

11.4.6: Key Terms

KEY TERMS

activity theory

a theory which suggests that for individuals to enjoy old age and feel satisfied, they must maintain activities and find a replacement for the statuses and associated roles they have left behind as they aged

age stratification theory

a theory which states that members of society are stratified by age, just as they are stratified by race, class, and gender

ageism

discrimination based on age

baby Boomers

people in the United States born between approximately 1946 and 1964

centenarians

people 100 years old or older

cohort

a group of people who share a statistical or demographic trait

continuity theory

a theory which states that the elderly make specific choices to maintain consistency in internal (personality structure, beliefs) and external structures (relationships), remaining active and involved throughout their elder years

dependency ratio

the number of nonproductive citizens (young, disabled, elderly) to productive working citizens

disengagement theory

a theory which suggests that withdrawing from society and social relationships is a natural part of growing old

elder abuse

the act of a caretaker intentionally depriving an older person of care or harming the person in their charge

exchange theory

a theory which suggests that we experience an increased dependence as we age and must increasingly submit to the will of others, because we have fewer ways of compelling others to submit to us

filial piety

deference and respect to one's parents and ancestors in all things

geriatrics

a medical specialty focusing on the elderly

gerontocracy

a type of social structure wherein the power is held by a society's oldest members

gerontology

a field of science that seeks to understand the process of aging and the challenges encountered as seniors grow older

gerotranscendence

the idea that as people age, they transcend limited views of life they held in earlier times

grief

a psychological, emotional, and social response to the feelings of loss that accompanies death or a similar event

hospice

healthcare that treats terminally ill people by providing comfort during the dying process

life course

the period from birth to death, including a sequence of predictable life events

life expectancy

the number of years a newborn is expected to live

modernization theory

a theory which suggests that the primary cause of the elderly losing power and influence in society are the parallel forces of industrialization and modernization

physician-assisted suicide

the voluntary use of lethal medication provided by a medical doctor to end one's life

primary aging

biological factors such as molecular and cellular changes

secondary aging

aging that occurs due to controllable factors like exercise and diet

selective optimization with compensation theory

a theory based on the idea that successful personal development throughout the life course and subsequent mastery of the challenges associated with everyday life are based on the components of selection, optimization, and compensation

senescence

the aging process, including biological, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual changes

social gerontology

a specialized field of gerontology that examines the social (and sociological) aspects of aging

subculture of aging theory

a theory that focuses on the shared community created by the elderly when they are excluded (due to age), voluntarily or involuntarily, from participating in other groups

supercentenarians

people 110 of age or older

thanatology

the systematic study of death and dying

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