

Name: Sophia Hinds

Student Number: 2435098

Module code: LCHS4010

Module: Psychology in Health and Social Care

Lecture name: Rizwan Nadin

Assignment Title: Assessment 2 Bibliography & report

Part A: Annotated Bibliography

Source 1

Orenstein, G. and Lewis, L. (2022). *Erikson's stages of psychosocial development*. National Library of Medicine. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK556096/> [Accessed 28 Mar. 2026].

Erikson sets out his eight-stage model of psychosocial development, each stage identified by a key conflict that must be explored for healthy psychological growth. The final stage, Integrity versus Despair, is particularly relevant to health and social care. Erikson argues that individuals in their later life engage in a reflective process of their lives, those who achieve a sense of meaning and acceptance of their lives develop ego integrity, whilst those who feel their life lacked a sense of purpose experience despair and deep regret. This theory emphasises that development is a lifelong process, and that social relationships and cultural context are important to the psychological outcomes people experience at every stage of their lives.

This source is foundational for any health and social care practitioners seeking to understand the psychological needs of older adults. In a residential care setting, Erikson's theory provides a valuable method through which to interpret patients' emotional and psychological states, especially feelings of regret, loss of purpose, or even the opposite, contentment, wisdom, and fulfilment. Relating to older adults, the theory encourages practitioners to see older adults as still actively engaged in meaningful psychological development rather than viewing their mental state as declining (Orenstein and Kaur, 2026).

Source 2

Syed, M. and McLean, K.C. (n.d) 'Erikson's theory of psychosocial development', in Braaten, E. and Willoughby, B. (eds.) *The SAGE encyclopedia of intellectual and developmental disorders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

This source allows a view on Erikson's theory that reveals that different stages of his theory can occur at any time. The Integrity vs Despair stage is seemingly focused on older adults, however this level of reflection and self-realisation can very well occur for younger adults (20 – 30 years old). It just appears more noticeable for older adults because of the perceived wisdom and experience gathered at such an older age. This simply falls to individual differences in cultural contexts, environments, personalities, and life experiences that

determine the intensity of these stages and how long they last. This relates to the developmental part of his theory, framing these stages as something that is always changing and never complete.

An older adult entering a health and social care setting will be faced with issues of autonomy and independence, relating to Erikson's theory, this means revisiting previous stages residents might have visited decades ago, such as intimacy vs isolation, industry vs inferiority, and autonomy vs shame and doubt. Syed and McLean's framing of Erikson's theory can help practitioners understand how to navigate the needs of older residents and knowing that their needs can be determined by simply knowing their age but knowing how the different stages have shaped the individual's life and responding to it accordingly.

Source 3

Cumming, E., Dean, L.R., Newell, D.S. and McCaffrey, I. (1960) 'Disengagement: a tentative theory of aging', *Sociometry*, 23(1), pp. 23–29.

The social disengagement theory suggests that as people age, there is a decline in their engagement with society, meaning fewer relationships, less involvement in social settings, minimising their social life. This theory frames this as something not to be taken negatively and is presented as older people taking steps back in the roles they play in society to let young people fulfil those empty roles. Naturally, as older people age, they retract themselves from society to find a sense of peace and contentment as they near the end of their lives.

This theory is crucial to older adults in a health and social care setting as this theory isn't applicable to everyone and residents may still wish to actively engage with society and the people around them, savouring the many relationships they've built throughout their lives. The understand of this theory may be weaponised and used as a means of discarding older adults in care, treating their mortality as an excuse to not try to social engage them. This would especially be in apparent in the residents that have mental illnesses, going through trouble times like bereavement and were therefore forced out of social settings due to circumstances.

Source 4

Havighurst, R.J., Neugarten, B.L. and Tobin, S.S. (1968) 'Disengagement and patterns of aging', in Neugarten, B.L. (ed.) *Middle age and aging*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 161–172.

The chapter of this book aims to challenge the views of the social disengagement theory presented by Cumming and Henry. This chapter highlights the idea that older adults tend to be more satisfied and happier when they remained active and socially engaged with the people around them and society in general. The authors argue that older adults that have diverse patterns of social engagement, and that maintaining meaningful roles in society and relationships relates to higher morale and life satisfaction, these understanding forms their counter theory to social disengagement, the 'Activity Theory'.

This chapter is directly relevant to health and social care settings as it encourages activity-based and social engagement strategies in care. Practitioners can push for more contemporary care practices, including group activities, social events, and volunteering programmes within care homes. The activity theory may not be completely applicable when you consider individual needs and personalities, and capabilities, not all residents wish to remain highly active, and the quality of the engagement provided matters more than quantity. But, overall, a push for social engagement seems more suitable for a health and social care setting than social withdrawal that is labelled as something natural and necessary.

Part B: Short Report

Applying Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development to Support Psychological Wellbeing in Older Adults Living in Residential Care

1. Introduction

This report aims to utilise Erikson's theory of psychosocial development for the betterment of the psychological wellbeing in older adults living in residential care. With the focus of his eighth stage Integrity vs Despair, a crucial stage for individuals who feel they are nearing their end and begin to question the events of their lives and reflect on the experiences they had and didn't have up until this point. Using this angle, we can generate an appropriate case scenario to demonstrate how this theory can be applied and used to create a strategy to address this challenge.

2. Applying Erikson's Theory to Residential Care

Erik Erikson (1963) suggests that human development progresses through eight psychosocial stages, each with a key psychological conflict. The final stage is Integrity versus Despair is most relevant to older adulthood and applicable to a care home practice. This is a period of reflection, with individuals recalling and making sense of the experiences they had throughout their lives. Those who have achieved a sense of meaning, contentment, and acceptance gain ego integrity, however those who feel their life was wasted or never had purpose experience despair, naturally this progresses into depression, deep regret for the life they could've lived, or resentment.

In a care home setting, this is most likely the stage many residents will be at in their development, this can be driven by the change of now being in a care home. This is guaranteed to trigger some sort of reflection on their mortality and their past up until this moment. Practitioners who understand this theory and this stage specifically can better interpret and understand the residents' emotional and psychological state and create interactions and activities that actively encourages the residents to focus on integrity rather than despair.

Practical applications of Erikson's theory in residential care include:

- Life review and reminiscence: Opportunities for residents to narrate and reflect on their own history and recount the things they have been through, this helps create a narrative that is meaningful and can invoke some sort of purpose (Psychology.Town, 2024).

- Centred conversations: Giving residents the space and environment to tell stories of their lives can help create sense of their lives. Care workers who listen actively to residents' stories affirm the value of themselves and their experiences (Abbasi et al., 2024).
- Maintaining roles and purpose: Creating activities that are role oriented can help with social integration, maybe speaking to younger people who may be seeking wisdom can provide them with purpose.

3. Case Scenario

Margaret who is 80 years old has moved into a residential care home 8 months ago following a bad fall down the stairs that has greatly affected her mobility. Before moving to this care home, she was a primary school teacher (year 2 children) for almost 40 years, being an active member of her community often reading to her students and just being heavily involved in the lives of her many students and their parents. Since her admission to the care home, staff have noticed that Margaret seems withdrawn and often isolates herself, she expressed her life being over and avoids socialising with other residents.

Applying Erikson's theory here, the care team have recognised Margaret is at the Intensity vs Despair stage of her development and is slowly losing her sense of meaning, leaning towards despair. She has lost her fulfilling job and her independence, and the lack of the community she was so actively involved in feels lost.

To help her key worker has introduced an activity, a reflective activity, in which Margaret can share some of her key experiences with the children she taught over the years. She was also encouraged to bring anything physical she can use to remind her of her teaching days, like photos, or drawings the children she taught made for her. All these were documented and shared with the care team, a wholesome moment that helped her recognise the impact she had on the lives of all these children over the years. To further help, the care team has contacted the school she worked out to allow the children she once taught to schedule periodic visits and reading sessions to rekindle her sense of purpose and value to the children.

The results were huge with a significant boost in Margaret's overall mood and social engagement with other residents. Observing her interactions you can see how the care and kindness that she has shown to these children for many years has translated to her fellow residents. She now has established a little reading group amongst them where residents are often gathered around her to listen to her read and tell all sorts of fun stories of her

experiences as a primary school teacher, she has also created an environment for other residents to tell their stories too.

This scenario demonstrates how understanding Erikson's theory enables health and social care practitioners to move beyond simply trying to manage low moods in a care home and instead address the hidden psychological developmental needs of older residents.

4. Challenge and Strategy

Challenge: Time and Workload Constraints

Trying to apply this theory in a care setting requires a lot of time, and careful planning that may be difficult to maintain in such a busy and demanding environment. Care workers have high workloads that limit these opportunities for deep dives into the psychological developmental needs of residents, limiting the level of engagement required for this theory to work effectively. The needs of residents aren't always as simple as the one presented in the case scenario, so this introduces a level of complexity that can be hard to navigate around in care setting, especially if they are heavily overworked and understaffed.

Strategy: Embedding Life Review into Routine Care

A strategy to this maybe to incorporate the theory in existing care routines, finding ways time manage effectively means that a life review opportunity is possible if included appropriately. There are many opportunities in care routines such as mealtimes, daily activities, personal care routines where centred conversations about the resident's history can be brought up sparingly to make them feel valued and their experiences have meaning, even if it is for 5 to 10 minutes. The time will accumulate if this is done effectively across their daily routines.

Care homes have a standard for effective communication with colleagues but also residents, meaning having these conversations with residents is already somewhat encouraged, so more focus on this and using the Erikson's theory as guide can increase contributions to responding to the developmental needs of residents.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, Erikson's theory gives health and social care practitioners a good tool to understand the psychological wellbeing of older adults in a residential care home. By recognising that older adults can experience stages like integrity vs despair at different

intensities, care professionals can navigate their needs and tailor their care and support effectively. While challenges like time management and constraints exist in this high intensity space, reflecting on this theory can help form strategies to help combat it.

References

Abbasi, M., Radfar, M., Hossein Jafarizadeh and Hamidreza Khalkhali (2024). Does life story work based on Erikson's theory enhance psychological well-being in elderly residents of nursing homes? A randomized controlled trial. *Geriatric Nursing*, 61(61), pp.140–148. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gerinurse.2024.10.066>.

Cumming, E., Dean, L.R., Newell, D.S. and McCaffrey, I. (1960) 'Disengagement: a tentative theory of aging', *Sociometry*, 23(1), pp. 23–29.

Erikson, E.H. (1963) *Childhood and society*. 2nd edn. New York: Norton.

Havighurst, R.J., Neugarten, B.L. and Tobin, S.S. (1968) 'Disengagement and patterns of aging', in Neugarten, B.L. (ed.) *Middle age and aging*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 161–172.

Orenstein, G. and Lewis, L. (2022). *Erikson's stages of psychosocial development*. [online] National Library of Medicine. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK556096/> [Accessed 28 Mar. 2026].

Psychology.Town (2024). *Embracing Integrity vs. Despair in Later Adulthood • Psychology Town*. [online] Psychology Town. Available at: <https://psychology.town/developmental/embracing-integrity-despair-later-adulthood/> [Accessed 28 Mar. 2026].

Syed, M. and McLean, K.C. (n.d) 'Erikson's theory of psychosocial development', in Braaten, E. and Willoughby, B. (eds.) *The SAGE encyclopedia of intellectual and developmental disorders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.