### Erikson’s Theory: Intimacy versus Isolation

**Intimacy**
- Making a permanent commitment to intimate partner
- Other close relationships: friends, work
- Involves giving up some newfound independence, redefining identity
- Strong identity helps
- Successful resolution prepares for generativity
  - Caring for the next generation and improving society

**Isolation**
- Without independence, people
  - define themselves in terms of their partner
  - sacrifice self-respect and initiative
- Without intimacy
  - Loneliness and self-absorption
- A secure sense of intimacy enhances the quality of other close relationships
- Hesitate to form close ties
- Fear of losing identity
  - Compete
  - Reject differences
  - Threatened by closeness

### 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
  - I.e. 1st job, getting married, birth of 1st child, buying a home, retiring, etc.
- Answers the question: How am I doing for my age?
- Less rigid than in earlier generations
- Following a social clock lends confidence, contributes to social stability
- Distress if not following or falling behind

### Selecting a Mate

- Physical proximity
- Most select partners who are similar
- Gender differences
  - Women: intelligence, ambition, financials, morals
  - Men: attractiveness, domestic skills
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>
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Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love

- 3 components:
  - Intimacy: emotional component
  - Passion: physical and psychological component
  - Commitment: cognitive component
    - leads to decision to love and maintain love
- Passionate love (sexual attraction) is strong at the beginning of a relationship, but then transitions to companionate love (warm, trusting affection and caregiving). Commitment determines whether a relationship survives.

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

Factors in Loneliness

| Unhappiness resulting from a gap between relationships we have and those we desire |
| Age |
| Circumstances |
| Personal Characteristics |

- Peaks in late teens, early 20s
- Declines through 70s
- Separated, divorced, widowed
- Immigrants from collectivist cultures higher than those born in US or Canada
- Socially anxious
- Insecure models of attachment
- Self-defeating behaviors, attitudes
Family Life Cycle

- Early adulthood
  - Leaving home
  - Joining families in marriage
  - Parenthood
- Middle adulthood
  - Launching children
- Sequence of phases that characterizes development of most families

- Late adulthood
  - Retirement
  - Death of spouse

Factors Related to Marital Satisfaction

- Family backgrounds
- Age at marriage
- Length of courtship
- Timing of first pregnancy
- Relationship to extended family
- Financial and employment status
- Family responsibilities
- Personality characteristics

Gender Differences in Marital Satisfaction

Men: Just being married improves physical and mental health
  - Attachment, belonging, social support

Women: Relationship quality is important
  - Overwhelming demands of many roles cause dissatisfaction

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 co-parenting team
  - Challenges: few social supports; hard to find child care
- With adolescents
  - Brings sharp changes
  - Challenges: negotiation of roles, dip in marital satisfaction

Cohabitation

- Unmarried, sexually intimate, living together
- Increasing
- Can be preparation for marriage
  - North Americans who cohabit before marriage more likely to divorce
- Can be alternative to marriage
  - More accepted in Western Europe

Divorce Rates

- Stabilized since 1980s
- 45% U.S., 30% Canadian marriages
  - About 7% higher for remarriages soon after first marriage
- First seven years, midlife most common times
  - Young and adolescent children involved

Causes and Factors in Divorce

- Ineffective problem solving
- Separate lives
- Major problems: Infidelity, money issues, substance abuse
- Background factors: age, religion, prior divorce, family background
- SES
- Gender roles, expectations
Consequences of Divorce

- Major change of life and self
  - Opportunities for positive and negative change
- Immediate consequences - generally subside in 2 years
  - Disrupted social networks, support
  - Increased anxiety, depression, impulsive behavior
  - Traditional women, noncustodial fathers may have more problems
- New partner helps satisfaction
  - More important to men

Remarriage After Divorce

- Most within four years of divorce
  - Men sooner than women
- Vulnerable to breakup
  - Reasons for marriage
    - Often too pragmatic
  - Carry over negative patterns
  - View divorce as acceptable resolution
  - Stepfamily stress
- Takes 3-5 years to blend
  - Education, couples and family counseling can help

Challenges to Women's Career Development

- Discontinuous employment
  - Leave for child-rearing, family care
  - Hinders advancement
- Concentration low-paying, low-advancement jobs
  - Contributes to salary gap
- Low self-efficacy for male-dominated fields
- Gender stereotyping
- Few mentors

Work-Family Balance

- Dual-earner marriages dominant family form
  - Most also parents
- Role overload common problem
  - Especially for women
- Workplace supports can help
  - Time flexibility