

Title page: Assessment 2: Bibliography & report

Module: Psychology in Health and Social Care

Module code: LCHS4010

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Contents page

Part A: Annotated bibliography	pp.3-5
Part B: Report	pp.6-8
Reference list	pp.9-10

Part A: Annotated Bibliography: Psychological Theories of Adult Development and Wellbeing in Care Homes

Source 1:

Chen, P.Y., Hsu, Y.L. and Tung, H.H. (2021) 'Predicting ego integrity in older adults: The role of earlier psychosocial development', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(18), pp. 9490–9502.

Chen *et al.* (2021) research investigates how ego integrity develops and how it relates to past psychosocial experiences. According to the study, people who effectively overcome early developmental obstacles like establishing meaningful relationships and accomplishing personal objective are more likely to have stable emotions and a fulfilling existence as they mature. Positive attitudes toward aging, increased acceptance of life circumstances, and enhanced psychological wellbeing are all associated with ego integrity. On the other hand, those who have unresolved issues may suffer from hopelessness and unfavourable thoughts about becoming older.

This study highlights how crucial meaningful interaction and emotional support are in assisted living facilities. Residents can reflect on their lives and preserve a strong sense of identity and wellbeing by engaging in activities like storytelling, group discussions, and life-history projects. Erikson's approach, in contrast to disengagement theory, emphasises psychological fulfilment and social connection, which supports contemporary care policies that support person centred, holistic care.

Source 2:

Cumming, E. and Henry, W.E. (1961) *Growing Old: The Process of Disengagement*. New York: Basic Books.

Disengagement theory was created by Cumming and Henry (1961) to explain the social elements of aging. According to the theory, people progressively distance themselves from societal roles and responsibilities as they get older. This disengagement is regarded as normal and advantageous, allowing younger generations to take on significant societal tasks

while helping elderly persons psychologically adapt to physical deterioration. As a result, disengagement is seen as an inevitable aspect of growing older.

Disengagement theory has been widely criticised for presenting social withdrawal as a normal part of ageing. In care homes, this perspective may encourage passive care practices and reduce opportunities for social interaction. Modern health and social care approaches instead emphasise **independence and active participation**, aligning more closely with activity theory, which promotes continued engagement to support wellbeing in later life.

Source 3:

Ejiri, M., Kawai, H. and Fujiwara, Y. (2022) 'Association of social disengagement with health status and mortality among older adults', *Scientific Reports*, 12(1), pp. 1–10.

Ejiri *et al.* (2022) investigate the impact of social disengagement on older individuals' health outcomes. According to their research, those who cut back on social interactions are more likely to have worse physical health, lower levels of wellbeing, and a higher risk of dying. According to the study, maintaining supportive relationships and social involvement is essential for good aging.

The importance of preventing social isolation in residential care settings is demonstrated by this study. Care facilities are increasingly using social events, group activities, and community engagement programs to improve the wellness of its residents. Charities like The Silver Line, a private helpline for lonely seniors, demonstrate how external support networks can improve care home services. Therefore, the study disproves the disengagement argument by showing that social involvement significantly improves health outcomes.

Source 4:

Malone, J.C., Liu, S.R., Vaillant, G.E., Rentz, D.M. and Waldinger, R.J. (2016) 'Midlife Eriksonian psychosocial development: Setting the stage for late-life cognitive and emotional health', *Developmental Psychology*, 52(3), pp. 496–508.

Malone *et al.* (2016) address Erikson's psychosocial theory of lifetime development and its consequences for emotional well-being in later life. According to Erikson, personality develops in eight phases over the course of a person's lifetime, each of which is marked by a psychological conflict that needs to be successfully resolved in order to promote healthy growth. The last step is ego integrity vs despair, which is especially pertinent to older adults. In this phase, people consider the purpose and meaning of their lives as well as their prior experiences. When ego integrity is attained, one feels fulfilled and accepted; when this conflict is not resolved, remorse and hopelessness may arise.

Ego integrity, which is linked to wisdom, psychological well-being, and acceptance of aging, is the outcome of successfully completing this stage. On the other hand, unsolved disputes might result in hopelessness, regret, and life unhappiness. The authors stress that connections, social positions, and significant accomplishments from earlier adulthood have a significant impact on psychological resilience and wellbeing in later life.

Erikson's theory is especially pertinent in assisted living facilities since many individuals think back on their experiences in later adulthood. Through life review treatments, reminiscence therapy, and tailored discussions on prior accomplishments, care home staff can assist residents in attaining ego integrity. These methods support older persons in preserving their sense of self and dignity. Erikson's stage model, however, may oversimplify the variety of aging experiences and fails to take into consideration societal aspects like health disparities and institutional living. Notwithstanding this drawback, the idea continues to have an impact on person centred care strategies applied in residential care environments.

Part B: Report

Introduction

Supporting psychological wellbeing is a key responsibility for health and social care professionals working in residential care homes for older adults. Residents often experience major life changes, including declining health, loss of independence, bereavement and moving into institutional care, which can affect identity, emotional stability and life satisfaction. Psychological theories of ageing help professionals understand these challenges and guide supportive care practices. One relevant framework is Erikson's psychosocial theory, particularly the final stage of **ego integrity versus despair**, which focuses on how older adults reflect on their life experiences and develop meaning and acceptance in later life. The concept of **life review** is closely linked to this stage, as Butler (1963) suggests that reflecting on past experiences allows older adults to reinterpret their lives and achieve psychological fulfilment.

This report explores how Erikson's theory can be applied to improve psychological wellbeing in residential care, using a case scenario and examining potential challenges professionals may face when implementing the theory.

Erikson's psychosocial theory proposes that development occurs across eight stages, each involving a psychological conflict that shapes emotional growth. The final stage, **ego integrity versus despair**, occurs in later adulthood when individuals evaluate whether their life experiences have been meaningful (Erikson, 1959). Achieving ego integrity is associated with acceptance and life satisfaction, whereas despair may lead to regret and negative perceptions of ageing.

Research shows that older adults with higher levels of ego integrity report greater psychological wellbeing and emotional stability (Lamers *et al.*, 2011). In contrast, those experiencing despair are more likely to show symptoms of depression, anxiety and social withdrawal (van der Kaap-Deeder *et al.*, 2021). Similarly, reflecting on life experiences can strengthen identity and resilience in later life (Westerhof, Bohlmeijer and McAdams, 2017). However, Erikson's theory has been criticised for oversimplifying the ageing process because it does not fully consider wider social influences such as health inequalities, cultural differences and institutional environments.

Case study example

Mrs. Williams, an 84-year-old resident, moved into a care home following the death of her husband and increasing mobility difficulties. After admission she appeared withdrawn, rarely participated in activities and often said her life had “lost its meaning”.

An activity coordinator introduced her to a weekly reminiscence group where residents shared memories using photographs and guided discussions. Mrs. Williams spoke about her career as a nurse and her community volunteering, and staff encouraged her to create a life story book highlighting her achievements.

Over time she became more socially engaged, developed friendships and began to speak more positively about her experiences. She was later invited to help welcome new residents, drawing on her caring background. This example shows how reminiscence activities can help residents reconnect with their identity and develop a sense of ego integrity.

Challenges

A key challenge when applying Erikson’s theory in residential care is limited time and staffing pressures. Care staff often prioritise essential physical care tasks such as medication administration, mobility support and personal hygiene assistance. Consequently, psychosocial interventions may receive less attention despite their importance for emotional wellbeing.

In addition, some residents may initially feel reluctant to discuss personal memories, particularly if they have experienced loss or trauma. Encouraging reflection therefore requires sensitive communication and an understanding of individual emotional needs.

Strategies to Overcome the Challenge

Incorporating memory techniques into routine care interactions instead of depending solely on scheduled sessions is one successful practice. Early research by Haight and Webster (1995) highlighted that reminiscence activities can help older adults maintain identity and emotional wellbeing by encouraging reflection on meaningful life experiences.

Strong research evidence supports this approach. A meta-analysis by Pinquart and Forstmeier (2012) found that reminiscence interventions significantly improved psychological wellbeing and reduced depressive symptoms among older adults. In later life, reminiscence also plays significant psychological roles, such as enhancing identity, preserving social ties, and assisting people in gaining significance from their prior experiences (Webster and McCall, 1999).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Erikson's psychosocial theory provides an important framework for understanding the emotional needs of older adults living in residential care. The idea of ego integrity focuses on how thinking back on life events can support people in gaining acceptance, preserving their identities, and finding psychological fulfilment in later life. Research indicates that strategies like life review exercises and reminiscence can be beneficial in promoting wellbeing by motivating residents to share memories, acknowledge accomplishments, and sustain deep social ties.

However, professionals must also recognise that ageing experiences are influenced by wider factors such as health status, social support and the care environment. For this reason, Erikson's theory should be applied alongside person-centred care approaches that respect each resident's individual history and needs. When implemented effectively, these strategies can help promote dignity, emotional resilience and improved psychological wellbeing among older adults living in residential care settings.

As a result, incorporating Erikson's theory into residential care procedures can contribute to the development of more encouraging settings that respect residents' life experiences, uphold their dignity, and improve their psychological welfare as they age.

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