

Counselor know thyself and social theories of aging critical thinking examples

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



A competent therapist will understand the issues that older adults face even though they themselves have yet to reach the senior years. The therapist will also have learned the specific -ages-stages of adult development and aging and be able to build a positive and rewarding professional relationship with her elderly clients. The therapist will also understand that these changes affect not only the individual client but also their interaction with their families and the community at large.

Stereotypes about the elderly that are prevalent in society include issues of ageism and bias. Often elderly persons are perceived as out of touch with the current social and business environment. This can create employment discrimination when older employees are encouraged to retire instead of seeking a promotion they might otherwise be qualified to fill. It extends into driving situations where people often assume an elderly individual has slower reaction times and is more likely to create a hazard on the road. This type of assumptive discrimination does affect all ages. For example a kid who loses their glasses is considered careless, but if a businessperson loses their glasses, it is assumed they were busy. A senior citizen who does the same thing is scrutinized as possibility becoming senile. .

I know I have been guilty of age profiling myself. One of the things I am learning today is the difference between, perception, stereotypes and individual client care. We learn the ages-stages of adult development and it is true that most people will pass through those phases. However, those people are going through their own individual aging process and they are doing it at their own speed. Because the sense of individuality is more highly developed in adults the stages of their aging patterns are more fluid than

those of children whose intellectual development is more firmly connected to their physical development.. As a counselor, I know I must listen to my client's personal concerns before I make a determination as to which age-stage of development they are passing through, and how quickly they are doing it.

There is a permeation of pressure to " remain young" that is pervasive throughout the media. As a result, many seniors start feeling less valuable simply because of their age. They apologize for their appearance, or for physical challenges, they may no longer be able to meet. Magazines like " More" that made a commitment to use only models have made some inroads into these media perceptions. However, if you page through the latest issue it is obvious that for the most part, they select the youngest looking forty-year-old models they can find.

As a therapist, I believe it will be valuable for me to learn how other cultures approach ageing and age bias. In Western Civilization, aging is considered a problem, everyone is doing it and that in itself adds to the difficulty. Because we value youth over age people are afraid of the natural aging process. This increases the difficulties faced by aging individuals who suddenly find themselves " invisible." Most societies do differentiate between how they treat younger, middle aged and older individuals. This does not mean that age bias against the elderly is universal; some societies afford them more respect for varying reasons. As a therapist, I need to be aware, yet unbiased and this is not an easy task.

This awareness extends to the ethical and legal responsibilities you have to your elderly clients as a marriage and family counselor. Public personas such

as Betty White and Sean Connery certainly remind us that sex and charisma is not confined to the young. Reality dictates they are exceptions, there are physical aspects to aging that affect marital and family relations as people age. As a counselor, I need to be sensitive to how my clients are working through the aging process and remember that each partner is working through their own issues, as they are helping their partners go through theirs. This is taking place on the physical, mental and spiritual levels of both partners, and at different rates. That in itself is quite a bit to consider.

Another family issue that sometimes needs to be addressed is when children start accepting more responsibility for extended family matters, and sometimes for specific issues regarding the financial and medical care of their parents or other older family members. This may be appropriate, necessary and welcomed by my elderly client, or it may be none of these. Furthermore, I need to be aware that I may be called upon to render my opinion or even testify as to the advisability of a physical managed care situation or a financial conservatorship.

Social theories of aging, as they apply in Western Civilization relate to my stereotypes and biases in several ways. It is not a far stretch from learning to recognize and help a client through the ages-stages of adult development and pigeon holing someone into a stereotype; sometimes it seems to be a rather fine line indeed between these two scenarios. However, studying and becoming familiar with the stages of adult development affords me, as a counselor to understand where my clients are in the process, and how they perceive of themselves as well. Using Betty White and Sean Connery as examples again some people view their personal ageing process differently;

In conclusion, I have been guilty of making an assumption based upon a stereotype or bias that is embarrassingly inaccurate. On the other hand, I cannot ignore that all of my clients are aging, and hopefully maturing; this is part of the life process. Learning how people go through the ages-stages of adult development is part of my maturation process both as a counselor and as an individual. Helping them relate to the changing circumstances related to aging is part of their adult development and my own.

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