

# Psychology of Adjustment PSY 131

## Chapter 3 Adulthood and Autonomy

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## Chapter Overview

- Moving Toward Autonomy
- Transactional Analysis
- Albert Ellis: Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy
- Early Adulthood
- Middle Adulthood
- Late Middle Age
- Late Adulthood

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## Adulthood and Autonomy

- THE STRUGGLE TOWARD AUTONOMY
  - Process of autonomy begins in early childhood and continues throughout life
  - Ultimate goal is the development of a mature and interdependent self
  - Autonomy means knowing yourself and having significant connections with others
  - Cultural factors play a key role in determining the kind of relationships that govern one's life

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## Transactional Analysis

- Eric Berne, 1961 "Transactional analysis in psychotherapy", 1964 "Games people play"
- Transaction: unit of social interaction
- Three ego states
  - Parent
  - Adult
  - Child
- Life script: learn how to behave, "games" passed from generation to generation
  - Emerges from injunctions

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## Challenging Early Messages (or Parental Injunctions)

- Examples of parental injunctions that we incorporate into our lives:
  - Don't make mistakes
  - Don't be close
  - Don't be a child
  - Don't succeed
  - Don't be you
- Autonomy
  - Awareness
  - Spontaneity
  - Intimacy

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## Albert Ellis and Uprooting Irrational Beliefs

- Your faulty thinking is what leads to your emotional upsets
- You can best change your feelings and actions by changing your beliefs
- It is essential to identify and challenge self-defeating beliefs
- Become aware of your should's, ought's, and must's
- Learn ways of challenging your internal dialogue and your inner critic

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## Early Adulthood

- There are wide variations in the way in which people experience early adulthood
- Erikson's core struggle: Intimacy versus Isolation
- Emerging adulthood: a distinct period from both adolescence and young adulthood
- Emerging adulthood offers rich opportunities for exploring personal identity in the areas of love, work, and values

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## Middle Adulthood

- A time of going outside of ourselves
- This can be a time of great productivity
- Erikson's core struggle: Generativity versus Stagnation
- When we reach middle age, we come to a crossroads
  - A time of "dangers and opportunities"
- Important issues during this period?

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## Late Middle Age

- People often think of what they want to do with the rest of their lives
- There are many positive and creative dimensions of middle age
- A time to consider new sources of meaning in our lives
- A time to examine priorities and make new decisions

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## Late Adulthood

- Erikson's core struggle: Integrity versus Despair
- Prevalent themes often include loss, loneliness, dependency, regrets over past events and decisions
- It is essential to challenge the stereotypes of late adulthood
- The attitude an older person has about aging may be more important than chronological age
- Using / exercising faculties = best way to maintain

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