Invitation to the Life Span
by Kathleen Stassen Berger

Chapter 11 – Emerging Adulthood
Body, Mind, and Social World

PowerPoint Slides developed by
Martin Wolfger and Michael James
Ivy Tech Community College-Bloomington
Emerging Adulthood

– The period between the ages of 18 and 25, which is now widely thought of as a separate developmental stage.
– Also called young adulthood or youth.
Cultural and National Differences

Strong and Healthy Bodies

- Emerging adults are usually in good health.
- Traditionally, the years between ages 18 and 25 were a time for hard physical work and childbearing.
- Physical work and parenthood are no longer expected of every young adult in the twenty-first century.
Cultural and National Differences

– The current level of food availability means that in almost every nation, emerging adults have reached full height (girls usually by age 16, boys by age 18).

– For both sexes, muscle growth and fat accumulation continue into the early 20s, when women attain adult breast and hip size and men reach full shoulder width and upper-arm strength.
Cultural and National Differences

– By age 20, the immune system has developed well enough to fight off everything from the sniffles to cancer.

– Usually, blood pressure is normal, teeth develop no new cavities, heart rate is steady, the brain is fully grown (by the end of emerging adulthood, about age 25), and lung capacity is as large as it will ever be.

– Death from disease almost never occurs during emerging adulthood.
## Cultural and National Differences

**TABLE 11.1**
U.S. Deaths from the Top Four Diseases, by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Annual Rate per 100,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15–24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–44</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–54</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–64</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65–74</td>
<td>1,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75–84</td>
<td>3,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>8,981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: National Center for Health Statistics, 2007.*
Cultural and National Differences

define: homeostasis

– The adjustment of all the body’s systems to keep physiological functions in a state of equilibrium.

– As the body ages, it takes longer for these adjustments to occur, so it becomes harder for older bodies to adapt to stress.

– Good nutrition and exercise underlie health at every age.
Cultural and National Differences

Sex and Reproduction

– The sexual-reproductive system is especially vigorous during emerging adulthood.
– The sex drive is powerful, infertility is rare, orgasm is frequent, and birth is easy, with fewer complications in the early 20s than at any other time.
– Optimal functioning of the Sexual-reproductive system in emerging adulthood are produced by sex hormones, which peak in both sexes at about age 20.
Cultural and National Differences

– With frequent intercourse and **without contraception**, the average woman in her early 20s becomes pregnant within three months.

– Globalization, advanced technology, and modern medicine have combined to produce effective contraception, available in almost every nation.

– Since **fewer infants die** now, people **no longer** need to begin childbearing **before age 20** or to have **four or more children** simply to ensure that some of their children **will survive**.

– Once the connection between over population and poverty was widely recognized, **the social construct** changed and family size has shrunk world wide
Cultural and National Differences

replacement rate

– The number of births per woman that would be required to maintain a nation’s (or the world’s) population with no increases or decreases.

– The current replacement rate is considered to be about 2.1 births per woman.

– Birth rates have declined the world over, with developing as well as developed nations recording lower fertility rates.
Cultural and National Differences

– Advances in contraception have also increased the rate of sexual activity, especially among unmarried adults.
– Globally, emerging adults have fewer babies but engage in more sexual activity than older adults (married or not) do or than people their own age once did.
– **Half (approximately 50%)** of all emerging adults in the United States have had **at least one sexually transmitted infection (disease, STD) (STI).**
Cultural and National Differences

Taking Risks

– Emerging adulthood is marked by a greater willingness to take risks of all sorts, not just sexual ones.

– Young adults enjoy danger, drive without seat belts, carry guns, try addictive drugs, etc.
Cultural and National Differences

**edgework**

– Occupations, recreational activities, or other ventures that involve a degree of risk or danger (Know definition!)

– The prospect of “living on the edge” makes edgework compelling to some individuals.

– **extreme sports** - Forms of recreation that include apparent risk of injury or death and that are attractive and thrilling as a result.
Cultural and National Differences

**drug abuse**

– The ingestion of a drug to the extent that it impairs the user’s biological or psychological well-being.

*Recurrent drug (including alcohol) use that results in disruption of academic, social, or occupational functioning, or in legal or psychological problems.*

**drug addiction**

– It is a broad term that refers to a condition in which a person feels psychologically and physically compelled to take a specific drug. tolerance, physical & psychological dependence*, withdrawal, rebound effect Obsession, cravings.
Cultural and National Differences

Drug Use in the Past 30 Days Reported by U.S. Adolescents and Emerging Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Type</th>
<th>Eighth-graders</th>
<th>Tenth-graders</th>
<th>Twelfth-graders</th>
<th>Emerging adults (ages 19–25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used any illicit drug</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoked marijuana</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoked cigarettes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got drunk</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Johnston et al., 2007.
Cultural and National Differences

– Drug abuse is particularly common among those who die violently.

– In the United States, between the ages of 15 and 25, almost 1 male in every 100 dies violently, through suicide, homicide, or a motor-vehicle accident.

– About 4 times as many young men as young women commit suicide or die in motor-vehicle accidents, and 6 times as many are murdered.
FIGURE 11.4 A Dangerous Time for Young Americans: This graph shows the rates of violent death by ethnic category among Americans aged 15 to 24. Ethnic differences have narrowed over the past decade, but they are still readily apparent. Emerging adulthood is the peak period for all forms of violent death except suicide, which has higher rates among older White males and older Asian females than among young adults.

Violent Death from Ages 15 to 24, by Ethnic Category, United States, 2005

Annual death rate per 100,000 young adult Americans

Source: National Center for Health Statistics [updated, February 2007].
FIGURE 11.5 A Dangerous Time for Young People Worldwide This graph shows the rates of violent death among young adults in selected countries. Worldwide data take years to gather; most of these nations have reduced violent deaths over the last decade.

Young Adult Mortality from Three Causes of Violent Death, Selected Countries

Source: Heuveline, 2002.
Cultural and National Differences

social norms approach

- A method of reducing risky behavior among emerging adults that is based on their desire to follow social norms.

- This approach publicizes survey results to make emerging adults aware of the actual prevalence of various behaviors within their peer group.
Cognitive Maturity

• Informed by Experience
  – Labouvie-Vief investigated age differences in the way people described themselves.
  – These self-descriptions were categorized as follows:
    - **Self-protective** *(high in self-involvement, low in self-doubt)*
    - **Dysregulated** *(fragmented, overwhelmed by emotions or problems)*
    - **Complex** *(valuing openness and independence above all)*
    - **Integrated** *(able to regulate emotions and logic)*
Cognitive Maturity

– No one under age 20 had reached the advanced “integrated” stage, but some adults of every age had.
– The largest shift in self-description toward higher levels occurred between adolescence and emerging adulthood.
Cognitive Maturity

Participants’ Self-Descriptions, by Category and by Age Group

Percent

Age group (in years)

11–15
15–20
20–30
30–45
45–60
60–70
70–85

Category

Self-protective (lowest level)
Complex
Dysregulated
Integrated

Cognitive Maturity

stereotype threat

– The fear that someone else will judge one’s appearance or behavior negatively and thereby confirm that person’s prejudiced attitudes.

– The mere *possibility of being negatively* stereotyped arouses anxiety that can disrupt cognition and distort emotional regulation.

– Stereotype threat makes people of all ages doubt their ability, which reduces learning if their anxiety interferes with cognition.
### Cultural and National Differences (Reducing stereotype threat p.399)

#### TABLE 11.2  Attitudes and Grades in Academic Term Following Stereotype-Threat Experiment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group I (no intervention)</th>
<th>Group II (IQ is multiple)</th>
<th>Group III (IQ is malleable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Blacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value placed on academics, from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average grade</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Aronson et al., 2002.*
Cognitive Maturity

Cognitive Growth and Higher Education

– Most contemporary students attend college primarily to secure their vocational and financial future.

– College also **correlates with better health**: College graduates everywhere smoke less, eat better, exercise more, and live longer.

– There is no doubt that tertiary education improves verbal and quantitative abilities, knowledge of specific subject areas, skills in various professions, reasoning, and reflection.
## Cognitive Maturity

### TABLE 11.3 Perry’s Scheme of Cognitive and Ethical Development During College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Position 1</th>
<th>Authorities know, and if we work hard, read every word, and learn Right Answers, all will be well.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>But what about those Others I hear about? And different opinions? And Uncertainties? Some of our own Authorities disagree with each other or don’t seem to know, and some give us problems instead of Answers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 2</td>
<td>True Authorities must be Right, the others are frauds. We remain Right. Others must be different and Wrong. Good Authorities give us problems so we can learn to find the Right Answer by our own independent thought.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>But even Good Authorities admit they don’t know all the answers yet!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 3</td>
<td>Then some uncertainties and different opinions are real and legitimate temporarily, even for Authorities. They’re working on them to get to the Truth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>But there are so many things they don’t know the Answers to! And they won’t for a long time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 4a</td>
<td>Where Authorities don’t know the Right Answers, everyone has a right to his own opinion; no one is wrong!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Then what right have they to grade us? About what?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 4b</td>
<td>In certain courses Authorities are not asking for the Right Answer. They want us to think about things in a certain way, supporting opinion with data. That’s what they grade us on.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 5</td>
<td>Then all thinking must be like this, even for Them. Everything is relative but not equally valid. You have to understand how each context works. Theories are not Truth but metaphors to interpret data with. You have to think about your thinking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>But if everything is relative, am I relative too? How can I know I’m making the Right Choice?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 6</td>
<td>I see I’m going to have to make my own decisions in an uncertain world with no one to tell me I’m Right.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>I’m lost if I don’t. When I decide on my career (or marriage or values), everything will straighten out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 7</td>
<td>Well, I’ve made my first Commitment!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Why didn’t that settle everything?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 8</td>
<td>I’ve made several Commitments. I’ve got to balance them—how many, how deep? How certain, how tentative?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Things are getting contradictory. I can’t make logical sense out of life’s dilemmas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 9</td>
<td>This is how life will be. I must be wholehearted while tentative, fight for my values yet respect others, believe my deepest values right yet be ready to learn. I see that I shall be retracing this whole journey over and over—but, I hope, more wisely.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personality Patterns

• Continuity and Change
  – Psychological research on personality traits of twins from ages 17 to 24 finds both genetic continuity and developmental improvements.
  – Emerging adults are open to new experiences.
  – The trend is toward less depression and more joy, along with more insight into the self.
Personality Patterns

Mental Health and Illness

– The many stresses and transitions of emerging adulthood might be thought to reduce self-esteem, but the research seems to say otherwise.

– Dealing with transitions successfully—especially leaving home, achieving identity, attending and then graduating from college, and securing a full-time job—correlates with well-being.
Personality Patterns

Psychopathology
– Worldwide, adults are more likely to have an episode of mental illness during emerging adulthood than during any later time.

Diathesis–stress model
– The view that psychological disorders, are produced by the interaction of a genetic vulnerability (the diathesis) and stressful environmental factors and life events (similar to the biopsychosocial model)
Personality Patterns

– Each particular psychopathology has a developmental trajectory, becoming more common at certain ages than at others.

– In addition to substance use disorders, specific other problems—including mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and schizophrenia—are more likely to appear in emerging adulthood.
Identity and Intimacy

• **Identity Achieved**
  
  – The search for identity (see Chapter 10) still begins at puberty, but it continues much longer.
  
  – Most emerging adults are still seeking to determine who they are.
  
  – Erikson believed that, at each stage, the outcome of earlier crises provides the foundation of each new era.
## Identity and Intimacy

### TABLE 11.4 Erikson’s Eight Stages of Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Virtue/Pathology</th>
<th>Possible in Emerging Adulthood If Not Successfully Resolved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust vs. mistrust</td>
<td>Hope/withdrawal</td>
<td>Suspicious of others, making close relationships difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy vs. shame and doubt</td>
<td>Will/compulsion</td>
<td>Obsessively driven, single-minded, not socially responsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative vs. guilt</td>
<td>Purpose/inhibition</td>
<td>Fearful, regretful (e.g., very homesick in college)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry vs. inferiority</td>
<td>Competence/inertia</td>
<td>Self-critical of any endeavor, procrastinating, perfectionistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity vs. role diffusion</td>
<td>Fidelity/repudiation</td>
<td>Uncertain and negative about values, lifestyle, friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy vs. isolation</td>
<td>Love/exclusivity</td>
<td>Anxious about close relationships, jealous, lonely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generativity vs. stagnation</td>
<td>Care/rejectivity</td>
<td>[In the future] Fear of failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity vs. despair</td>
<td>Wisdom/disdain</td>
<td>[In the future] No “mindfulness,” no life plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Erikson, 1982.*
Identity and Intimacy

Ethnic Identity

– About half of the 18- to 25-year-olds identify with very specific ethnic groups.
– More than any other age group, emerging adults have friends with diverse backgrounds.
– Ethnic identity may affect choices in language, manners, romance, employment, neighborhood, religion, clothing, and values.
Identity and Intimacy

- **Intimacy**
  - Erikson’s sixth psychosocial stage, *intimacy versus isolation*, particularly emphasizes that *humans are* social creatures.
  - Intimacy progresses from attraction to close connection to ongoing commitment.
  - Marriage and parenthood, as emerging adults are discovering, are only two of several paths to intimacy.
Identity and Intimacy

Friendships

– Throughout life, friends defend against stress and provide joy.
– Friends, new and old, are particularly crucial during emerging adulthood.
– Most single young adults have larger and more supportive friendship networks than newly married young adults once did.
Identity and Intimacy

Romance

– Robert Sternberg (1988) described three distinct aspects of love:

- **Passion** - an intense physical, cognitive and emotional onslaught characterized by excitement, ecstasy, and euphoria.
- **Intimacy** - knowing someone well, sharing secrets as well as sex.
- **Commitment** - grows gradually through decisions to be together, mutual care giving, kept secrets, shared possessions, and forgiveness.
# Identity and Intimacy

## TABLE 11.6 Sternberg’s Seven Forms of Love

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Love</th>
<th>Passion</th>
<th>Intimacy</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liking</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infatuation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty love</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic love</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatuous love</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companionate love</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consummate love</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Sternberg, 1988b.*
cohabit

– To live with an unrelated person—typically a romantic partner—to whom one is not married.

– Most young adults in the United States, England, and northern Europe cohabit rather than marry before age 25.
Identity and Intimacy

– Divorce is common(ending 45 percent of U.S. marriages) and difficult, not only for the partners but also for their families—their parents as well as their children.

– Domestic violence and excessive drinking are more likely to occur among young adults who cohabit than among those who marry.

– Married couples are more likely to divorce if they have lived together before marriage.
Identity and Intimacy

Family

– Emerging adults are supposedly independent, leaving their childhood home and parents behind.

– Parents continue to be crucial influences after age 18—more so now than in the past.

– Fewer emerging adults today have established their own families, secured high-paying jobs, or achieved a definitive understanding of their identity and goals.