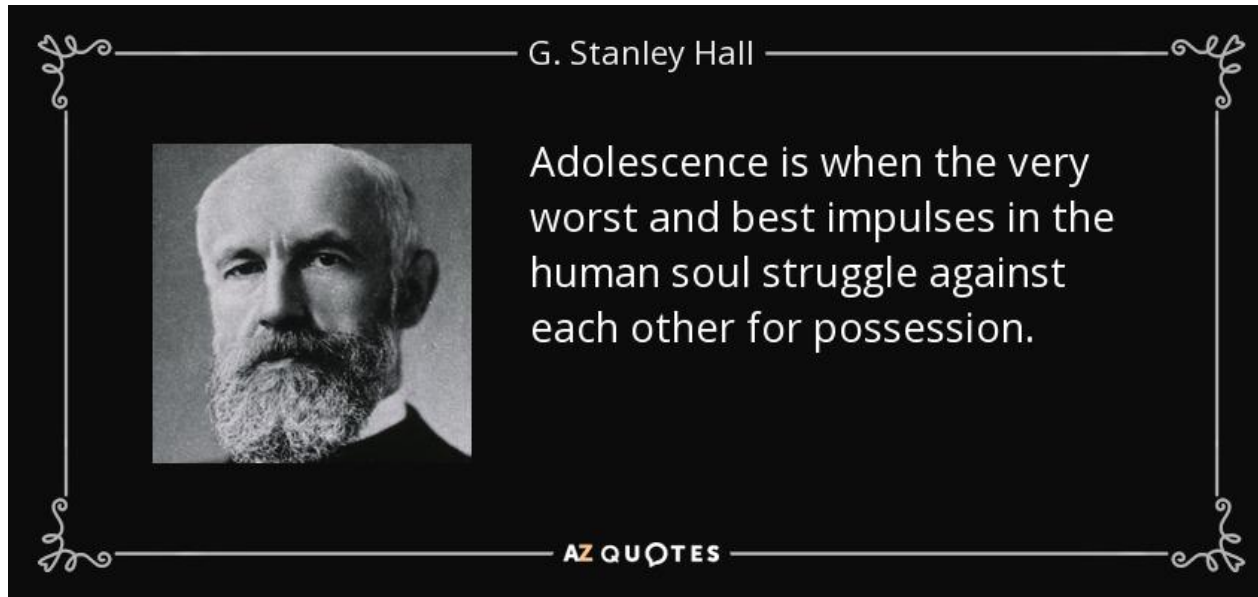


A group of five diverse teenagers are smiling and posing for a photo outdoors. In the center is a young man with dark, wavy hair wearing a grey zip-up jacket over a red and white checkered shirt. To his left (viewer's right) is a young woman with dark, curly hair wearing a dark blue turtleneck. To his right (viewer's left) is a young woman with long brown hair wearing a grey knit beanie and a purple sweater. Behind them are two more teenagers: a young man with dark hair in a blue plaid shirt on the far left, and a young woman with long blonde hair in a grey plaid shirt in the center background. The background consists of trees with bright yellow and orange autumn leaves. The overall mood is warm and positive.

Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood

Dr Judith Marshall

G Stanley Hall (1844-1924)



"...for the higher and more completely human traits are now born"

(Hall, 1916, xiii)

First 'psychology of adolescence' through scientific methods

Adolescence:

- A period of storm and stress
- A new birth

G Stanley Hall (1844-1924)

- Emotional life of the adolescent - an oscillation between contradictory tendencies:

Energy and exaltation | Indifference, lethargy, and loathing

Exuberance, euphoria and laughter | Dysphoria, depressive gloom, melancholy

Egoism, vanity, and conceit | Lack of confidence, humiliation, and bashfulness

Extreme sensitivity | Extreme callousness and cruelty

- Recognised specific importance of friendships, peer groups and roles models during this developmental period

Puberty

A biologically defined period

Adolescence is a broader social construction

Puberty 11 or 13 years until 22 - 25 years of age

Influences on puberty – actual and conceptual?

Why is early maturation generally more positive for boys than for girls?

Adolescent changes

Neural networks are streamlined,
especially in prefrontal cortex and
limbic system

Regulates planning and coordinating
behaviours

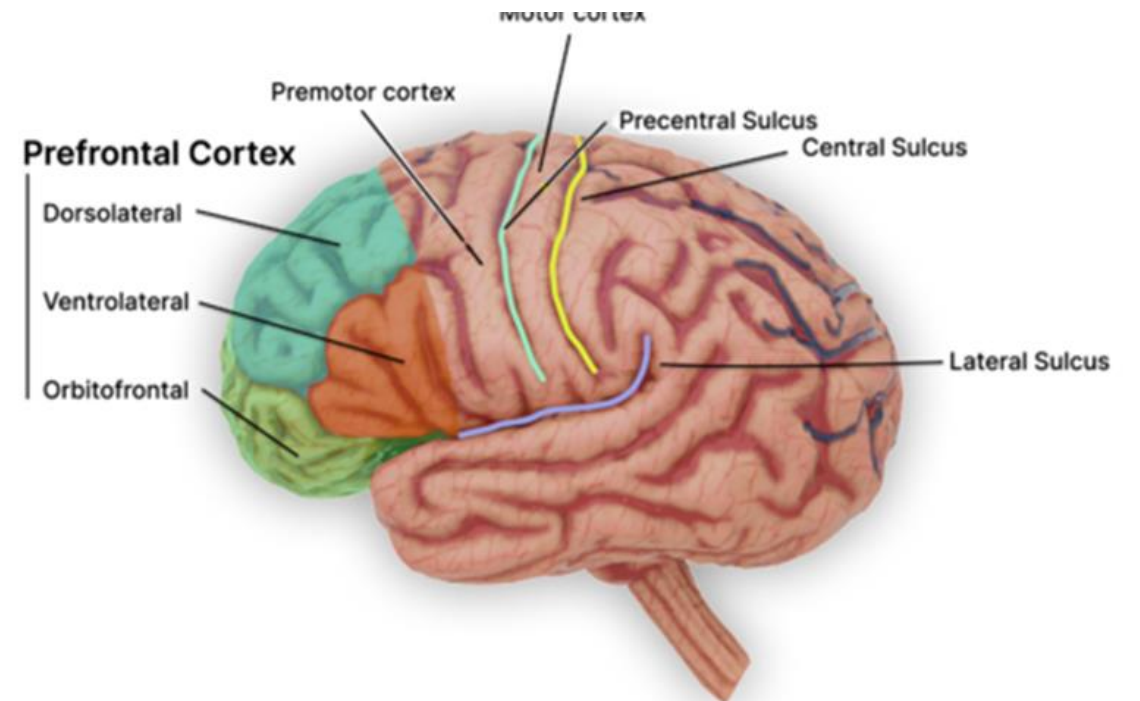
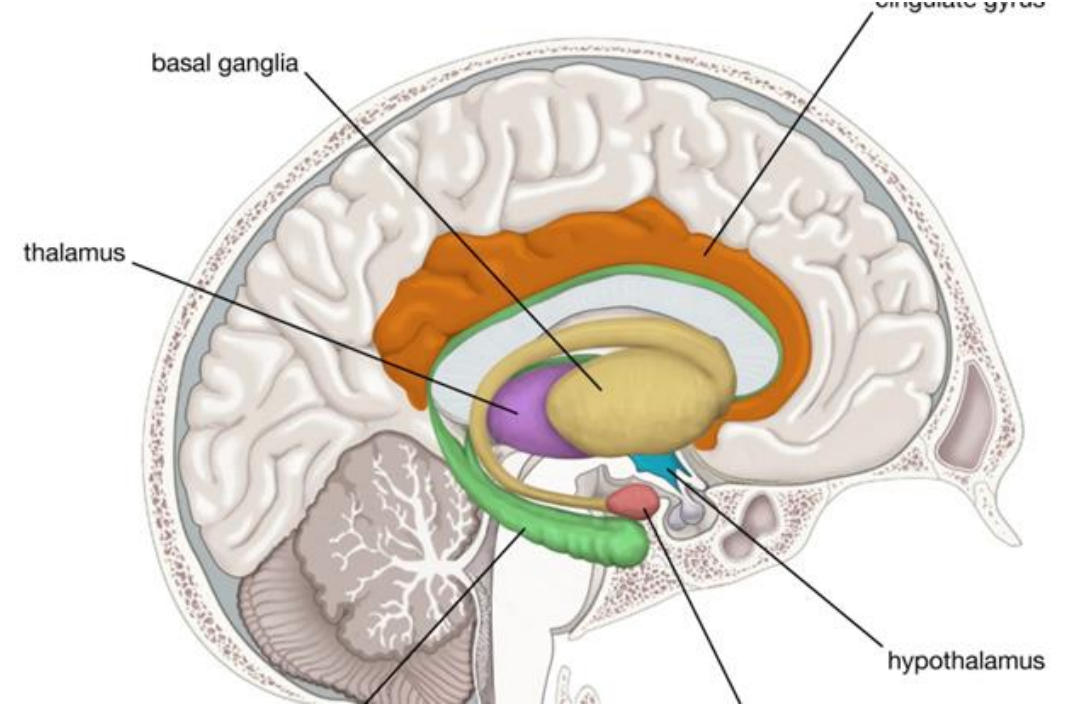


Table 1.1 Freud's Psychosexual Stages

Psychosexual Stage	Approximate Age	Description
Oral	Birth–1 year	The new ego directs the baby's sucking activities toward breast or bottle. If oral needs are not met appropriately, the individual may develop such habits as thumb sucking, fingernail biting, and pencil chewing in childhood and overeating and smoking later in life.
Anal	1–3 years	Toddlers and preschoolers enjoy holding and releasing urine and feces. Toilet training becomes a major issue between parent and child. If parents insist that children be trained before they are ready, or if they make too few demands, conflicts about anal control may appear in the form of extreme orderliness and cleanliness or messiness and disorder.
Phallic	3–6 years	As preschoolers take pleasure in genital stimulation, Freud's Oedipus conflict for boys and Electra conflict for girls arise: Children feel a sexual desire for the other-sex parent and hostility toward the same-sex parent. To avoid punishment and loss of parental love, they suppress these impulses and, instead, adopt the same-sex parent's characteristics and values. As a result, the superego is formed, and children feel guilty whenever they violate its standards.
Latency	6–11 years	Sexual instincts die down, and the superego develops further. The child acquires new social values from adults and same-sex peers outside the family.
Genital	Adolescence	With puberty, the sexual impulses of the phallic stage reappear. If development has been successful during earlier stages, it leads to marriage, mature sexuality, and the birth and rearing of children. This stage extends through adulthood.

Freud

- Central task of adolescence: break close emotional ties to parents
- Individuation: differentiation of the person's feelings, judgements, behaviours and thoughts from those of the parents

Genital Stage of Psychosexual Development



Erikson's 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development

A Lifespan Approach to Personality Development Through Social Relationships

Core Theory Principles

- **Epigenetic Principle:** Development unfolds in a predetermined sequence; each stage builds on previous ones
- **Psychosocial Crises:** Each stage presents opposing forces (syntonic vs. dystonic) that must be negotiated
- **Ego Strengths/Virtues:** Successfully resolving crises develops specific virtues (hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, wisdom)
- **Balance Over Perfection:** Healthy development requires balanced ratios, not complete elimination of negative tendencies

The Eight Psychosocial Stages

Stage 1

Trust vs. Mistrust

Birth - 18 months

Virtue: HOPE

Infant learns whether the world is safe and predictable through consistent caregiving. Develops basic trust or mistrust based on reliability of care.

Stage 2

Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt

18 months - 3 years

Virtue: WILL

Toddler develops independence and self-control. Balances "Me do it!" assertiveness with accepting necessary limits. Toilet training exemplifies this challenge.

Stage 3

Initiative vs. Guilt

3 - 6 years

Virtue: PURPOSE

Child takes initiative in planning activities and pursuing goals. Imaginative play flourishes. Excessive restriction can create guilt about natural assertiveness.

Stage 4

Industry vs. Inferiority

6 - 12 years

Virtue: COMPETENCE

School-age child masters culturally valued skills through formal education. Social comparison with peers crystallizes feelings of competence or inadequacy.

Stage 5

Identity vs. Role Confusion

12 - 18 years

Virtue: FIDELITY

Adolescent integrates childhood identifications into coherent identity. Experiments with roles and ideologies. Psychosocial moratorium allows exploration.

Stage 6

Intimacy vs. Isolation

Young Adulthood

Virtue: LOVE

Young adult forms deep, committed relationships. Fuses identity with others without losing self. Includes romantic partnerships and close friendships.

Stage 7

Generativity vs. Stagnation

Middle Adulthood

Virtue: CARE

Middle-aged adult contributes to next generation through parenting, mentoring, or creative work. Shifts focus from personal achievement to nurturing others.

Stage 8

Integrity vs. Despair

Late Adulthood

Virtue: WISDOM

Older adult reflects on life and confronts mortality. Accepts life as lived—choices, relationships, accomplishments. Achieves integrity or experiences despair.

Epigenetic principle

Psychosocial – de-emphasises the 'sexual' (Freud)

5	Identity vs Confusion	Adolescence	Self chosen values and goals lead to lasting personal identity. Lack of identity leads to identity confusion.
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...While extensive biological changes are taking place.

Including brain development.

Adolescence: Ego Identity versus Role Confusion

Task : to consolidate all earlier identifications to create a continuity – this will aid the adolescent in achieving an occupational identity

Basic strength at this stage: **fidelity** – being true to the self

Role confusion - trying on many different identities

Often involving over identification with unrealistic role models

Successful resolution - young person develops a strong ego identity (sense of self)

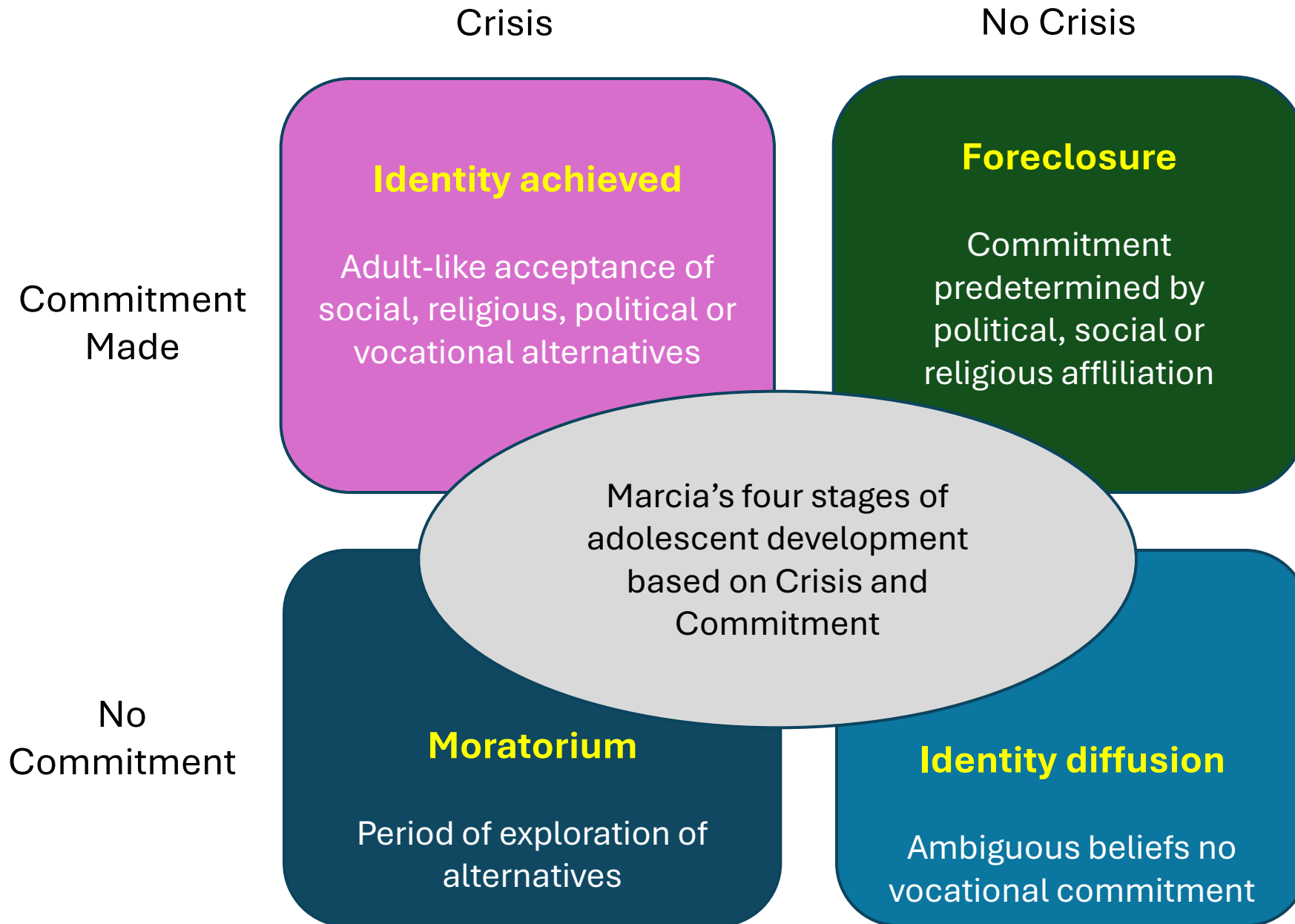
Accepts their abilities and uniqueness and also to have goals for change and further growth

James Marcia (1966): Adolescence & Identity Statuses

- Expanded Erikson's adolescent stage
- Theory based on **exploration and commitment** to an identity
- Adolescent either develops an identity or experiences a negative outcome
- Consider
 - different understandings of 'adolescence'?
 - date of research

Study:

- College-age males in U.S.
- Identified 4 forms of identity development...



Marcia - Identity Status Classification

Identity diffusion: not yet gone through an identity crisis; uncommitted to a coherent set of values; no urgency

An incomplete and sometimes incoherent sense of self, with resulting feelings of isolation and depression. They have never explored alternatives

e.g. “I don’t care”

Foreclosure: no crisis: option selected without a search; following parental or ‘expected’ career path

Can arise if adolescents prematurely commit themselves to an identity without adequately considering their choices

- e.g. my parents are Christians;
- My family have always voted Conservative

Moratorium: identity crisis in process; searching for options but none decided

Identity achievement: resolved identity crisis
(healthy resolution of Erikson's stage 5 crisis)

Learning a masculine or feminine social role

- Accepting one's body
- Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults
- Selecting and preparing for an occupation
- Achieving a scale of values and an ethical system to live by

Unsuccessful resolution = lack of direction, lack of productivity and
uncertainty of own strengths

Psychosocial Moratorium

Erikson and Marcia argued for the importance of a psychosocial moratorium

- A time-out period during which the adolescent is not expected to take on adult roles and can pursue activities that lead to self-discovery
- Only possible in some cultures and only to the more privileged classes

Support for Marcia's taxonomy

Berzonsky and Kuk (2000)

- Identity processing style and transitions to university
- Found: Long-term diffused teenagers are less mature and tend to go along with the crowd, often resulting in academic difficulties

Halevy (2025)

- Directly applies Marcia's four identity statuses (diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, achievement) to *three independent components of religious identity*.
- The findings validate that Marcia's statuses **function empirically in distinct domains**, supporting the robustness and adaptability of his framework.

Hameed (2024)

- Mixed-methods study of rural high-school girls assigned students to Marcia's four identity statuses
- Found **distinct psychosocial and behavioural patterns for each status**
- Reinforces the model's predictive validity in adolescent development and educational engagement.

Support for Marcia's taxonomy

Merdecal (2024)

- Overview - highlights Marcia's model as a **central framework in contemporary identity formation research**
- Emphasises its continued applicability in contexts like adolescence, multicultural identity, and digital identity exploration

Carlsson et al (2024)

- The **moratorium identity status** aligns reliably across interview and questionnaire methods, providing **empirical confirmation** of at least one core Marcia status.
- Reinforces the importance of maintaining conceptual fidelity to his original model.
- Critiqued how Marcia's original identity status model has been altered, diluted, or distorted in later questionnaire-based measures, especially the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (Luyckx et al., 2008). Questionnaires miss the nuance and complexity.



15
Minutes

Piaget and The Developing Sense of Self

Focus upon cognition

Hypothetico-deductive reasoning

- Hypothesis, or prediction – deduction of logical, testable inferences
- Systematic isolation and combination of variables -which of these inferences are confirmed

Propositional thought

Ability to evaluate the logic of propositions (verbal statements) without referring to real world circumstances

Consequences of abstract thought:

Adolescents become more self-conscious and self-focusing

New form of egocentrism

Piaget

Adolescent Egocentrism

A self-absorbed and distorted view of one's uniqueness and importance

The **imaginary audience**

Belief that we are the prime focus of attention and concern (Elkind and Bowen, 1979)

Oversensitivity to social evaluation – often extreme self-consciousness and effort to avoid embarrassment

The **personal fable**

Inflated opinion of own importance – special or unique

Often see self as reaching great heights of importance and/or sinking to unusually deep depths of despair

Believe it is unique to them; that others cannot understand

Piaget

Has been suggested that distorted visions of the self do not result from egocentrism - instead, partly an outgrowth of advances in perspective taking, which causes teenagers to be much more concerned about what people think

(Vartanian and Powlishta, 1996)

Aspects of the imaginary audience may serve positive, protective functions – other people's evaluations have important *real* consequences

(Bell and Bromnick, 2003)

Concern with appearance has emotional value relevant to relationships

(Vartanian, 1997)

A positive personal fable may help adolescents cope with challenges

Piaget: Idealism and Criticism

- Abstract thinking permits adolescents to go beyond the real to the possible - 'ideal', 'perfection'
- The ability to use abstract thinking allows adolescents to think of themselves in terms of abstract characteristics that encompass a variety of concrete characteristics and behaviours - These characteristics may contradict each other e.g. "intelligent" "silly" "cool".
- These disparities come from social pressure to display different selves in different relationships e.g. with parents, classmates, friends, romantic partners

Piaget: Idealism and Criticism

Adolescent idealism and criticism can be advantageous:

- Once teenagers see the possession of strengths and weaknesses, they have a greater capacity to work constructively for social change

(Elkind, 1994)

More able to form positive, lasting relationships, accepting of imperfection

Piaget: Decision-making

Adolescent decision making often undermined by lack of rational thought processes

- Identifying the pros and cons of each alternative
- Assessing the likelihood of various alternative outcomes
- Evaluating their choice in terms of whether or not their goals were met
- Learning from mistakes and making improved future decisions

Summary

- ▶ Storm & stress?
- ▶ Conflicts
- ▶ Identity more complex now than in the past?
- ▶ Important concepts in adolescence: identity versus diffusion; identity foreclosure; moratorium
- ▶ Cognition in adolescence
- ▶ Consequences for later psychosocial development?
- ▶ Individuality in adolescence



Emerging Adulthood

Many cultural concepts of adulthood

Many informal rites of passage



2006 - David Cameron

Formal “rite of passage” for 18-years-olds - transition from childhood to adulthood,

David Cameron/Conservatives outlined plans

Launched pilot courses run by the Young Adult Trust to help teenagers to learn about becoming adults.

The Times, 31 Oct 2006

Late teens and early twenties

Robbins and Wilner
(2001) - college graduates



Confusion and uncertainty



‘Quarterlife’ crisis - self doubt



Workplace



Friendships and relationships

Critique of Robbins and Wilner

Arnett (2007)

- Over-emphasis of the negative aspects of transition
- Scientific rigour of the study has been questioned – but the difficulties, uncertainties and stresses perceived as real by the participants
- The ‘quarterlife crisis’ another term for the Erikson’s description of the identity crisis
- Many experiences (e.g. self-doubt, concern about the future, needing friends and mentors)
are aspects of Erikson’s ‘task’ for young people to form a sense of identity
- Erikson Identity crisis 12-18. Young adults still experiencing this.

Arnett's Theory of Emerging Adulthood

'Emerging adulthood' distinct from adolescence and young adulthood

Acknowledges Erikson's theorising (1950, 1968), Levinson's (1978) research into young adulthood and Keniston's (1971) theory of youth

Keniston - youth is a time of disaffection or "tension between self and society" (Keniston, 1971, p. 8)

Arnett:

- Keniston's theory culture-specific and time-specific
- Keniston's concept of 'youth' problematic

But - Arnett recognizes that all three theorists recognized a period of and experimentation regarding values, behaviours, roles and responsibilities

Demographic distinction

Period of emerging adulthood is qualitatively different in current times than it was in the 1970s

If many adult roles are left until the late twenties - longer period accepted to explore possible life courses

Emerging adulthood - does not contain a set of normative expectations

- Some have adult roles and responsibilities - have embraced adulthood
- Others behave as adolescents and don't consider future



Arnett: Subjective distinction

Emerging adults in U.S. see themselves as neither adolescents nor adults

Not until late twenties/early thirties do majority of young people feel they have reached adulthood

Younger participants had no name for the prolonged period that they were going through

- explains that their society has no name for it

Identity exploration

‘Most identity exploration actually takes place during emerging adulthood (age 18 – 25 years)’

Does it?

Less pressure on adolescents to ‘become’ something permanent

– acceptable for adolescents to ‘go through phases’

But age 18 – 25 – more opportunity (e.g. money, freedom) to experiment

Three areas of Identity exploration

Love

Important - How and why do adolescent romantic relationships differ from adult romantic relationships

Not only due to social pressures regarding roles, but also links to cognitive development

- increased ability to think about abstract concepts - like love

Work

A means of identity exploration for adolescents

(link to Marcia – Identity exploration/foreclosure?)

Identity exploration begins early - is an ongoing process that requires 'space'

Three areas of Identity exploration

Worldviews

Changing worldviews depend on:

- life experiences
- cognitive development

Young adolescents tend to share their parents' overall worldview

But life experiences(including further and higher education) starts the questioning and searching regarding a coherent worldview that is personally acceptable

Critique

Arnett emphasises the notion of stage-like progress in human development

- Influence of issues of social class?
- Cultural influences?

Adolescence as a life stage - almost universal in both Western and non-Western cultures

- Period in between adolescent and adulthood only existed in 20% of the cultures studied

Arnett does recognise that class, culture and other personal experiences play a part, but states a need for an 'emerging adulthood concept

Support for Arnett's concept

Jankowiak et al. (2025): Empirical, cross-cultural study (Spain, Portugal, Japan, Korea, Poland, USA).

- Identified *new developmental tasks* consistent with Arnett's claims about identity exploration (e.g., lifelong learning, building mental resilience).
- Confirmed that individuals aged 18–29 view themselves as “in-between,” aligning with Arnett's five defining features.
- Strong empirical support for EA as a distinct developmental period and its variation across cultures.

Mikhaylova (2024): Study review

- Positive associations between EA features (self-focus, identity exploration, feeling “in-between”) and educational trajectories.
- Studies across multiple countries show consistent **psychometric support** for IDEA as a measure of Arnett's five features of emerging adulthood.

Semelman, M. (2024): APA review of evidence

- Data on instability in love, work, and residence.
- Findings on identity exploration, optimism, and prolonged transitions to adulthood.
- Although a secondary source, it directly summarizes empirical research supporting the theory.

Reading

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