changes and challenges, for example, in the areas of family and career. We will consider the physical, cognitive, social, and personality changes that take place in this developmental stage. The stresses and challenges of becoming independent adults, for example living separately from parents, forming intimate relationships, and developing career goals can be considerable. In addition, not all young adults follow a linear trajectory from dependence to independence; some adults continue to live with parents in order to pursue educational or career training, while others do not form lasting intimate relationships with partners. We will discuss these issues within the context of Perry's and Schaie's cognitive theories and Erikson's intimacy-versus-isolation stage.

In a counterpoint to Western approaches to development that focus on individual growth, you will also learn about Aboriginal approaches that focus on women's roles within the community, including managing community resources and keeping community relationships strong. Anderson suggests that relationships were developed in women's circles through shared work, which built collectivity and interdependence within the community. While Anderson provides a depiction of traditional Aboriginal life, the principles of collectivity support a different web of relationships than individualistic approaches to independence and separation. You will also learn about some of the challenges facing adolescents moving into early adulthood whose lives have been changed irrevocably by war and disruption in their country of origin. The video, *Everybody's Children*, explores the lives of two unaccompanied minors who arrived as refugees to Canada and the responsibilities they had to assume to survive in a new culture and community. You may want to reflect on your own early adulthood years and the tasks and challenges you undertook (or are undertaking) to mature into independent adulthood.

Topics

Unit 8 is divided into 4 topics:

- Topic 1: Physical Development in Early Adulthood
- Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Early Adulthood
- Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Early Adulthood
- Topic 4: Aboriginal Approaches to Early Adulthood

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe physical development in early adulthood, including limitations and challenges, physical disabilities, and the impacts of stress.
- Describe the process of cognitive development in early adulthood, including critiques of Piaget, Perry’s approach to postformal thinking, and Schaie’s stages of development.
- Describe the process of social and personality development in early adulthood, including Erikson’s intimacy-versus-isolation stage.
- Analyze how gender issues in post-secondary education and career impact women in particular.
- Describe Aboriginal approaches to early adulthood, and in particular women’s roles in this life-stage.
- Compare and contrast responsibilities and tasks inherent in emerging adulthood, using the examples of Western normative values and the experiences of visible minority refugees in Canada.

Activity Checklist

Here is a checklist of the learning activities you will be completing in Unit 8. You may find it useful in planning your work.

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 7: “Early Adulthood” in <i>Discovering the Lifespan</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the <i>Review, Check, and Apply</i> at end of each section. (ungraded) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 5: “Adult Years: The Women’s Circle” (pp. 83–125) in <i>Life Stages and Native Women</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View the documentary <i>Everybody’s Children</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Critical Analysis questions for this unit in your learning journal. (ungraded) |

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|--|
| | <p>Additional Learning Activities: (ungraded)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Videos:</i> Go to MyPsychLab and view the videos <i>Features of Emerging Adulthood</i> and <i>Marriage and Love Relationships across Cultures</i>, and complete the critical questions. 2. <i>Personal Learning Journal:</i> Explore issues raised in this unit and complete the reflection questions. 3. <i>Simulation:</i> Go to <i>My Virtual Life</i> and create a profile of an adult. Go through the first phase, "Late Adolescence." 4. <i>Stress Test:</i> Take the stress test in your textbook or online. 5. <i>Unit 8 Discussion Board:</i> Share your thoughts with your peers. |
| | <p>Assignment 3: Short Answers (15%) – you can continue to work on this assignment</p> <p>Assignment 4: Reflection on Social Issues and Development (15%)</p> |

Resources

Anderson, K. (2011). Adult years: The women's circle. In K. Anderson, *Life stages and native women: Memory, teachings, and story medicine* (pp. 97–125). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Feldman, R. S., & Landry, O. (2017). Early adulthood. In R. S. Feldman & O. Landry, *Discovering the lifespan*. (2nd ed.) (pp. 288–335). Toronto: Pearson.

National Film Board. *Everybody's children*. [Video]. Retrieved from http://www.nfb.ca/film/everybody's_children

Introduction

Unit 8 covers a twenty-year period when young adults are expected to mature and become independent, economically and socially. This is a time when there are many challenges for adults in terms of educational choices, career choices, and family responsibilities. As adolescent tasks focus on a greater understanding of self, family, and community, young adults are expected to become active participants in their community as they take on more responsibilities. These expectations are not without challenges, however, and you will learn about the effects of stress on physical and mental health in adulthood. Adult identity is also bound up with work and career, and you will learn about some of the challenges facing women to combine family and career. We will also discuss post-formal thinking and theoretical approaches to

cognitive development in early adulthood. Included in this section is a discussion of adult intelligence and post-secondary education. You will also learn about forging relationships within this period, including Erikson's intimacy-versus-isolation stage, and the implications of choosing a life partner within a Western context of changing family norms.

We will also discuss traditional Aboriginal approaches to adulthood for women, which includes the formation of women's circles to support the development of collectivist, interdependent relationships within community. Women's traditional roles as managers of resources and keepers of relationships with kin and community foster the collective approach and provide a contrast to Western normative values of independence and separation. You will also learn about the different experiences of adolescent refugees in Canada, who are forced into adulthood at a young age by their life circumstances. This is a useful topic for you to reflect on as you move through the readings and videos for this unit: at what point in your life did you feel that you had moved into adulthood and why? What did you note as the indicators of this change?

Topic 1: Physical Development in Early Adulthood

This section continues the discussion of physical development through the lifespan. While most adults are at their physical peak during this period, particularly when they are in their 20's, there is also a need for exercise and good nutrition to support this physical prowess. This is the time in which life-long habits of fitness and exercise can be developed, which may have profound implications for healthy aging. You will also learn about physical limitations and challenges in this period, including obesity, along with a discussion about how young adults cope with physical disabilities. The barriers that young adults with physical disabilities often face in terms of mobility, work, and education are a useful counterpoint to the task of independence posited by Western developmental norms.

One of the major issues that adults in this stage have to deal with is increased stress, and as a student you may have experienced the stress that comes with balancing school, work, and family life. Think back to how effectively you have dealt with stress in the past, and what current strategies you use to manage stress. As a social worker, you will be working with families and individuals experiencing significant levels of stress, and it is important to be able to recognize signs of stress in yourself and others, as well as understanding what kinds of strategies may be effective in alleviating both the symptoms of stress and its underlying causes.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Physical Development in Early Adulthood" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- Describe the process of physical maturity in early adulthood, including limitations and challenges.
- Compare and contrast the challenges facing young adults with disabilities and normative models of development.
- Describe the origins and consequences of stress in early adulthood.
- What are some of the coping mechanisms identified in the reading to deal with stress? Reflect on your own coping strategies around stress. Do your strategies fit or not with the textbook descriptions?

Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Early Adulthood

In this section, we will discuss cognitive development in early adulthood. This area is influenced by Piaget's theory that cognitive development is mostly complete by the end of adolescence, but there is more current research to suggest that the nature of thought changes for young adults. Labouvie-Vief calls this postformal thought, and she suggests that formal operational thought, as detailed by Piaget, does not meet the demands of adulthood in terms of moral and value-laden decisions informed by life experience. You will also learn about Perry's approach to postformal thought and Schaie's stages of development, which follow on from Piaget's final stage. These theories about cognitive development are important to reflect on as a social worker so that you can provide the most appropriate supports and programming for children and adults.

You will also learn about definitions of intelligence, moving from IQ testing which measures only one kind of intelligence to a consideration of a number of different models of intelligence, including emotional and social intelligence. These areas of research are currently being developed, and you will learn about how complex ideas around creativity and the difficulties inherent in measurement. We will also discuss post-secondary education and training, and some of the current issues facing students and institutions. For example, the transition to university can be difficult, and some students experience depression and anxiety in their first semester. There is also a difference in terms of gender expectations and achievements.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Cognitive Development in Early Adulthood" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- Describe Piaget's approach to cognitive development in early adulthood. Compare his approach to the depiction of postformal thought by Labouvie-Vief and Perry.
- Describe Schaie's stages of development approach.
- Describe the different kinds of intelligence detailed in Feldman and Landry, including creativity.
- What are some of the experiences mediated through a gender lens that affect women in post-secondary institutions?
- Reflect on gender disparities in social work education, where women students outnumber men by a considerable margin. How do you account for this difference?

Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Early Adulthood

This topic focuses on the development of intimate relationships in early adulthood. This is a period when there are many expectations (from family, friends, and self) to forge a permanent relationship with a partner. (Please see Table 7-2 for a list of the developmental tasks of adulthood.) In this section, you will learn about the components of happiness and the social clocks of adulthood within the context of Erikson's intimacy-versus-isolation stage. Erikson stresses the viewpoint that young adults who are not successful in maintaining intimate relationships may be a result of an earlier inability to develop a strong sense of identity. You will also learn about different forms of love, both passionate and companionate, and how young adults choose partners. These choices are, of course, complicated by cultural, religious, and sexual identity/diversity issues.

In addition to forming a partnership, there are a number of complicating factors that influence the course of a relationship, for example, marriage/cohabitation or the decision to have children. You will also learn about the pressures inherent in choosing a career path and the role of work in early adulthood, including Ginzberg's Career Choice Theory. Finally, we will discuss the gendered nature of work, for example, the dual role that women in the workforce face in terms of paid and unpaid labour (housework, childrearing responsibilities), the pressures on women to work in certain professions over others, and the wage gap between men and women. These are important areas for social workers to consider in providing supports to

clients, particularly as women are not only more likely to become social work professionals, but women also make up the majority of clients in most practice contexts.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Social and Emotional Development in Early Adulthood" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- Describe Erikson's developmental stage of intimacy-versus-isolation in early adulthood.
- Describe the different components of love as detailed in Sternberg's Triangular Theory.
- Describe how decisions like choosing to have children or deciding to marry or cohabit affect intimate relationships.
- How do young adults choose a career path (refer to Ginzberg's Career Choice Theory and Holland's Personality Type Theory)?
- What are the implications for social workers in working with families (micro level) who are impacted by the gendered divisions of labour (macro level), in terms of income and unpaid/paid labour?

Topic 4: Multicultural Approaches to Early Adulthood

In this section, you will learn about traditional Aboriginal approaches to adulthood, particularly in terms of women's roles. Anderson discusses the gendered nature of roles within Aboriginal communities, which placed women and men within different spheres of influence. She cautions against interpreting Aboriginal cultural norms within the framework of European patriarchal ideology, but rather to view different gender roles in traditional societies as separate "jurisdictions" (p. 98) which may not necessarily have a hierarchical component. Within the framework of the women's circle, Anderson discusses the role of women as managers of resources, including food, clothing, and paid work, along with keepers of relationships, including kinship ties within the community.

Another counterpoint to Western approaches to lifespan development is explored in the video, *Everybody's Children*. This video details the experiences of two unaccompanied minors, Sallieu and Joyce, who arrive in Canada as refugees and who have to become independent immediately, making decisions about education, housing, work, and applications for residency that would under other circumstances be the responsibility of their parents or guardians. Although they are adolescents in terms of chronological age, they are adults in terms of their life experiences. This documentary provides an interesting comparison/contrast to Western theoretical

approaches to lifespan development that focus on discrete ages and stages in chronological order that children and adults must experience in order to complete set developmental tasks.

Critical Analysis

1. Read Chapter 5: “Adult Years: The Women’s Circle” in *Life Stages and Native Women*.
2. View the video *Everybody’s Children* from the National Film Board of Canada. This video is available online through the TRU library. (51 minutes)

Consider the following:

- Describe the role of the women’s circle in Aboriginal communities.
- What are the tasks or work that were highly valued for women within the women’s circles, according to Anderson?
- Describe the challenges facing Sallieu and Joyce as they arrive in Canada as refugees in terms of work, education, and residency, etc.
- Western approaches to lifespan development stress the ages and stages approach to growth. Compare and contrast Aboriginal approaches and the adolescents interviewed in the video to Western normative approaches. As a social worker, how would you work with adolescents and young adults who do not fit the Western model of developmental norms?

Additional Learning Activities

You may choose to explore the following optional learning activities to enhance your comprehension of this subject:

1. *Videos*: Go to [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) and view the following videos:
 - *Features of Emerging Adulthood*: This video shows a number of young adults discussing their transition from adolescence to adulthood, focused on their growing independence from family. Compare and contrast this video to the experiences of Sallieu and Joyce, who have no family support in their transition to adulthood. What impact do you think this estrangement from family might have on the developmental tasks of emerging adulthood?
 - *Marriage and Love Relationships*: The couples interviewed in this video describe different cultural norms around marriage, including arranged marriage, dowry/bride price, and romantic attachments. Although the video documents a number of different cultural norms, all the couples in

the video discuss heterosexual partnerships. What kinds of different responses do you think would have been elicited from same-sex couples?

2. *Personal Learning Journal*: In your personal learning journal, reflect on the cultural norms around courtship and marriage that you have learned in this unit. Do some of these norms fit with your own experiences of relationships in this time period? What values and beliefs do you have about relationships in early adulthood, and how could these values influence your approach to working with young adults?
3. *Simulation*: Log in to *MyVirtualLife* and create a profile for an adult. You will be asked to make decisions as you progress to early adulthood. As you go through the next few units, continue with the simulation and analyze the effects of your decisions. How have the decisions you made in the first phase of late adolescence affected your virtual person?
4. *Stress Test*: Take the stress test in Table 7-1 in your textbook. Alternately, go online and search for a “stress test” to take. What coping mechanisms do you think would be helpful for individuals that score above average on the test?
5. *Discussion*: Feel free to share your thoughts about the concepts in this unit by posting to the *Unit 8 Discussion Board*.

Assessment

Assignment 3: Short Answers B (15%)

Continue to complete the worksheet . This assignment is due at the end of Unit 11.

Assignment 4: Reflection on Social Issues and Development (15%)

(Available in your online course material)

Summary

This unit explored the period of early adulthood, from 20 to 40 years of age. This extensive period encompasses life challenges in a number of areas, including education, career, marriage, and family. You have learned about the physical changes that young adults undergo, along with cognitive, and social and personality development. We discussed Erikson’s intimacy-versus-isolation stage and the implications for adults who do not meet this developmental task. The Western normative model was challenged by a discussion of Aboriginal approaches to early adulthood, particularly women’s roles, and the video documentary, *Everybody’s Children*, that challenged the ages and stages approach. You have explored through

these contrasting approaches to adult development some of the challenges to Western normative developmental models. You may also have experienced some of these challenges to normative models in your personal life or have worked with clients who have not fit within Western developmental approaches.

The next unit, middle adulthood, also covers a lengthy period, from 40 to 65 years of age. During this period in normative developmental models, adults experience a variety of significant transitions, from parents with dependent children to empty nesters and from work to retirement. There are also physical changes that take place during this stage, including menopause for women, and health concerns for both sexes that may arise in middle age. This is also a stage in which many people re-evaluate their personal relationships at the same time as they focus more closely on family and friends, as work becomes less of a priority. You will also learn about middle-aged adults who challenge these norms, for example, by returning to school to retrain for a new career during this stage or by continuing to work past retirement age.

Unit 9: Middle Adulthood

Overview

This unit explores the period of middle adulthood from ages 40 to 65. There are often significant transitions during this period within family and work domains; some adults experience the sandwich generation, where they are still parenting children while taking on additional responsibilities for elderly parents. In addition, some adults work beyond retirement age, while others retire in their 50s. In other words, there is a great deal of variation in the lives of middle-aged adults, which makes prescribed roles and tasks in this life stage complicated by difference and diversity. You will learn about changes in the middle-aged body's capabilities and sexual performance within the context of menopause. Current research on hormone replacement therapy is also discussed along with health issues within this stage of development.

We will also discuss cognitive changes in middle age, including different kinds of intelligence, how memory functions, and the development of expertise, drawn from years of experience. You will learn about the major impacts on personality development, in particular the perspectives of normative-crisis vs. life events. The midlife period is characterized in Erikson's model as a time of generativity-versus-stagnation, and we will discuss not only critiques of Erikson's theory but more current research on midlife tasks. You will also learn about family relationships, including divorce and the impact of family violence, in addition to discussions of work and career in midlife. You may want to reflect on your parents' lives in middle age, for example, their health, employment, and family life, to provide a counterpoint to Erikson's theory.

Topics

Unit 9 is divided into 3 topics:

- Topic 1: Physical Development in Middle Adulthood
- Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Middle Adulthood
- Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Middle Adulthood

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this module, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe physical development in middle adulthood, for example, the aging process, menopause, and health issues.

- Describe the process of cognitive development in middle adulthood, including definitions of intelligence and memory retention.
- Describe the process of social and personality development in middle adulthood, including Erikson’s generativity-versus-stagnation stage and critiques of Erikson’s model, as well as family relationships, including the impact of violence, and finally, work, and career issues.
- Analyze the medicalization of aging, and in particular menopause.
- Compare and contrast roles and responsibilities in middle adulthood, including the role of grandparents, the impact of boomerang kids, and the stresses of the sandwich generation with Western normative approaches to aging and degeneration.

Activity Checklist

Here is a checklist of the learning activities you will be completing in Unit 9. You may find it useful in planning your work.

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 8: “Middle Adulthood” in <i>Discovering the Lifespan</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the <i>Review, Check, and Apply</i> questions at end of each section. (ungraded) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View <i>MyPsychLab</i> videos <i>Family Relationships in Middle Adulthood across Cultures</i> and <i>Perspectives on Work and Career Path</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Critical Analysis questions for this unit in your learning journal. (ungraded) |
| | <p>Additional Learning Activities: (ungraded)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Personal Learning Journal:</i> Explore issues raised in this unit and complete the reflection questions. 2. <i>REVEL:</i> Log on to the lab and view the resources available, such as videos, simulations, flashcards, etc. 3. <i>Unit 9 Discussion Board:</i> Share your thoughts with your peers. |
| | <p>Assignment 3: Short Answers (15%) – you can continue to work on this assignment</p> |

Resources

Feldman, R. S., & Landry, O. (2017). Middle adulthood. In R. S. Feldman & O. Landry. *Discovering the lifespan*. (2nd ed.) (pp. 340–383). Toronto: Pearson.

MyPsychLab. (n.d.). *Family relationships in middle adulthood across cultures*. [Video].

Introduction

This unit explores the challenges and achievements of middle adulthood. For many adults, this is the period when they have reached their career goals, at the same time as their parenting role changes as adult children become independent. For other middle-aged adults, unemployment might provide a difficult transition to retirement, health concerns may become apparent, and family life may disintegrate when children leave home. Adults experience several significant transitions during this 25-year period to their physical wellbeing and capabilities, their cognitive development, including memory retention, and their social and personality stability.

We will discuss physical changes in middle age, including menopause for women and the controversy around hormone replacement therapy. You will also learn about changes to sexuality and health for middle-aged adults, including the most prevalent diseases in this age group. We will also address intelligence and memory in this stage of lifespan development. Finally, we will focus on social and personality development in the stage, from Erikson's generativity-versus-stagnation period to the cultural dimensions of middle age. Within this topic, you will also learn about family relationships and the pressures on marriage and relationships that emerge in middle age, along with the challenges of work and career at this point in life. You may want to talk to a family member who is in this life-stage to develop an understanding of the individual stressors and highlights of this period.

Topic 1: Physical Development in Middle Adulthood

This topic covers some of the physical changes that people in middle adulthood undergo over the course of this stage. There are changes to physical capacities as well as to senses, particularly sight and reflexes. In addition, this is a time when women move through the transitional phase of menopause, and there can be significant challenges in many areas, for example, sexuality. Some of the stereotypes of menopause have been dispelled by recent research, and most researchers now characterize menopause as a normal part of aging rather than as a disease that needs treatment. You will also learn about the male climacteric, which is characterized by more gradual changes for men than menopause is for women.

We will also discuss health risks in middle age, including coronary heart disease and cancer. This discussion is placed within a context of wellness and illness for middle-

aged men and women, and the lifestyle changes that can be made to decrease risk and increase health. Other areas discussed include the impact of stress in middle age, and preventative health measures, for example mammograms and prostate tests that may assist in early diagnosis of cancer. As a social worker, you may be working with families or couples who are in the mid-life stage, and it is important to understand their particular challenges to provide appropriate supports and counselling if warranted.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Physical Development in Middle Adulthood" and "Cognitive Development in Middle Adulthood" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- Describe the physical changes that affect people in middle adulthood, including limitations and challenges.
- Describe the changes that occur in sexuality for men and women in this stage;
- What are the most common health challenges in middle age, and what is the effect of stress on middle-aged adults?
- Compare and contrast women's climacteric with men's. Why do you think that menopause has traditionally been seen as a condition in need of medical treatment while the male climacteric has not?

Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Middle Adulthood

Middle adulthood is, paradoxically, a time when people often start to question how well they remember events or information, while at the same time displaying the expertise in their field that comes from lengthy experience coupled with education and training. In this topic, you will learn about changes to intelligence and memory during this stage, including current research that refutes earlier ideas that intelligence levels peak at aged 18 and are in decline from that point on. We will also discuss the difference between crystallized and fluid intelligence, and the interrelationship between both. Instead of simply looking at cognitive deficits and decline, you will learn about Salthouse's approach which focuses on cognitive competency in middle adulthood and how it is maintained.

In addition, we will address memory; in particular, the impacts of aging on memory and how it can be improved. You will learn about long-term and short-term memory and memory schemas, which organize and categorize information storage. Memory schemas appear to be embedded in cultural information and knowledge. Finally, we will discuss strategies to increase memory and functioning, specifically focusing on mnemonics. If you are interested in working in the medical field as a social worker,

you may want to look for further research in the area of memory, focusing on indicators of disease, for example, and early onset of dementia.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Social and Emotional Development in Middle Adulthood" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- Describe how intelligence is measured and assessed in middle adulthood, including current research on whether intelligence declines with age.
- Compare and contrast crystallized and fluid intelligence.
- Describe Salthouse's explanation of the discrepancy between career attainment in middle adulthood and cognitive decline in this period.
- Describe the different types of memory, short-term and long-term, and the importance of memory schemas.
- Reflect on the changes to cognitive competence in middle adulthood as described in Feldman and Landry. What are the implications for learning for adults in this stage who return to school?

Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Middle Adulthood

This topic covers several important issues, for example, whether personality remains stable over the lifetime, or whether significant changes are the norm, and you will learn about the controversies and debates within this area. We will also focus on Erikson's stage of generativity-versus-stagnation, in which the prime task in middle adulthood is either to contribute to work, community, and family or to stagnate through boredom and frustration. You will also learn about critics of Erikson's stage, including Vaillant, Gould, and Levinson; current research and theory in this area provides a more complex analysis of Erikson's stage, including the need to divide this period into different age groupings (45–55 and 55–65).

We will also discuss how marriage and relationships change in this period, particularly within Western cultural norms of the nuclear family. Once children have become independent, there is often a review of couples' relationships, and this may lead to separation and divorce. The sandwich generation, parents who are still raising children while becoming responsible for aging parents, is also a growing phenomenon. Family relationships are also placed within the context of family violence, and you will learn about spousal abuse, its causes and impacts, and the cultural contexts that may be involved. Social work practitioners in almost every area of practice must be knowledgeable and competent in the area of family violence, as they will frequently encounter this problem in their work with families,

couples, and individuals. Finally, we will discuss the impact of work and career in middle adulthood, including challenges to work, unemployment and changing careers during this life-stage.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Social and Emotional Development in Middle Adulthood" in *Discovering the Lifespan* and after viewing the video *Family Relationships in Middle Adulthood across Cultures* at [MyPsychLab Video Series](#), consider the following:

- Describe Erikson's developmental stage of generativity-versus-stagnation in middle adulthood, and subsequent research that builds on Erikson's ideas.
- Describe the principles of stability vs. change in personality in middle adulthood.
- Describe how families and couples evolve over this period, from empty nesters to grandparents, from re-evaluating relationships to divorce, and the stresses of the sandwich generation.
- What are the implications for middle-aged adults of changing careers or facing unemployment in this period?
- As a social worker, what kinds of supports and assistance do you think it would be important to put into place to assist victims of spousal abuse? What are the attributes that you think a social worker needs to possess to work effectively in this area?

Additional Learning Activities

You may choose to explore the following optional learning activities to enhance your comprehension of this subject:

- *Video:* View the [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) *Perspectives on Work and Career Paths in Middle Adulthood*. The video shows a number of middle-aged adults discussing their career trajectories. What similarities and differences do you observe between the three women and one man in the video in terms of their expectations for work and careers, along with their changing career paths?
- *Personal Learning Journal:* In your personal learning journal, reflect on the tasks that Erikson places within this life-stage. If you are a young adult, have you experienced the mentorship that Erikson describes as the role of generativity in this age group? If you are in middle age, have you provided mentorship to a younger adult? Describe the experiences of being a mentee or a mentor.

- *Interview:* Interview a friend or family member in middle adulthood who has faced a career change or return to work after a lengthy absence due to family commitments or other reasons. What kinds of challenges did they face in terms of family, colleague, and/or employer reactions to their new job?

Assessment

Assignment 3: Short Answers B (15%)

Continue to complete the worksheet . This assignment is due at the end of Unit 11.

Summary

In this unit, we explored the lengthy period of middle adulthood, from 40 to 65 years of age. Many transitions occur during this stage in all domains, from physical and cognitive changes to social changes within family structures, as children grow up and become independent, and aging parents become a new responsibility for middle-aged adults. Obvious physical changes include the climacteric for both women and men, and there are health challenges in this period as well, including increased incidence of heart disease and cancer. You also learned about cognitive changes that include differences in memory retention as well as research on different kinds of intelligence. In terms of social and personality development, we discussed Erikson's generativity-versus-stagnation stage, in addition to more current explanations of how people adapt to cultural norms and societal expectations at this stage of life. For some adults, this is the peak of career success, and for others this is a time to contemplate retirement and post-career life. For many adults, however, this is a period of significant change that can lead to renewed engagement with society post-retirement.

The next unit deals with another lengthy period, from 65 years of age onwards. As life expectancy increases, there is a concomitant increase in the number of older adults, particularly in Western societies, than in previous generations. We will explore the myths and realities of aging as you learn about the stereotypes of late adulthood, including ageism, physical signs of aging, and implications for health and wellness. You will also learn about intellectual functioning in old age and personality development in the later years. This is a period characterized by Erikson as ego-integrity-versus-despair, and as in previous units, we will also discuss critiques of Erikson's model. The social networks of family and friends are also important as we age and need to be factored into discussions of aging in place. Finally, you will learn about the role of elders and grandmothers in terms of leadership and governance positions in traditional Aboriginal communities, in a counterpoint to Western cultural norms around senior women and their status.

Unit 10: Late Adulthood

Overview

This unit deals with the period of life from 65 onwards. Significant changes take place in late adulthood in terms of physical, cognitive, and social attributes, and these transitions are mediated through a cultural lens that either values older adults as repositories of knowledge, wisdom, and experience, or dismisses older adults as incompetent, childlike, and dependent. In Western culture, stereotypes of the elderly focus on deficits rather than strengths, both in terms of individual attributes and in terms of a societal impact on the health system, for example, as the baby boomer cohort ages. You will learn about the physical, cognitive, and social changes that affect older adults, and you will be able to explore these transitions within the context of wider social issues that influence how older adults are viewed.

In contrast, we will also discuss Aboriginal responses to aging. Anderson describes the role of elders in traditional Aboriginal communities as key to mentoring the next generation. What Anderson describes as the “mastery of relatedness” (p. 126) provides significant status for elders, as they are seen to have acquired wisdom and knowledge through their longevity. This period is also seen as productive in Aboriginal communities, and elders within traditional communities are seen not only as passive repositories of wisdom but also as active participants in knowledge and culture transmission, with leadership and governance roles. This discussion of the difference in roles for seniors in Western and Aboriginal cultures will help you to move beyond stereotypes to analyze the roles that are embedded within cultural norms.

Topics

Unit 10 is divided into 4 topics:

- Topic 1: Physical Development in Late Adulthood
- Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Late Adulthood
- Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Late Adulthood
- Topic 4: Aboriginal Approaches to Late Adulthood

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this module, you will be able to do the following:

- Describe physical changes in late adulthood, including health-related issues, for example, dementia, within a context of ageism in Western societies.

- Describe the process of cognitive changes in late adulthood, including memory and learning capacity.
- Describe the process of social and personality development in late adulthood, focusing on Erikson’s ego-integrity-versus-despair stage and critiques of Erikson.
- Analyze how social supports, including family relationships and networks of friends, impact success aging in later adulthood.
- Compare and contrast Aboriginal approaches to elders and the roles they are assigned in traditional communities to Western approaches to aging.

Activity Checklist

Here is a checklist of the learning activities you will be completing in Unit 10. You may find it useful in planning your work.

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 9: “Late Adulthood” in <i>Discovering the Lifespan</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the <i>Review, Check, and Apply</i> questions at end of section. (ungraded) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 6: “Grandmothers and Elders” in <i>Life Stages and Native Women</i> and review videos from Richard Wagamese. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View <i>MyPsychLab</i> video: <i>Work and Retirement across Cultures</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Critical Analysis questions for this unit in your learning journal. (ungraded) |
| | <p>Additional Learning Activities: (ungraded)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Videos:</i> Go to REVEL, view the video, <i>Religion and Spirituality</i>, and complete the Critical Analysis questions. 2. <i>Personal Learning Journal:</i> Explore issues raised in this unit and complete the reflection questions. 3. <i>Myths and Realities of Aging:</i> Evaluate the information provided and test a friend on their understanding of the myths of aging. 4. <i>How Fit is Your Brain?</i> Take an online brain game and evaluate its usefulness. 5. <i>Unit 10 Discussion Board:</i> Share your thoughts with your peers. |

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|--|
| | Assignment 3: Short Answers (15%) – you can continue to work on this assignment |

Resources

Anderson, K. (2011). Grandmothers and elders. In K. Anderson, *Life stages and native women: Memory, teachings, and story medicine* (pp. 126–160). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Feldman, R. S., & Landry, O. (2017). *Discovering the lifespan*. (2nd ed.). Toronto: Pearson.

MyPsychLab. (n.d.). *Work and retirement across cultures*. [Video].

Introduction

The topic of aging is one that is discussed frequently in the media, political, and policy spheres, and within families. As the baby boom generation moves into retirement age, there are some cultural shifts in Western societies about the capacities of seniors, although the overall discussion is often framed within the context of inevitable health expenses and budgetary concerns. In this unit, you will learn about the physical, cognitive, and social changes experienced by seniors, placed within a context of ageism and stereotypes. You may want to start the unit by taking the test in Table 9-1 – Myths of Aging, which demonstrates that many commonly held beliefs about aging are incorrect.

You will also explore the physical changes and transitions in late adulthood, including health concerns and dementia. We will also discuss how intelligence and memory change, as well as late-life learning capacities. Erikson's final developmental stage, ego-integrity-versus-despair, which focuses on looking back over life and evaluating accomplishments is compared with Peck's developmental tasks model, which offers a more differentiated view of aging and seniors. You will also learn about daily life in late adulthood, and family and social relationships. Finally, Aboriginal approaches to elders are reviewed, and they will provide a contrast to the deficit model of Western approaches to aging.

Topic 1: Physical Development in Late Adulthood

This topic covers the physical changes that seniors undergo from age 65 onwards. It is important to note that changes are individual in nature, and that not all seniors experience significant declines in their physical capabilities during their lifetime.

You will learn about the effects of both primary and secondary aging, and the social stigma involved in ageism. While reaction times slow in late adulthood, which may have serious social consequences in terms of loss of driving privileges, seniors age differently and some people continue to drive safely into their later years. There is also a general decline in the senses as people age, in terms of vision, hearing, taste, and smell.

We will also discuss health and wellness in late adulthood, focusing on the causes and consequences of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. There is a growing number of people with some form of dementia in our society, and these numbers will increase as the aging population increases. These demographic trends are used to develop public policy and programs, and there is considerable discussion in Canada about the affordability of the health care system. However, old age does not inevitably lead to ill health, and you will also learn about wellness in late adulthood, including sexual functioning. Research on how to postpone aging and increase life expectancy is also discussed.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Physical Development in Late Adulthood" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- Describe the physical changes that affect people in late adulthood, including primary and secondary aging.
- Describe the changes that occur reaction times and the senses in this stage and the implications seniors in terms of their ability to remain independent.
- Describe the biological underpinnings of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. What are some of the challenges in caring for a family member with Alzheimer's disease?
- Review the "Myths of Aging" table. From a social work perspective, what messages do you think are important to promote to combat pervasive ageism in Western society?

Topic 2: Cognitive Development in Late Adulthood

This topic addresses the issue of cognitive changes in late adulthood, focusing on research on intelligence in older people. Earlier research suggested that seniors had less cognitive ability in old age. However, more current longitudinal research has found little evidence to support earlier claims. Instead, research supports several generalizations across a number of studies that include the finding that while some abilities gradually decline from about age 25, others remain stable indefinitely. Even

in late adulthood, declines are minimal, but there is evidence that environmental and cultural factors are important in maintaining brain elasticity.

There are also memory changes in old age, which are influenced by environmental, information-processing and biological factors. You will learn about different kinds of memory, for example, autobiographical memory, and the accuracy of recall. We will also discuss the importance of lifelong learning and the capacity of older adults to learn about new subjects. Finally, it is important to note that there are significant individual differences in cognitive functioning at this stage, and generalizations about aging may not be useful.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Cognitive Development in Late Adulthood" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- Describe how research on intelligence in older people has evolved from a finding that seniors function less well cognitively as they age to more current research that contradicts these findings.
- Describe the importance of exercising the brain in terms of maintaining function in late adulthood.
- Describe how memory function changes in late adulthood, and the explanations for this change provided in the textbook.
- Compare and contrast the changes to cognitive functioning in this stage, focusing on memory, with seniors' abilities to engage in classroom learning later in life. What strategies do you think would be important for seniors to use to maximize their learning capacity in a classroom?

Topic 3: Social and Personality Development in Late Adulthood

This topic focuses on how personality develops during late adulthood, including how seniors adapt and deal with the exigencies of aging. One of the areas for you to consider is whether personality is stable and continuous throughout the lifespan or whether there are variations depending on life circumstances. You will learn about a variety of theorists' views on this stage of development, starting with Erikson's ego-integrity-versus-despair stage. In this stage, Erikson posited that the task for seniors was to reflect on their lives, looking backwards and evaluating their achievements and coming to terms with their life. Other theorists, for example, Peck, provide more complex explanations for changes in late adulthood, including a redefinition of self in light of retirement from the work role. You will also explore Neugarten and Levinson's approaches to aging.

We will also discuss the daily life of late adulthood, including living at home and in senior residences. One important aspect of life for seniors is their financial independence, and you will learn about the social costs of poverty in old age. You will also learn about relationships in late adulthood, including marriage, family, and the death of a spouse, and you will explore the social networks of late adulthood in terms of friendships and other social supports. A major social issue, elder abuse, is also discussed along with the implications for family when the abuser is a relative. Note that this is also called senior abuse, and should not be confused with the Aboriginal distinction of 'elder'. Elder abuse is a growing concern in Canada, and there are suggestions that it is largely a hidden problem with significant impacts on seniors' lives. As a social worker, you may be interested in working with seniors, and it is important to be knowledgeable about elder abuse and how it may be hidden within a client population who are ashamed or afraid to disclose their situation.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Social and Emotional Development in Late Adulthood" in *Discovering the Lifespan* and after viewing the video, *Work and Retirement across Cultures* from [MyPsychLab Video Series](#), consider the following:

- Describe Erikson's developmental stage of ego-integrity-versus-despair in late adulthood.
- Describe Levinson's, Peck's, and Neugarten's approaches to social and personality changes in late adulthood.
- Compare and contrast the principles of successful aging with the seniors' description of how they faced work and retirement issues across cultures.
- What are some of the challenges facing relationships in later adulthood? How could social workers assist seniors in developing social networks and supports?
- As a social worker, what kinds of assistance do you think would be important to put into place to identify and support victims of elder abuse?

Topic 4: Aboriginal Approaches to Late Adulthood

This topic focuses on the roles of grandmothers and elders in traditional Aboriginal communities. As a counterpoint to Western approaches to seniors, which focus on deficits and impending death, Anderson describes a culture that imbues late adulthood with significant responsibilities around spirituality, culture transmission, and political agency. Elders are considered to have reached "mastery of relatedness" (p. 126) by virtue of their longevity and discharge of responsibilities throughout their lifespan. Anderson also describes this life-stage as one of great productivity, even if physical limitations are present. She discusses four roles for elders in

Aboriginal communities: leadership and governance responsibilities; teaching or cultural transmission; managing the health of the community; and being the doorkeepers to the spiritual world.

You will learn about these different roles as they pertain to grandmothers; Anderson also provides a counterpoint to modern Aboriginal communities where political governance is often male-dominated. She describes traditional roles for women that placed them in powerful positions within the community in terms of leadership and governance. Elders also had the responsibility of safeguarding the health and wellbeing of communities as well being involved in spiritual leadership roles, particularly around birth and death. The roles of elders and grandmothers in communities is therefore seen as essential to preserving communities in terms of culture, health, and leadership.

In this section, you will also hear again from Richard Wagamese, as he reflects on traditional teachings and the importance of Elders in Aboriginal culture. The loss of Elders through the devastation of the residential school system has left several generations of Aboriginal men and women searching to regain their traditional knowledge and learning so that they can become fully participating members within their culture and community.

Critical Analysis

Kim Anderson on Grandmothers and Elders

After reading Chapter 6 in *Life Stages and Native Women*, consider the following:

- Describe the role of grandmothers in traditional Aboriginal communities, using Anderson's discussion of the "mastery of relatedness" (p. 126).
- Describe the four roles that elders focus on in this life stage: leadership and governance; teaching; managing the health of the community; and doorkeepers to the spiritual world.
- Compare and contrast the role of Aboriginal grandmothers and older adult women in Western societies in terms.
- Anderson describes traditional Aboriginal communities. What factors do you think have impacted the decline of traditional cultural practices?

Richard Wagamese on Cultural Knowledge and Dissemination

In Unit 1, you watched an interview with Richard Wagamese in which he discusses the role of Elders in traditional Aboriginal societies, and how the loss of their teachings has had an enormous detrimental impact on Aboriginal culture over a relatively short period. He considers the traditional separate gender roles of boys and girls in Aboriginal societies to be an important factor in inculcating a tradition of

respect and honour for women that has been eroded through assimilation and acculturation.

Now, having studied stages of the lifespan through to late adulthood, watch the videos again and consider the following:

- Western approaches to lifespan development describe seniors' roles as reflecting on their past and coming to terms with impending death. Contrast this approach to Richard Wagamese's depiction of the role of Elders in Aboriginal communities as vital actors in transmitting culture and knowledge to younger generations, including taking on the responsibility of raising grandchildren.
 - Richard Wagamese provides a definition of matrilineal societies and the importance of matrilineal heritage. Consider some of the myths that surround the role of elderly women in Western societies with the ways in which the author depicts the power of women to take back their traditional cultural roles.
1. Traditional Teachings and Gender Roles
http://barabus.tru.ca/socw3551/socw3551_01.html
 2. Recapturing Women's Roles
http://barabus.tru.ca/socw3551/socw3551_02.html

Additional Learning Activities

You may choose to explore the following optional learning activities to enhance your comprehension of this subject:

1. *Video*: Go to [MyPsychLab Video Series](#) and view the video, *Religion and Spirituality*. The video shows a number of older adults discussing their beliefs and philosophies about religion and spirituality. What similarities and differences do you observe between the four interviewees in their reflection on the influence of religion and spirituality on their lives?
2. *Personal Learning Journal*: In your personal learning journal, reflect on your own values and beliefs around religion and spirituality. How do you think your views may impact your approach to working with older clients?
3. *Myths and Realities of Aging*: View the table in the following document (Available in your online course material). Are there any other myths and realities that you would like to add? If so, add them in the blank spaces provided. After reviewing the information, ask a friend, family member, or colleague whether each statement is a myth or reality and provide them with feedback. Where answers are incorrect, explain the correct answers and

- discuss. As well, consider what is being done to debunk such myths in your workplace or in your personal environment. What can you do?
4. *How Fit is Your Brain?* Do an Internet search for memory training and test out some of the games. Use key words such as 'free', 'memory', 'brain', and 'games'. After playing, evaluate the games' usefulness. What would you recommend to older adults who are concerned about their memory?
 5. *Discussion:* Feel free to share your thoughts about the concepts in this unit by posting to the *Unit 10 Discussion Board*.

Assessment

Assignment 3: Short Answers B (15%)

Continue to complete the worksheet . This assignment is due at the end of Unit 11.

Summary

In this unit, we discussed the life stage from 65 years onward. As the life span has increased and many seniors are living longer than previous generations, discussions arise around quality of life issues, stereotypical depictions of the elderly in Western society, and whether seniors are a burden to succeeding generations. In this unit, you explored the myths and stereotypes of aging, as well as the inevitable physical and cognitive changes that develop over time. Social and personality changes were also discussed, including Erikson's ego-integrity-versus-despair final life stage and challenges to Erikson's approach from Levinson, Peck, and Neugarten. Major challenges for seniors in this stage include financial security, caregiving for elderly partners, elder abuse, and health concerns ranging from dementia to heart disease and cancer. You also learned about Aboriginal approaches to elders; in contrast to Western approaches, women elders in traditional Aboriginal societies fulfilled important and powerful roles within family and community, and they were valued for the knowledge and experience they had gained over a lifetime.

The final unit in this course focuses on death and dying. The final period of life is discussed in terms of the definition of the moment of death; this is a complex issue because medical definitions of death are imprecise and open to interpretation. We will discuss the moral and philosophical arguments around death and dying, including the different perceptions of death at differing points in the lifespan. You will also learn about the process of dying and how people prepare to die, including Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief, along with critiques of her approach. Bereavement and mourning are also discussed, along with the cultural components of death within various societies. You may want to reflect on your personal approach to death and dying. Have you experienced the death of a family member, and what

were the rituals and ceremonies that you engaged in around death and bereavement?

Unit 11: Death and Dying

Overview

You are now starting the final unit of this lifespan development course. Over the course of the 11 units, you have learned about physical, cognitive, and social and personality development from birth onwards throughout each life stage. This last unit deals with death and dying, and we will consider a number of areas within this stage, from a somewhat different perspective from previous units. For example, while you will learn about the complex issues of defining physical death, we will also discuss the moral and ethical decisions that individuals, families and physicians face in determining death. You will also learn about different causes and reactions to death depending on the age of the person's death, and different approaches to educating children and adults about death and dying.

We will also discuss how people prepare for death, specifically in Western cultures, through an exploration of Kübler-Ross's five stages of dying and critiques of her approach. You will also learn about legal issues in regard to living wills and care for terminally ill patients, and you will be able to compare and contrast the legal perspective with ethical considerations around euthanasia and assisted suicide. Finally, grief and bereavement will be discussed within a cross-cultural context. The topics in this unit will help to prepare you to work professionally with families and individuals facing or experiencing grief and loss, and you will also have an opportunity to explore your own approach to this complex issue.

Topics

Unit 11 is divided into 3 topics:

Topic 1: Dying and Death across the Lifespan

Topic 2: Confronting Death

Topic 3: Grief and Bereavement

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this module, you will be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the processes of death and dying, including definitions of functional death and brain death.
- Describe the differing perspectives of death at different life stages.
- Compare and contrast Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief with alternate perspectives.

- Describe the legal and ethical issues regarding living wills, Do Not Resuscitate Orders, assisted suicide, and euthanasia.
- Analyze normative Western perspectives on death and dying.

Activity Checklist

Here is a checklist of the learning activities you will be completing in Unit 11. You may find it useful in planning your work.

| ✓ | Activity |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 10: “Death and Dying” in <i>Discovering the Lifespan</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the <i>Review, Check, and Apply</i> at end of each section. (ungraded) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View the <i>MyPsychLab</i> video <i>Remembering and Honouring the Dead across Cultures</i>. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Critical Analysis questions for this unit in your learning journal. (ungraded) |
| | <p>Additional Learning Activities: (ungraded)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Videos:</i> Go to <i>MyPsychLab</i>, view the videos <i>Grieving: Parts I and II</i>, and complete the critical questions. 2. <i>Personal Learning Journal:</i> Explore issues raised in this unit and complete the reflection questions. 3. <i>Loss Reflection:</i> Reflect on losses in your own life and answer the questions presented. 4. <i>Unit 11 Discussion Board:</i> Share your thoughts with your peers. |
| | <p>Assignment 4: Short Answers B (15%) – you can complete this assignment now</p> <p>Major Paper: Case Study (40%)</p> |

Resources

Feldman, R. S., & Landry, O. (2017). *Discovering the lifespan*. (2nd ed.). Toronto: Pearson. Chapter 10: “Death and Dying” (pp. 424-443).

MyPsychLab. (n.d.). Remembering and Honoring the Dead across Cultures. [Video].

Introduction

Although death is an inevitable final stage of our lifespan, the topic of death and the process of dying are difficult topics for many people in Western cultures to discuss. It is a fairly recent topic of exploration for lifespan development theorists. Furthermore, the age and life stage in which people die has a great impact on how death is viewed; for example, the death of a child is seen very differently from the death of a senior. In this unit, you will cover the final stage of life, and the controversies and dilemmas facing medical professionals, families and individuals in preparing for and determining death. Areas you will explore include assisted suicide and euthanasia, as well as Do Not Resuscitate Orders and living wills. This discussion will be placed within a normative cultural context which places great value on youth (or youthful appearance) and defiance of the process of aging. As in every life stage you have studied, however, there are complex issues that arise from our approach to dying and death within Western society.

We will also discuss grief and bereavement, including preparing for death, and mourning and funeral rites. These ceremonies differ across cultures and religions, and as a social worker it is important to realize that differences in outward expressions around death may signify individual, cultural, or spiritual/religious beliefs rather than abnormal behaviour. You are encouraged to reflect on your own values and beliefs on this topic, for example, around euthanasia or assisted suicide, in order to develop an understanding of some of the complexities surrounding this final life stage.

Topic 1: Dying and Death across the Lifespan

This topic starts with a discussion around the definition of death. Although this may seem to be a straightforward medical term, the moment of death itself has become more open to interpretation with the significant medical advances of the last 25 years. You will be asked to consider whether death ends at the moment of brain death or when heart or respiration ceases. These are significant questions, and you may also want to reflect on psychosocial issues; for example, should the quality of a person's life be considered in determining whether to continue to provide invasive medical treatment, and should individuals themselves, family members, or doctors make decisions about whether treatment should continue or not?

You will also explore causes and reactions to death across the lifespan. The death of a child is perceived quite differently from the death of an older adult, and the reactions of parents, siblings, and other family members may be different and diverse. Young children, in particular, have a limited concept of death, and this may impact their approach to grief and loss. Parents dealing with the death of a child

may need support and education around the cognitive development of children to be able to help young family members adjust to the death of a sibling or cousin. Finally, you will learn about death education across the lifespan and the importance of providing professional support to people facing their own death or that of their loved ones.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Dying and Death across the Lifespan" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- Describe the process of dying and death, including definitions of functional death and brain death.
- Describe the different causes of death across the lifespan.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the different perspectives of dying and death across the lifespan, including childhood and adolescent death.
- What kinds of educational programs are available to educate people about dying and death? What other educational programs do you think might be useful?
- From a social work perspective, how would you assist individuals and families to approach dying and death?

Topic 2: Confronting Death

This topic shifts from biological considerations of dying and death to the psychosocial realm of preparing for death and the ways that people face the prospect of dying and their own imminent death. You will learn about the influential psychiatrist and theorist, Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, and her stages approach to dying and death. The five stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (see figure below). You will also explore critiques of this stages approach, including cultural considerations.

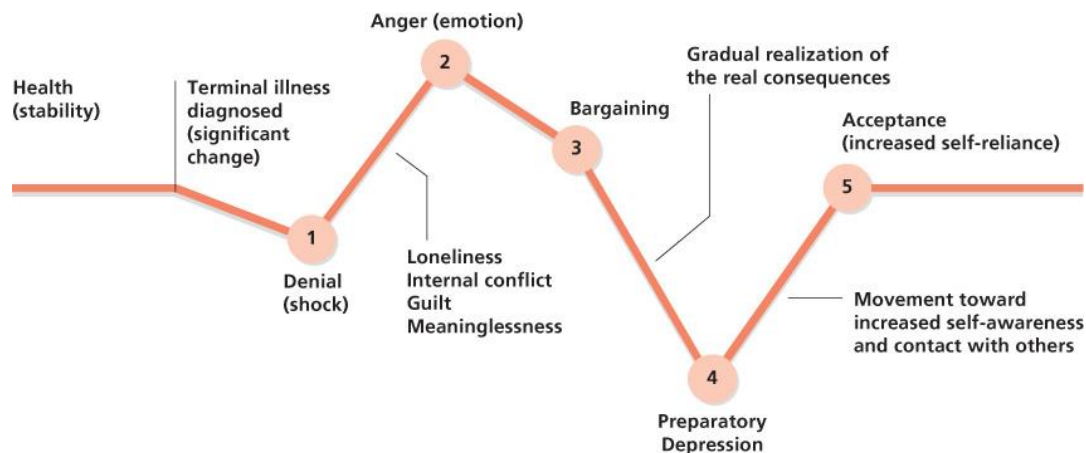


FIGURE 10-1 Moving Toward the End of Life

The steps toward death, according to Kübler-Ross (1975). Do you think there are cultural differences in the steps?

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Another important area covered in this topic focuses on how people exert control over how they die, including location (hospital, palliative care, home) and the manner of their death. You will learn about DNR decisions (Do Not Resuscitate Orders) and the difficulty in distinguishing between “extraordinary” and “routine” measures to revive or prolong life for patients. In addition, we will discuss living wills and the legal issues raised by these documents. You will also learn about the debates around euthanasia and assisted suicide. The final area you will explore is where people choose to die. Palliative care is an area of increasing interest for social work practitioners, and if you are interested in this area of practice, you may want to research medical options, for example, palliative care or hospices, in your community.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Confronting Death" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, consider the following:

- List and define the five stages of dying described by Kübler-Ross. What cultural influences do you think are embedded in her theory?
- Demonstrate an understanding of the issues (both pro and con) raised by DNR decisions and living wills.
- Describe the choices that patients may make in deciding the location of their death.
- A number of controversial issues are raised in discussions around euthanasia and assisted suicide in Western culture. Reflect on your own values and beliefs on these topics. How do your values and beliefs fit (or not) with social work values and beliefs?

Topic 3: Grief and Bereavement

In this final topic, you will explore mourning and funeral ceremonies and traditions. We will start with examining Western approaches to funeral rites, including costs, and consider what we can learn about Western society from its customs and norms around funerals and mourning. It might be useful here for you to think about a funeral you have attended along with the rituals and ceremonies involved in this process. For example, was there a religious component to the funeral ceremony or was it a memorial of a person's life without an expression of religion or spirituality? Was there a burial or a cremation following the ceremony? Clearly, there are a diverse number of approaches to acknowledging and ritualizing death across Western culture, and there are, of course, many cross-cultural differences.

Equally, approaches to grief and bereavement vary both within cultures and across cultures. We will discuss the definitions of bereavement and grief, and you will explore different ways of displaying grief within a cultural context. The process of grieving can be lengthy and difficult, and you will also learn about differentiating between a normal grief process and an unhealthy level of depression and anguish. These are important areas for social workers to consider when they are supporting families and individuals, at various life stages, in moving through the grief and bereavement process.

Critical Analysis

When reading "Grief and Bereavement" in *Discovering the Lifespan*, and after viewing the video, *Remembering and Honoring the Dead across Cultures* at [MyPsychLab Video Series](#), consider the following:

- Describe Western approaches to funeral rites and ceremonies. What do these rites have in common with different cultural approaches?
- Define the terms *grief* and *bereavement*.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the difference between normal and unhealthy grief, and list the supports that social workers could provide to grieving individuals and families.
- Compare and contrast the different ceremonies and rituals around remembering the dead described in the video. What cultural differences (and similarities) did you observe between Western norms and the Mayan and Botswanian norms detailed in the video?

Additional Learning Activities

You may choose to explore the following optional learning activities to enhance your comprehension of this subject:

1. *Videos*: View the videos, *Grieving: Parts I and II* at [MyPsychLab Video Series](#). The videos focus on Bob, who has lost both his wife and a daughter. Bob and other family members provide their own insights into the grief process and the supports they found helpful. What differences do you see in the approaches taken by family members in mourning the loss of the “matriarch” of the family and a young sister?
2. *Personal Learning Journal*: In your personal learning journal, reflect on your own values and beliefs around grief and bereavement. What kinds of supports do you think would be useful for you to assist in moving through the grief process?
3. *Loss Reflection*: It is one thing to think about loss and another to go through the experience. Review your experiences with loss and think about some of the ways you have dealt with them. Different people deal with loss in different ways. The following questions are designed to help you think through some of your own experiences with loss.
 - List three important losses in your life.
 - Are you still in pain from a loss or multiple losses?
 - Are there any important losses that you have experienced and have now worked through? How did you work through that loss?
 - If you have worked through an important loss, can you apply your ways of coping to an unresolved loss? If so, what is helpful and what is not?
 - What rituals and cultural activities helped you cope with this loss?
 - If you had a friend or relative who was having difficulty dealing with a loss, what would you do to help? How would your strategy change depending on their age?
 - If you find any aspect of this activity distressing or disturbing, please talk to someone you trust about it. Seek counselling if it is appropriate. We all have issues we are dealing with and loss is often one of them, be it the loss of a relationship, or a skill or ability, or simply aging.
4. *Discussion*: Feel free to share your thoughts about the concepts in this unit by posting to the *Unit 11 Discussion Board*.

Assessment

Assignment 3: Short Answers B (15%)

Continue to complete the worksheet . This assignment is due at the end of Unit 11.

Final Essay: Case Study Analysis (40%)

(Available in your online course material)

Summary

In this final unit, you have learned about the end of life: dying and death. While this is an inevitable part of life, it is an area that is sometimes difficult to address within Western cultures, as they place great value on youth and youthfulness and, concomitantly, less emphasis on aging and death. We have discussed the biological aspects of dying, including some of the controversies in determining the moment of death as well as the medical advances that can maintain life after brain death. Death across the lifespan is another important area to consider, as responses to death are, of course, quite different depending on a person's age. You have also explored the issue of quality of life, and controversial topics, for example, euthanasia and assisted suicide for terminally ill patients. Finally, we have also discussed Kübler-Ross's approach to the stages of grief, including critiques of her theory that focus on the cultural relativity of her approach.

You have now completed the final unit for the course on lifespan development, and you have explored Western normative approaches across the lifespan, including major theorists and approaches, developmental ages and stages, and critiques of Western models. You have also learned about Aboriginal approaches to life stages, and have also discussed different cultural approaches to development across the lifespan in both rural and urban settings, Western societies, and Indigenous communities in both Canada and Mexico. This analytical approach will help you to develop a critical perspective on developmental issues when you are working with families and individuals in a social work setting. Congratulations on completing the final unit; now you can complete your final essay!