



Adolescence

- ▶ Development continues throughout the lifespan
- ▶ We face different challenges and milestones at different stages of life

e.g.

- How and when we develop a “sense of self”
- How and when we develop morals
- Is adolescence always a time of “storm and stress”?
- How we cope with old age – e.g. cognitive decline & bereavement?

G Stanley Hall (1844-1924)

- ▶ First 'psychology of adolescence' through scientific methods
- ▶ Puberty (12 or 13 years) until 22 - 25 years of age

▶ Adolescence:

- a period of storm and stress
- a new birth

"for the higher and more completely human traits are now born"
(Hall, 1916, xiii)

- ▶ 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

Freud: **Psychosexual** theory of development

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

Oral , Anal, Phallic, Latency, Genital stages of development

Adolescence: Genital stage

Central task of adolescence:

To break close emotional ties
to parents

Individuation:

Involves a differentiation of the
person's feelings, judgements,
behaviours and thoughts from
those of the parents

Freud

Biological changes = beginning of move into young adulthood

Earlier developmental periods culminate in genital primacy
(reproduction)

Unresolved conflicts re-emerge – can regress to an earlier stage

e.g. Oral: overeating, sucking thumb, chewing pens

Anal: excessive cleanliness/tidiness

Puberty - resurgence of Oedipal fantasies that must be overcome

Can only establish healthy adult relationships if resolve these conflicts

Peter Blos (1962, 1989) - argues regression an integral part of puberty

- struggles within the family at this stage are related to unresolved conflicts and the nature of regression will vary between adolescents

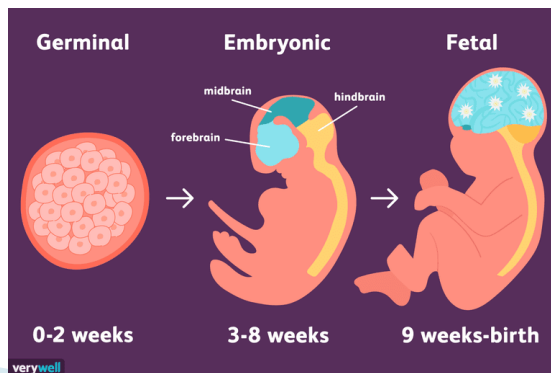
Erik Erikson: Theory of **Psychosocial** development

Theory of psychosocial development which spans birth to death

A Freudian approach but psychosexual framework is de-emphasised

Importance of culture and society

Key developmental aim – formation of a healthy identity



Epigenetic principle

- Anything that grows has a plan
- Parts arise when they are meant to
- Each part has a role to play in the development of the whole

Erikson

Believed that all humans pass through a **genetically determined** sequence of **psychosocial stages**

- These stages are present at birth but latent (innate)
- Unfold in relation to both an innate scheme and one's family and cultural influence

Eight stages span the whole lifespan

- Each stage involves a struggle between two conflicting outcomes

Positive outcome

Person is ready for the next stage

Negative outcome

Normal development is inhibited

next stage is unlikely to be resolved positively

- However – although an inability to resolve a conflict at a particular stage may mean “struggle” in later stages...
- The outcome of one stage is not permanent, but can be altered by later experiences

Erikson (1963) - 8 Psychosocial Stages of Development

1	Trust vs Mistrust	Birth-1 year
2	Autonomy vs Shame/doubt	1-3 years
3	Initiative vs Guilt	3-6 years
4	Industry vs Inferiority (diffusion)	6-11 years
5	Identity vs Confusion	Adolescence
6	Intimacy vs Isolation	Young adulthood
7	Generativity vs Stagnation	Middle adulthood
8	Ego integrity vs Despair	Old age

Erikson's 8 Psychosocial stages of development

1	Trust vs Mistrust	Birth-1 year	Trust comes from warm responsive care, mistrust when have to wait too long for comfort or handled harshly
2	Autonomy vs Shame/doubt	1-3 years	Child's mental and motor skills develop. Autonomy is fostered when parents permit reasonable free choice and do not force the child

Erikson's 8 Psychosocial stages of development

3	Initiative vs Guilt	3-6 years	Child engages in make believe play. This allows them to experiment with who they can become. Initiative (ambition and responsibility) develop when parents support this new sense of purpose. Demanding too much self control can lead to over control / guilt
4	Industry vs Inferiority (diffusion)	6-11 years	School children learn to work and cooperate with others. Inferiority develops when negative home, school or peer experiences lead to feelings of incompetence

Erikson's 8 Psychosocial stages of development

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.

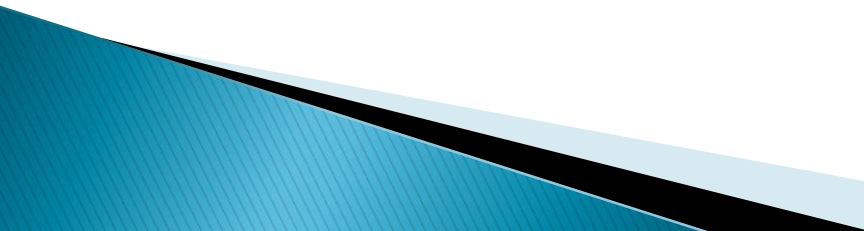
Including brain development.

6	Intimacy vs Isolation	Young adulthood	Ability to form close relationships with others. Can be effected by earlier stages.
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Erikson's 8 Psychosocial stages of development

7	Generativity vs Stagnation	Middle adulthood	Generativity means giving to the next generation through child rearing, caring, productive work. Failing in these means absence of meaningful accomplishment.
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8	Ego integrity vs Despair	Old age	Reflection on their personality. Integrity means satisfaction with their lives, despair comes from dissatisfaction and fear of death.
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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

- Expanded Erikson's adolescent stage
- Adolescent either develops an identity or experiences a negative outcome
 - Should consider different understandings of 'adolescence'?
 - Should consider date of research
- Study:
 - College-age males in U.S.
 - Identified 4 forms of identity development...

Crisis

No Crisis

Commitment
Made

Identity achieved

Adult-like acceptance of
social, religious,
political or vocational
alternatives

Foreclosure

Commitment
predetermined by
political, social or
religious affiliation

Marcia's four stages of
adolescent development
based on Crisis and
Commitment

No
Commitment

Moratorium

Period of exploration of
alternatives

Identity diffusion

Ambiguous beliefs no
vocational commitment

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 Erikson and Marcia

Young people who actively explore their identity have higher self esteem, are more likely to engage in critical thinking and report greater similarity between their real self and their ideal self

(Marcia et al, 1993)

Adolescents who are stuck in foreclosure tend to be dogmatic, inflexible, intolerant, fearful of rejection (rejected foreclosed adolescents are often recruited to cults)

(Kroger, 1995)

Long-term diffused teenagers are less mature and tend to go along with the crowd, often resulting in academic difficulties

(Berzonsky and Kuk, 2000)

Criticisms of Erikson's theory:

Gender-specific

Fails to fully address female identity development

In what ways does it fail?

Era-specific

Descriptions of the crisis periods

Explain

'Youth' now includes the early twenties - but in the 50s and 60s early 20s was adulthood

Culture specific

Discuss



15 minutes

Adolescence: A time of storm & stress?

► Puberty

A period of rapid maturation in which the person becomes capable of sexual reproduction

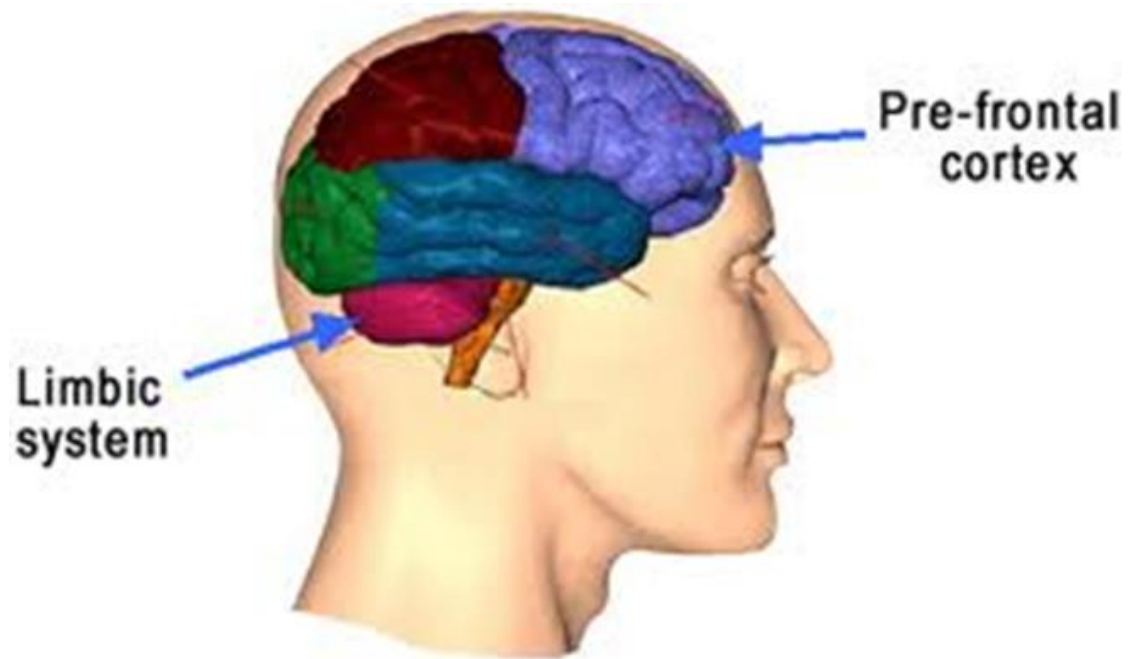
- Puberty is a biologically defined period
- Adolescence is a broader social construction
- Hence differences in estimations of age range for adolescence

Puberty

- Pituitary hormones stimulate glands, speeding up maturity
- Hormones can affect mood and behaviour
- Early maturation is generally more positive for boys than for girls
- Brain growth slows from childhood to adolescence



- Neural networks are streamlined, especially in prefrontal cortex and limbic system
- Regulates planning and coordinating behaviours



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 to see which of these inferences are confirmed in the real world

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 and The Developing Sense of Self

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

Critique of 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

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

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

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: Adolescence

- ▶ 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

Transition to Adulthood



When do we become adults?

Home culture and legal system e.g.

Bar Mitzvah: "Son of the commandments"

2006 – David Cameron

18-years-olds would pass through a formal "rite of passage", marking the transition from childhood to adulthood, under plans being considered by the Conservatives. ...

David Cameron outlined the plans as he launched pilot courses run by the Young Adult Trust to help teenagers to learn about becoming adults.

The Times, 31 Oct 2006



- Many cultural concepts of adulthood
- Many less formal rites of passage



Late teens and early twenties: a happy time?

- ▶ 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

- Robbins and Wilner, (2001, p89)

Incorrect to state overwhelming helplessness, apprehension, hopelessness etc. These are 'hardly abnormal'

- ▶ 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

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 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 explorations:

‘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

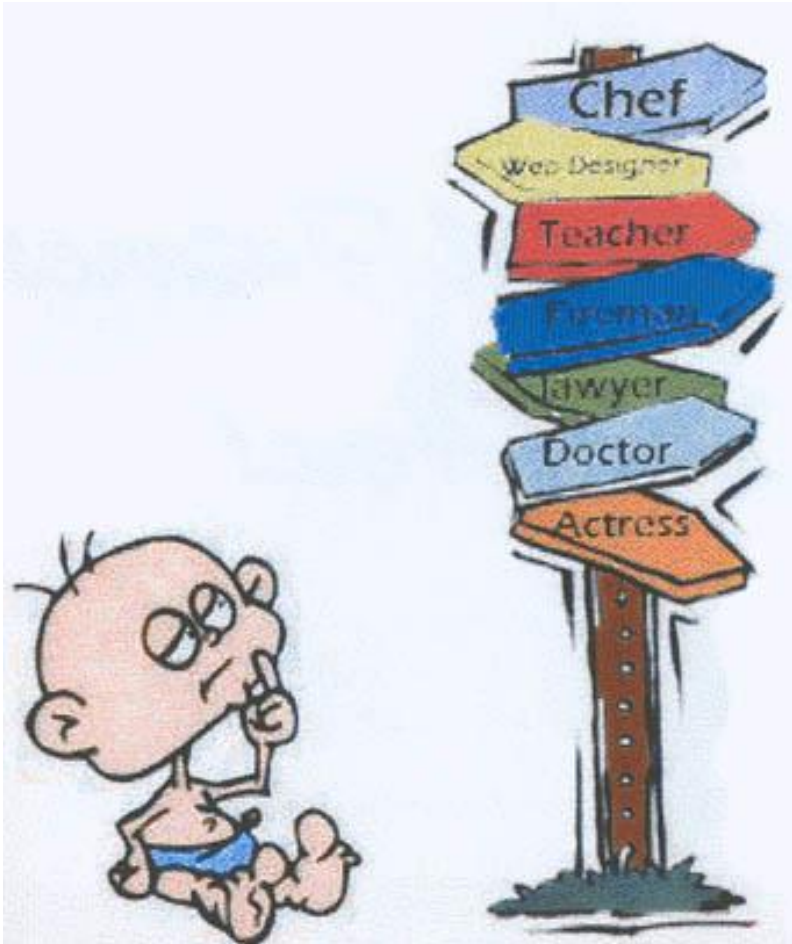


Not only due to social pressures regarding roles, but also links to cognitive development

- increased ability to think about abstract concepts – like love

(link to Piaget?)





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'



- ▶ 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

(Perry, 1970/1999)

Critique:

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

Influence of issues of social class?

Cultural influences?

Schlegel and Barry (1991):

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

But – period in between adolescent and adulthood only existed in 20% of the cultures studied

Arnett does recognise that class, culture and other personal experience plays a part but stresses need for concept 'emerging adulthood'

Might we need to stop thinking of adolescence and adulthood as a single dichotomy during the early few decades of life?

Reading

- Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development From the Late Teens Through the Twenties. *American Psychologist*, Vol.55 (5), 469–480.
- Arnett, J. J. (2001). Conceptions of the Transition to Adulthood: Perspectives from Adolescence Through Midlife. *Journal of Adult Development*, Vol. 8 (2), 133–143.
- Arnett, J. J. (2007). Suffering, Selfish, Slackers? Myths and Reality about Emerging Adults. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, Vol.36, 23–29.
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- Kins, E., Beyers, W, Soenens, B., Vansteenkiste, M. (2009). Patterns of Home Leaving and Subjective Well-being in Emerging Adulthood: The Role of Motivational Processes and Parental Autonomy Support. *Developmental Psychology*, Vol.45 (5), 1416–1429.
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