



PSYCHOLOGY IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

- LCHS4010
- ASSESSMENT 1 INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATION
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INTRODUCTION

Good Morning, Everyone.

My name is Jeckelline Ferretti, and today I will be talking about the case of Jenny, a sixteen years old girl, whose life changed at a very young age. After the passing of her father five years ago, Jenny took on a role no child should have to carry alone, becoming the primary caregiver for her mother. Her mother struggles with mobility issue and memory loss, which means she's unable to manage many everyday tasks on her own. As a result, Jenny is responsible for cooking meals, attending clinic visits, and doing the household shopping, all while still trying to live a normal teenage life.

In this presentation, I will discuss:

- Jenny's daily responsibility and challenges
- The emotional and physical impact of caregiving at such a young age
- Why stories like Jenny's are important to recognize and understand.
- And I will explain Jenny's situation focusing on **Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory**.

By applying this theory to Jenny's case, we can better understand the psychological challenges she may face and why appropriate support is essential for young caregivers like her.

OVERVIEW OF ERIKSON'S THEORY

Erikson's theory of psychological development suggests that human growth happens in eight stages over a person's life, starting from infancy and continuing into old age. Each stage is characterized by a psychological conflict that emerges from the interaction between a person's psychological needs and their social surroundings (Erikson, 1950).

Successfully getting through each stage helps build positive psychological strengths, called virtues, but if conflicts are not resolved, it can lead to emotional or social problems later-on in life (McLeod, 2018).

Key concepts and points of the theory one of the main points is that personality develops through social interactions. In contrast to previous theories that mainly concentrated on biological or unconscious motivations, Erikson highlighted the significance of social experiences, relationships, and expectations throughout various life stages. (Shaffer and Kipp, 2014).

Every stage brings a problem or a challenge that needs to be dealt with. These problems aren't just random occurrences; they are ongoing issues that influence growth. Erikson thought that people might go back to unresolved stages later in life, especially during times of stress or transition. (Erikson, 1968).

Another important concept is that development takes place in a predeterminate sequence, indicating that stages cannot be bypassed. However, the results of each stage are on a spectrum, instead of being just successful or unsuccessful.(McLeod, 2018).

OVERVIEW OF ERIKSON'S THEORY

Identity in Erikson's Theory

Identity is a key idea in Erikson's work, especially during the teenage years, which he describes as the stage of identity versus role confusion. Identity means a person's sense of self, which includes their values, beliefs, and goals. Additionally involves recognizing their place within society, (Erikson, 1968).

During their teenage years, people try out various roles and options to build a solid identity. Erikson believed that this exploration is crucial for proper psychological growth. If adolescents are unable to explore due to pressure, insufficient support or overwhelming responsibilities, they may face role confusion, resulting in uncertainty regarding their future and self identity.



Fundamental ideas in Erikson's theory

- **Psychosocial crisis**, represents the main struggle at every stage of development, featuring conflicting forces like trust against mistrust or identity against role confusion. How this conflict gets resolved plays a significant role in shaping personality development (Erikson 1950).
- **Ego identity**, refers to the awareness of oneself that grows through social interactions. It gives a feeling of consistency and stability over time and in different situations (Erikson, 1968).
- **Role confusion**, arise when a person finds it challenging to establish a distinct identity, frequently as a result of contradictory expectations or restricted chances for exploration. This can lead to feelings of insecurity and diminished self-esteem (McLeod, 2018).
- **Identity foreclosure**, Happens when a person takes on a role or identity without really looking into it, usually because of outside pressure or obligations. Marcia (1966) later built on this idea according to Erikson work.
- **Virtues**, are beneficial psychological strengths acquired by effectively navigating each stage, including hope, will, purpose, and fidelity. These virtues play a key role in enhancing our overall emotional resilience (Erikson, 1968).

Erikson's Psychological Theory and Jenny's Experience.

Industry vs. Inferiority (6-12 years)

- Jenny became a caregiver at 11 years old.
- Gained responsibility and practical skills builds competence.
- Missed normal childhood experience, risk of low self esteem or feeling different.

Identity vs. Role Confusion (12-18 years)

- At 16, she should be exploring identity and independence.
- Her identity may revolve around being a care giver.
- Limited social life, possible role confusion and isolation.

Impact on Well- being

- High stress and emotional burden.
- Risk of burnout and anxiety.
- But also increased maturity, resilience, and empathy.



Practical strategies to support Jenny linked to Erikson's theory.

Young carers support services, strategy

- Refer Jenny to a young careers program for emotional support, peer groups, and practical advice.

Professionals/ Agencies involved:

- Social workers, young carers charities, Community support organisations, school safeguarding team.
- Supports Identity vs Role confusion by allowing Jenny to connect with peers in similar situations.
- Reduces isolation and helps her see she is more than just a caregiver.
- Strengthens positive identity development.

Respite care for her mother:

- Arrange regular respite care (temporary professional care for her mother).
- Community nurses, Home care workers, Adult social services, Occupational therapists.

- Gives Jenny time to experience normal teenage activities.
- Supports healthy resolution of Identity vs Role Confusion by allowing identity exploration.
- Reduce stress, preventing negative impact on self-esteem.

School-Based support

- School counsellor, Teachers, School Safeguarding lead, Educational Psychologist

Linked to Erikson: Support industry vs inferiority, by helping Jenny maintain academic success.

Individual Counselling/ Therapy

- Provide access to adolescent counselling or therapy.
- Mental health counsellor
- Child and adolescent psychologist
- CAMHS (child and adolescent Mental Health Services)

Practical Home Support (Agency involved)

- Social services, Occupational therapy services, Welfare support agency.

Linked to Erikson: Reduces caregiving burden and allow Jenny to balance responsibilities with age-appropriate development.

Nature vs Nurture

Environmental influences (the influence of nurture)

- Jenny's father's death is an environmental trauma that disrupts her emotional security.
- Becoming her mother's caregiver forces early maturity (parentification).
- Constant stress and responsibility increase risks of anxiety, exhaustions, and suppressed emotions.
- Lack of normal teenage experiences affects her identity and social development.

Biological influences (the influence of nature)

- Jenny may inherit biological traits such as resilient, sensitivity, or vulnerability to anxiety/depression from her parents.
- Her temperament (naturally calm or emotionally reactive) affect how she copes with stress.
- Biological factors may shape her energy levels and ability to handle long-term stress.
- Genetics predisposition can influence her risk of mental health disorders under pressure.

Evaluation

- Helps Identify teens who are biologically vulnerable to anxiety and depression or in this case physical issue like mobility problem or memory loss.
- Supports the use of medical treatments when needed.
- Encourages early support for those at higher biological risk.
- Allows support to be tailored to the individual (based in temperament and mental health needs).

Weakness/limitations

- She was forced into adult responsibilities too early, limiting identity exploration.
- The theory does not account well for grief, trauma, and long-term stress from caregiving.
- It assumes stages occur in a fixed order, but her life circumstances disrupted this process.
- It overlooks emotional conflicts like guilt, resentment, and burnout.
- It does not fully consider social and economic pressures that left her little choice but to become a caregiver.

Alternative theory, the Piaget's theory.

- Cognitive development is shaped by experience and environment not just age.
- Jenny's caregiving role likely made her more mature and practical in her thinking.
- She had to adapt her thinking (accommodation) to cope with adult responsibilities.
- Stress and responsibility may limit her chances to use abstract thinking in school and social life.
- Development can differ between individuals based on life experiences.

Piaget's theory is useful because Jenny's environment and responsibilities may have changed how she thinks and solves problem compared to other teenagers.

Piaget suggested that children go through stages of cognitive development as they grow. (Piaget, 1952).

Cognitive growth happens through the processes of assimilation and accommodation. (Piaget, 1972).



Conclusion.

Today I have been talking about Jenny's situation, a sixteen years old girl, who's been taking care of her mother for the past five years, and how different theories help explain her development. Using Erikson's theory, Jenny may struggle with her identity because she had to take on adult responsibilities instead of enjoying a normal teenage life. This could lead to stress, confusion about who she is, and emotional difficulties. Jean Piaget's theory shows that Jenny's thinking may have become more mature and practical because of her experiences as a carer.

These Theories show while Jenny has developed responsibilities and coping skills, her difficult life circumstances may also affect her emotional wellbeing and future development.

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