Emerging Adulthood

- Slower than in past to reach milestones of adulthood
- Prolonged identity development
  - More education
  - Later career entry
- Less available for low SES

Theories of Changes in Thinking in Early Adulthood

- Piaget – postformal thought
- Perry – epistemic cognition
- Labouvie-Vief –
  - Pragmatic thought
  - Cognitive-affective complexity
Development of Epistemic Cognition

1. Dualistic thinking
2. Relativistic thinking
3. Commitment within relativistic thinking
   - Challenges
   - Opportunities to reflect
   - Peers
All help development

Cognitive-Emotional Complexity Across Adulthood

Expertise and Creativity

- Expertise = acquisition of extensive knowledge in a field
  - Takes many years
  - Affects information processing
- Effects on creativity
  - Problem finding
  - 10-year rule
  - Creativity usually rises in early adulthood
The College Experience

- Formative, influential “developmental testing ground”
- Exposure to new ideas, beliefs, demands leads to cognitive growth, new thinking patterns
  - Relativistic thinking
  - Increased self-understanding
- Depends on participation in campus life

Periods of Vocational Development

- Fantasy period
- Tentative period
- Realistic period
  - Exploration
  - Crystallization

Personality Types and Vocational Choice

- Investigative
- Social
- Realistic
- Artistic
- Conventional
- Enterprising
Development Through the Lifespan

Chapter 14
Emotional and Social Development in Early Adulthood

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Erikson’s Theory: Intimacy versus Isolation

Intimacy
- Making a permanent commitment to intimate partner
- Involves giving up some newfound independence, redefining identity
- Strong identity helps
- Affects friendships, work

Isolation
- Loneliness, self-absorption
- Hesitate to form close ties
- Fear of losing identity
- Compete
- Reject differences
- Threatened by closeness

Levinson’s Early Adult Season

- Early adult transition
  - Dream
  - Mentor

- Early adulthood life structure
  - Men: “settling down”
  - Women: continued instability, more roles

- Age 30 transition
  - Reevaluate life structure
  - Often focus on underdeveloped aspects
**Vaillant’s Adaptation to Life**

- 20s – intimacy concerns
- 30s – career consolidation
- 40s – generative
- 50s–60s – “keepers of meaning”
- 70s – spiritual and reflective

**Social Clock**

- Age-graded expectations for life events
- Less rigid than in earlier generations
- Following a social clock lends confidence, contributes to social stability
- Distress if not following or falling behind

**Childhood Attachment and Adult Romantic Relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment History</th>
<th>Working Model</th>
<th>Adult Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Comfortable with intimacy; unafraid of abandonment</td>
<td>Trust, happiness, friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant</td>
<td>Stress independence, mistrust, anxiety about closeness</td>
<td>Jealousy, emotional distance, little physical pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistant</td>
<td>Seek quick love, complete merging</td>
<td>Jealousy, desperation, emotional highs &amp; lows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Triangular Theory of Love

- Three components:
  - Intimacy
  - Passion
  - Commitment
- Passionate love early; companionate love later
- Passion gradually fades while intimacy, commitment grow
- Cultural differences

Friendships in Early Adulthood

- Friends usually similar age, sex, SES
- Common interests, experiences, needs
  - Add to pleasure of friendship
- Enhance self-esteem, make life more interesting
- Trust, intimacy, loyalty continue important
- Siblings often friends

Gender and Friendship

**Same-Sex Friendships**
- Gender differences
  - Women’s more intimate
- Individual differences
  - Longer friendships more intimate
  - Single people more intimate with friends

**Other-Sex Friendships**
- Fewer, shorter-lasting than same-sex
  - Educated, employed women have most
- Benefits to both genders
  - Men: opportunity for expression
  - Women: new views
- Sexual attraction must be considered
Family Life Cycle

- Early adulthood
  - Leaving home
  - Joining families in marriage
  - Parenthood
- Middle adulthood
  - Launching children
- Late adulthood
  - Retirement
  - Death of spouse

Leaving Home

- Average age decreasing
  - 50% of 18- to 25-year-olds live with parent
  - Depart for education earlier, marriage later
  - Too early long-term disadvantage
- Many return briefly
- SES, ethnicity affect ability, interest in leaving
- Family relationships can improve

Trends in Marriage

- Marrying later
- More cohabiting before marriage
- Fewer marriages
  - Staying single, cohabiting, not remarrying
  - But North Americans still pro-marriage
- Legalization of same-sex marriage in some places
- More religious and ethnically mixed marriages
Transition to Parenthood

- Many profound changes
- Roles often become more traditional
  - Roles get less traditional with second birth
- Marriage can be strained
  - Problems before children predict problems after
  - Sharing care predicts happiness
- Later parenthood eases transition
  - Couple’s groups, paid leave help, too

Parenting

- Powerful source of adult development
- With young children
  - Best parents work together as coparenting team
  - Challenges: few social supports; hard to find child care
- With adolescents
  - Brings sharp changes
  - Challenges: negotiation of roles, dip in marital satisfaction