

Adult development and aging essay



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Sue Piasecki Abstract The cyclic process of aging is impacted by our health and physical fitness. Each state of adulthood has its advantages and disadvantages concerning health and physical fitness. This paper covers each stage and the importance of mental and physical health and awareness. Public policy on aging is varied but generally is supportive and provides programs to assist aging adults health and welfare.

Adult development varies in different cultures, and is impacted in several areas. I. Early adulthood Using the observation method, this research paper examined early adults in the 20-39 age group begin to transition from early adulthood and into middle adulthood. Young women begin to feel the strains associated with trying to fit into the early adulthood. They are challenged during this phase by breaking the typical stereotypes of traditional womanhood.

New challenges of glass ceilings, patriacharial families, and second shift needs are some barriers to their success (Bjorklund, B. , & Bee, H. , 2008). They have to decide if they want to continue on with education, a career, marriage and children. Young women are less likely to take chances and risks at this point and are more likely to follow a traditional role which they may have been modeled to them by their parents. Young men on the other hand, begin to transition into careers and higher education.

The social pressure of assuming responsibility for himself and a soon to follow family (if they don't have one already) becomes a heavy task to accomplish. Young males are more likely than their female counter parts to assume some risk and try new things (Elium and Elium, 1994). During my

observation, I spent 4 hours with this age group who are members of the Air Force. These young men and women displayed behaviors stereotypical of their age and gender group.

The men are very aggressive, physical and interested in females more than ever. While they still demonstrate some of their boyish traits of playing video games, sports and hanging out, they also have been newly conditioned to the military lifestyle and the upward mobility of new careers and education. Many of them have tried to continue on with education prior to joining the military, however, were unable to remain in school. Most causes for leaving college before graduation was an inability to focus on school work and their parents refused to continue paying their tuition.

The remainder could not afford to stay and saw the military as an option to continue their education with tuition assistance from their service. One couple was married; she got pregnant prior to arriving to her present assignment and married the young man who was the father. Lucky for them, they were both coming to the same base of assignment so raising the baby would be shared and somewhat easier. Both agreed neither the baby or marriage was planned, but they were trying their best to “do the right thing” as stipulated by society and to be a family.

Another area I noted in the early adulthood domain was the addition of blended families. First is the deciding which relationship to put first, either the relationship between the husband and wife or that of the natural parent and child. One of the best ways to try to conquer this task is by a feeling of respect among everyone in the family. Respect is the bedrock of a

relationship, and putting that first and foremost is important. Letting the spouse-step parent know that respect for the step-child and step-child to step parent respect is paramount in the process.

Often the child feels they are not consulted and no longer have a say in decisions in the family once the step-parent becomes part of the family. This can and does cause friction between everyone and often placing the natural parent in the middle of it all (Bouchard, 2006). II. Middle adulthood During the three-hour observation I conducted on the middle adulthood domain I recorded the behavior of a couple in their late 70's. This couple had been married for 40 years and had 2 adult children and 3 grandchildren. I noticed they were physically slowing down, but were still very active around their home and the husband had recently retired from his second career.

In his first career he had spent 26 years in the U. S. Air Force and his second career, he spent 30 years as a civilian in the Navy. The wife had always been a stay a home mother and had taken part-time jobs here and there to make ends meet.

The both exercise regularly, the wife walks daily, and the husband goes to the gym. They also watch what they eat, but as most adults, splurge on a non-healthy meal or desert on occasion. They also travel regularly within their budget, which keeps them active, and from becoming stagnant in their home. Grand parenting is an important part of middle-aged life and ranks as one of the top three in important roles.

Three out of four adults in the United States become grandparents prior to turning 65 years old. One in two females experience this prior to turning 54

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years old. With the projected increase of longevity in the U. S. it is predicted that we may spend up to half our lives as grandparents (Parenting roles.

com, 2007). Grandparents today play a much different role than that of two generations ago and the roles that most of us see today. Today's grandparents live a much more active lifestyle, are more likely to be working and playing more non-traditional roles (Bjorklund, B. , & Bee, H. , 2008).

Another important grand parenting role is that of being a good parent.

Parents must understand that they must have a good relationship with their children in order to have access to grandchildren and to be close enough to share in family experiences. The empty nest is when the last child living at home leaves and only the parent(s) are left in the home. For women this happens around age 40-50 and for men, 55-60. The empty nest is often referred to as " post parental" because it follows the period of in home parenting. This stage in our lives is often viewed as a sad part of our lives when in fact it is not (Bjorklund, B.

, & Bee, H. , 2008). Research has shown that marriages and relationships improve during the empty nest stage. Women have less day-to-day activities to care for and have the opportunity to take on a new career or pursue higher or continued education. III.

Late adulthood During the three-hour observation I conducted on the late adulthood domain I recorded the behavior of a couple in their late 80's. I observed this couple in their assisted living home located in a quiet community for seniors. The couple had been married for 60 years and was still very happy. They had recently moved into their new home about a year

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ago and reported they were very excited about their new community and friends. They stated they were apprehensive about moving out of their previous family home where they raised their children and grandchildren because of the memories and attachment they had there. Their main reason for the move was to have medical assistance readily available, and the opportunity to have full-time help as they aged and needed more assistance.

While they stated their families were more than willing and able to help, they did not want to be dependant on them in that way and chose to move into their new home. They reported this move as a positive experience and stated they met many new friends there who shared some of their same interests. They had planned activities throughout the day designed to keep them active both mentally and physically. They had a recreation center where they could play cards, games and puzzles, and had an indoor pool where they could swim or participate in water aerobics. This is important because a sedentary lifestyle leads to negative health trends, it is estimated that 50% of women who are 65 years old or greater are not active and do not lead a physical lifestyle (Scanion-Mogel, Roberto, 2004). They were provided three hot meals per day that helped keep their nutrition levels where they are supposed to be as well as their energy levels.

IV. Elderly During the three-hour observation I conducted on the late adulthood domain I recorded the behavior an elderly veteran named Sam who is 93 years old. I observed Sam at his home in the VA center in Cheyenne Wyoming. Sam is not from Wyoming, but this is the closest VA location his family could find for him. His family is from Chicago and occasionally makes it out to visit him. Due to the distance and his age, he

has shown signs of disengagement as evidenced in his disengaging from roles and relationships he once had.

Sam served in the Navy during WW II and enjoyed speaking about his time of service. He has begun to enter Erickson's theory of ego integrity versus despair as he has begun the process of life review (Bjorklund, B. , & Bee, H. , 2008).

Sam exhibited memory lapses and gaps in his memory and is physically able to move around but only if assisted. He has very limited physical movement and exercise and spends most of this day thinking about the past, reading books, or playing cards. Sam has led a wonderful life and in speaking and spending time with him, I began to understand fully the cycle of adult development and aging. V.

Public policy on adult developmentPublic policy on adult development is rather nebulous in that it is difficult to find one concrete view. The Council on Aging represents the aging community by actively participating and representing them in various arenas. They also serve as experts in geriatric psychiatry as well as geropsychiatric issues. They serve as technical experts in areas of prescription drugs and Medicare part D. They continue to increase funding for research and endorsements on several items of Legislation such as the Positive Aging Act and the Older Americans Act (Roca, 2008). The Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA) was developed to improve the health conditions of the elderly for conditions such as frailty, and mental illness.

CGA also pursues the increased longevity, mobility, and functioning and to limit the dependency on nursing homes and hospitalization. The CGA provides problem lists and care plans for several providers and areas for families and community resources (Wieland, Ferrucci, 2008). VI. Views of adult development in different cultures Adult development in different cultures varies depending on the location of the adults. In Korea, adults practice Confucian ethics that focuses on the family first and the “ I” second.

This is quite contrary to Western beliefs where the family is normally placed after “ I”. In a study of older Korean’s desire to participate in health care decisions, it was determined that they favor decisions with the support of their families rather than without them. This study was conducted on 165 elderly Koreans aged 65 to 96 years old and focused on their involvement in healthcare choices. The study revealed that 74. 9% were interested in their health care and did want to participate in the process.

Often, health care professionals do not consider the desires of the elderly patient when making health care decisions. Western physicians began involving the patient in the decision making process in the 1960’s, whereas the practice did not begin until the 1980’s in the East. This was due in part to the Asian culture and mindset that the family is responsible for the care of elderly adults, especially during a time of medical necessity. In a study done on men with prostate cancer, the majority wanted to know all the detailed information. Women with breast cancer seemed to be satisfied with the information the physician provided and did not ask for additional information.

However, several studies have shown that the desire to participate in the decision making process of medical care was higher in women than in men. This also varies on the type of illness and health condition, as shown in recent studies; people are more willing to want to be involved when their medical condition is minor as opposed to a major concern, which most people were satisfied with their physician's opinion. Studies also found that people with higher education levels often sought out more information than those less educated (Chang, Lee, Kim, & Lee, 2008). In closing, this research paper covered the observation of the early adulthood, middle adulthood, late adulthood, and the elderly. Using the research method we covered public policy on adult development and development and the views of adult development in other cultures.

The process of adulthood begins at birth and continues until death. While each individual lives a unique life, each is part of the adulthood cycle.

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(Document ID: 1468530101). Appendix 1 Observation of Early Adulthood
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