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The disengagement theory of ageing controversially explains how as we get older, we naturally withdraw from society and it is an inevitable part as a person gets older resulting in decreased interaction between the ageing person and the social system. This could be because older people maybe exclude themselves from social activities, although this could be due to the person's ability to get around to participating in such activities, leaving restricted opportunities for them to interact with people causing the elderly social skill to deteriorate because they are using them less and less. This theory was originally proposed by William Henry and Elaine Cumming in 1961, however this theory is very controversial and many people just don't agree with it because it all depends on the individual. Some people argue that the loss of socializing is enforced rather than voluntary. For example, if someone needs to go into a nursing home, they will tend to make fewer friends when they are confined in a small space, and even if they do make friendships in the social circle of the care home, then they unfortunately might die off from illness or just old age, leaving their friends with less connections.

The supporters of the disengagement theory believed that it was just a natural part of ageing, which explained how people prepared for death. There are a lot of different factors that contribute to the disengagement theory. Firstly, ill health can affect an elderly person greatly because when they become ill, they may not be able to get around as much due to incidents like poor mobility, restricted hearing and impaired vision will likely stop the person from socializing as much with friends or relatives because they simply can't do things that they used to do anymore because of their

illnesses. Secondly, an elderly person's geographical mobility can affect them because after retirement, people may want to celebrate not working anymore so they spend their earned pension on going on holidays and maybe even moving away to different parts of the world, in order to find better housing in a warmer environment, resulting in them being away from their family and friends more for long periods of time. Another factor is retirement.

When people retire from working in their working place a long time, at first, they may start to feel lonely or depressed, feeling like they have nothing to do and empty for a while. This may result in them losing contact with their work colleagues, leaving that social circle which will be bad for their social confidence as they may feel left out or forgotten about. One further factor of the disengagement theory is when the elderly person's family and friends suffer from their own ill health. When a relative or friend of an elderly person becomes ill, they may not be able to care for them or visit them as much, causing the elderly person to become lonely and maybe lose their frequent contact with them which will affect their social confidence.

They may feel more isolated from their normal oscillation. The final factor of the disengagement theory is travel and technology. Elderly people may not be able to get around physically by walking as much and they may not be able to get around by car either as they may have lost their hearing or vision because at age 70, people have to take their driving test and renew their license to be legally allowed to keep on driving. This is to ensure their safety as well as other drivers and pedestrians on the road. Also, technology is developing so rapidly in this world, with 'pads, 'pods, computers, the <https://assignbuster.com/hsc-essay/>

internet, smart TV's and smart phones. These new devices now control and affect how we communicate in day-to-day life so a lot has changed compared to 30-40 years ago.

Older people may find this increasing technology difficult to understand, so they can't contact their family and friends electronically. Also they may not be able to afford high-tech gadgets and they may not have access to the internet. In 1966, Brimley came up with the idea of 'The Springboard of Life'. He designed an outline of the human life cycle, detailing the physical and social development of a life course. The Activity Theory of Ageing On the other hand, The Activity Theory of Ageing is the total opposite of the idea of the Disengagement Theory.

It views ageing as a good process, that there is a positive correlation between the rate of a person's level of activity, and their self-confidence and mobility. For example, the more activity (both socially and physically) that an elderly person does, the more self-confidence they will gain because they will be socializing more and they will be able to physically move around more. Whatever age we are, whether we are 10 or 100, we are still ageing every single day, so, according to the activity theory, the more activity we do as we age, the longer we will live.

In 1972, Lemon, Benton and Peterson studied the process of ageing and later created a publication named 'An Exploration of The Activity Theory of Ageing. When it was published, it became hugely popular in lots of different countries because people eked the idea of wanting to stay younger for longer' and it was basic common sense which led to a longer life. It

eventually became an applied theory of ageing and gained lots of positive responses because it was simply saying that people should still carry on interacting, socializing and staying active, whatever age they are if they intend on living a healthier, longer and happy life. The activity theory has had a few criticisms though. For example, people who oppose of it say that the disengagement theory of ageing is better because it is the most trial way of ageing and encourage people to age naturally instead of fighting it because it is a natural, inevitable part of life.

Also, sometimes people become ill as their growing older, so they tend not to follow the activity theory of ageing, simply because they are unable to. As elderly people come towards the end of their life span, if they take on the activity theory of ageing, they will likely want to produce a ‘ life review. This could consist of various activities such as looking at old photos and creating an album or scrapbook of memories, as well as taking trips to their favorite destinations with their family or closest friends. Through doing these activities, elderly people may look back at their past and try to find their meaning of their life through what they have achieved. To do this, the elderly seek people who care for them such as their family and friend’s, so they can share their memories with them, to make them feel more confident and content about their life. In today’s world, most people take on the activity theory of ageing, rather than the disengagement theory.

This is because people have more of a chance of living longer lives, with all of the new modern hospital treatments and equipment, doctors and nurses do everything they can to help a person who needs treatment get better and have a quick recovery. Everyone likes the idea of living longer so if people

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become ill, they will seek the best possible treatment in order to get better and carry on with their lives. However, even though people would most likely rather take on the activity theory of ageing, sometimes people become ill or something happens in their life which means that they are unable follow the activity theory and sadly fall into the disengagement theory of ageing, even if they don't want to.

The activity theory is more common now though in today's society with new advances in healthcare and better treatments for people with illnesses, even if an illness is incurable, there are treatments that can pro-long a person's life so that they can live longer and spend more time with their family. The activity theory, if possible, is a better way of ageing than the disengagement theory.