Adult Developmental/Life Stage Theories of Aging

Several theories of Adult development
- Jung, Levinson, Gail Sheehy and Robert Butler
- Focus on Erikson

Study of adult development theories is relatively recent
- Probably no single theory adequately explains the aging process

Aging is a complex process involving biological, psychological, social and environmental factors.
- How a person adapts to aging is a very individualized process

Erikson’s Eight Stages of Man
- Sequential maturation
- occurs according to a biological time pattern
- eight basic strengths emerge as we go through life
- each stage is the outgrowth of a time specific developmental confrontation.

We have to keep in mind that the age ranges that Erikson proposed for his theory may have changed somewhat for some of the tasks or strengths that need to be accomplished in today’s climate

Each stage includes a psychosocial crisis whose goal is to integrate both physical maturation and societal demands.
- Each step forward involves a disconnection with previous ways of thinking about the self and less of the comfort associated with a person’s sense of self.
- Each psychosocial crisis creates anxiety

1. Trust vs. Mistrust
(0-1 year)
- The child develops trust in himself and the world if his needs are tended to.
- He develops a sense of Hope
2. Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt (1-3 years)
- The child develops free choice and impulse control.
- He masters dressing, toileting etc. unless his parents undermine his development.
- He develops a sense of Willpower.

3. Initiative vs. Guilt
(3-6 years)
- The child joins with others to cooperate, accepts responsibility and is enthusiastic about helping.
- The child develops a sense of Purpose.

4. Industry vs. Inferiority
(7-11 years)
- The focus is the learning and mastery of skills in academic an social pursuits.
- If the child fails he will feel inferior.
- The child develops a sense of Competence.

5. Identity vs. Role Confusion
(12-18 years)
- Self identity should occur which leads to making long term goals, occupational choices and fitting into society.
- Failure to develop self-identity leads to lack of self confidence and alienation.
- The individual should develop a sense of self.

6. Intimacy Vs. Isolation
(18-21 to 40 years)
- The individual develops a close, sharing relationship that may include a sexual partner.
- The person who is unwilling to share or is unsure of self-identity may have difficulty developing relationships and may be lonely.
- The individual should develop a sense of Belonging.

7. Generativity vs. Stagnation
(40-60 years)
- Involvement with the guidance and establishment of future generations
- Movement away from self-concern and self-indulgence and towards the welfare of those who follow.
- The individual should develop a sense of Caring, Concern and Nurturance for the next generation.

8. Ego Integrity vs. Despair
(65 years to death)
- Acceptance of life and death
- Feelings of a life well lived without regrets
- A review of one's accomplishments

The Remaining Stages Are Adult Developmental Stages
- Despair for those who feel that they have not had a meaningful life.
- If successful in this stage the individual will have a sense of **Satisfaction and Acceptance**.

18 ❙ Ego Integrity

19 ❙ Despair

20 ❙ Summary

- Throughout the stages, if successful coping strategies are developed to reduce anxiety, stress will be decreased and the individual will gain new ways of coping and interacting with the world.
- A positive self concept will develop.
- Erikson’s theory is hopeful in that a person has the potential to rework a previous psychosocial stage in a more satisfying way.