Chapter 15:

Socioemotional Development in Early Adulthood
Continuity and Discontinuity from Childhood to Adulthood
• Adult personalities are malleable as one ages
• Temperament involves emotions and the ability to control them
• Temperament is linked to adjustment in adulthood, with some continuity from early childhood to adulthood
• The connections between childhood temperament and adulthood adjustment are based on a small number of studies
Temperament in Childhood, Personality in Adulthood, and Intervening Contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperament trait: inhibition</th>
<th>Intervening context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregivers</td>
<td>Sensitive, accepting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical environment</td>
<td>Has defensive spaces or stimulus shelters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>Child feels accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>It’s undermanned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personality Outcomes

| Extroverted adult, emotionally stable, sociable, outgoing | Introverted adult, more emotional problems |

**Fig. 15.1**
• Continuity is seen in the majority of securely attached children who enjoy secure relationships in adulthood

• The quality of childhood attachment relationships is linked to the quality of adult romantic relationships

• Other links exist between childhood attachment and relationship patterns in adulthood

• Not cast in stone, some individuals do revise their attachment styles as they experience relationships in their adult years
Attraction, Love, and Close Relationships
• What motivates one to be attracted to another?
• People actively seek out others to associate with
  – Familiarity is necessary for a close relationship
  – People seek others who are similar to themselves but opposites do attract in certain instances

• Physical attractiveness may not be the primary factor in establishing and maintaining a relationship
• Standards of what is attractive are always changing over time and across cultures
• Research does validate the “matching hypothesis”

• Love is a very complex area of human emotion and comes in different types of expressions

• Intimacy should occur after one is well into establishing a stable and successful identity
  – Failure to achieve intimacy results in social isolation
  – Intimacy’s most important aspect is commitment
  – Attempts to establish intimacy occur at the same time that one is seeking personal autonomy
• Friendship is important throughout the life span

• Friendship is a form of close relationship providing people with
  – Enjoyment and spontaneity
  – Acceptance
  – Trust, respect, and mutual assistance
  – Confidences shared and a sense of understanding

• There are many functions of friendship

• Friends and lovers are similar in many ways
• Friendships between men and between women
  – Women have more friends than men
  – Communication is central to female relationships
  – Females do more self-disclosure than men
  – Females exchange more mutual support
  – Activities are central to male relationships
  – Men share useful information but keep a distance
  – Men seek practical solutions to their problems
  – Men are less likely to disclose personal weaknesses
  – Male relationships are more competitive
• Romantic love, sometimes called passionate love, has strong components of sexuality and infatuation

• “In love” is the reason most people get married and dissolve a marriage

• Romantic love includes a complex set of different emotions such as anger, jealousy, desire, and joy

• Affectionate love, often called companionate love, is based on a deep and caring affection for another

• Consummate love is the strongest form of love
• Falling out of love includes
  – The tragic collapse of a close relationship
  – One person being taken advantage of by another
  – Betrayal of trust
  – Emotions like depression or obsessive thoughts
  – Being with someone who does not return your feelings
Sternberg’s Triangle of Love

3 types of love combine to form these patterns of love

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Love</th>
<th>Passion</th>
<th>Intimacy</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infatuation</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affectionate</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatuous</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consummated</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Everyone feels lonely at some time in his or her life, and some activities of contemporary society are causes of isolation
• Married persons are less lonely than nonmarrieds
• Many strategies exist for reducing loneliness
• Loneliness is a chronic condition for some people and linked to impaired physical and mental health
• Chronic loneliness differs from the desire to be alone or have some time to oneself
• Loneliness often occurs when life and relationships change; leaving the familiar for the unfamiliar
Marriage and Family
• The family life cycle has 6 stages
  – Leaving home allows youths to launch into adulthood
  – Marriage is the uniting of two entire family systems
  – Becoming parents creates new problems and requires lots of adjustments
  – Parenting can be very challenging when adolescents are seeking autonomy and identity
  – The family at midlife discovers new freedoms
  – The family in later life is a time of adaptation
## The Family Life Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family life-cycle stages</th>
<th>Emotional process of transition: key principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaving home: single young adults</td>
<td>Accepting emotional and financial responsibility for self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining of families through marriage: the new couple</td>
<td>Commitment to a new system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming parents and families with children</td>
<td>Accepting new members into the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family with adolescents</td>
<td>Increasing flexibility of family boundaries to include the children’s independence and grandparent’s frailties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family at midlife</td>
<td>Accepting multitude of exits and entries into family system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family in later life</td>
<td>Accepting the shifting of generational roles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• A stable marriage was the endpoint in adult development until about 1930 when personal fulfillment became a competing goal

• Marriage in the United States
  – A tradition, but with about 50% ending in divorce
  – Young adults have more expectations from marriage and their partners
  – Adults are delaying marriage
  – Adult marriages are not lasting as long
Increase in Age at First Marriage in the United States

- **Females**
- **Males**

**Age (years)**
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25
- 26
- 27

**Year**
- 1950
- 1960
- 1970
- 1980
- 1990
- 2000

**Fig. 15.5**
• Traits sought in potential marriage partners vary across cultures
  – Chastity is a factor in some Middle East and Asian cultures
  – Domestcity is valued in some African and South American cultures
  – Religion is a factor in many cultures

• Cross-culturally
  – Scandinavians marry later than Eastern Europeans
  – Cohabitation is popular in Scandinavian countries, while Japanese singles prefer living with parents
• High, unrealistic marital expectations are linked to dissatisfaction and underlie high U.S. divorce rates

• Numerous myths about marriage are thought to be the basis of unrealistic expectations

• Gottman identified 7 main principles that determine whether a marriage will work or not

• There are many benefits to having a good marriage

• Overall, women are more expressive and affectionate than men in marriage
• Successful parenting requires many skills and entails many emotional demands
• Individual needs and expectations have created many myths about parenting
• Child-rearing practices (desirable/undesirable) tend to pass on from one generation to the next
• Today’s parenting roles are changing in response to changing marriage and family patterns
• Interest in careers has postponed parenthood for many
The Diversity of Adult Lifestyles
Almost 50% of all U.S. households are headed by singles, some by choice and others by circumstances.

Singlehood
- Has many myths and stereotypes
- Has its advantages and disadvantages

Some adults choose to never marry but may still desire to have children.

Many singles feel pressure from a marriage-oriented society to settle down and get married.
Percentage of Single Adults 30 to 34 Years of Age in 1970 and 1998

Fig. 15.6
• Cohabitation
  – Is more acceptable in today’s society
  – Has its advantages and disadvantages
  – Tends to be short-lived
  – Involves relationships that tend to be more equal than those between husbands and wives

• Whether cohabitation is a harm or help toward later marital quality is controversial

• There are many reasons why one would choose to cohabitate
The Increase in Cohabitation in the United States

Unmarried couples living together

Year


4,500,000  4,000,000  3,500,000  3,000,000  2,500,000  2,000,000  1,500,000  1,000,000  500,000

Fig. 15.7
• Divorce rates have increased dramatically in all socioeconomic groups, from 2% in 1950 to 10% in 2002

• Divorce rates are higher in disadvantaged groups

• Adults experience change, stress, and difficulties during and after a divorce

• Separated and divorced persons are more likely to show physical and psychological impairments

• Successful strategies exist for dealing with changes from divorce and their challenges
Figure 15.8

Percentage of Divorced U.S. Men and Women: 1950 and 2002

- **1950**
- **2002**

**Percentage divorced**

Men
- 1950: 4
- 2002: 10

Women
- 1950: 4
- 2002: 12
The Divorce Rate in Relation to Number of Years Married

Fig. 15.9
• Remarried couples face many changes and challenges
  – Custodial and noncustodial parenting issues
  – Negotiating rules for reconstituted families and stepfamilies
• Many remarriages occur to reduce loneliness and improve financial circumstances
• Negative behaviors from earlier marriages may carry over into the remarriage
• Strategies are available to help with remarriage stresses
• Gay and lesbian relationships
  – Are similar to heterosexual relationships in satisfactions and conflicts
  – Have many misconceptions about them, including role definitions
  – Are easier to dissolve than heterosexual marriages
  – Raise concerns in some people about their influence as parents

• Lesbian couples place a high priority on equality in their relationships
Percentage of Gay Male and Lesbian Couples with Children: 1990 and 2000

- **Couples with children**
  - *Gay male* couples with children
  - *Lesbian* couples with children

**Percentage of same-sex couples**

- **1990**
- **2000**

**Fig. 15.10**
Gender, Relationships, and Self-Development
• Women
  – Need to be self-motivated and maintain their competency in relationships
  – Cite lack of communication much more often than men as a cause of divorce
  – See conversation as interaction or involvement, while men see it as a source of information
  – See listening as a way to show care and interest
Men

- Have roles that are contradictory and inconsistent
- Live 8 to 10 years less than women (on average)
- Are expected to be dominant in relationships with women, seeing them in physical terms and as inferior
- Often have too little interaction with their fathers
- Need to reconstruct their masculinity in more positive ways, eliminating cultural stereotyping
The End