

Adulthood and Old Age

Physical Changes



- Why do our bodies age?
 - Cells breakdown
 - Cells cannot reproduce
- Physical peak 18-30
- Slow decline
- Experience replaces physicality
- Middle age appearance changes

Physical Changes

- Appearance changes:
 - Hair thins and grays
 - Skin dries and becomes less elastic = wrinkles
 - Lose weight and height
 - Eyesight diminishes
 - Hearing declines
 - Reaction time slows (20%)

Health Problems

- Most common causes of death
 - Heart disease
 - Cancer
 - Cirrhosis of the liver
- Lifestyles changes can slow or quicken changes and health problems.



Menopause

- Between ages of 45-50
- The biological event in which a woman's production of sex hormones is reduced
- Stops ovulation
- Most women have little to no effects
- No equivalent for men
- Reduction in sperm slowly over time

Marriage and Divorce



- 90% marry
- 40-60% divorce
- Success based on:
 - Handle conflicts
 - Share happy/intimate moments
- Argue constructively
- Respect
- No ignoring, denying, exaggerating, ugly fights

Sexual Behavior

- Activity does not automatically decline with age
- Masters and Johnson
 - No physiological reason
 - Those who are inactive:
 - Boredom
 - Health problems
 - Believe it is the norm



Cognitive Changes



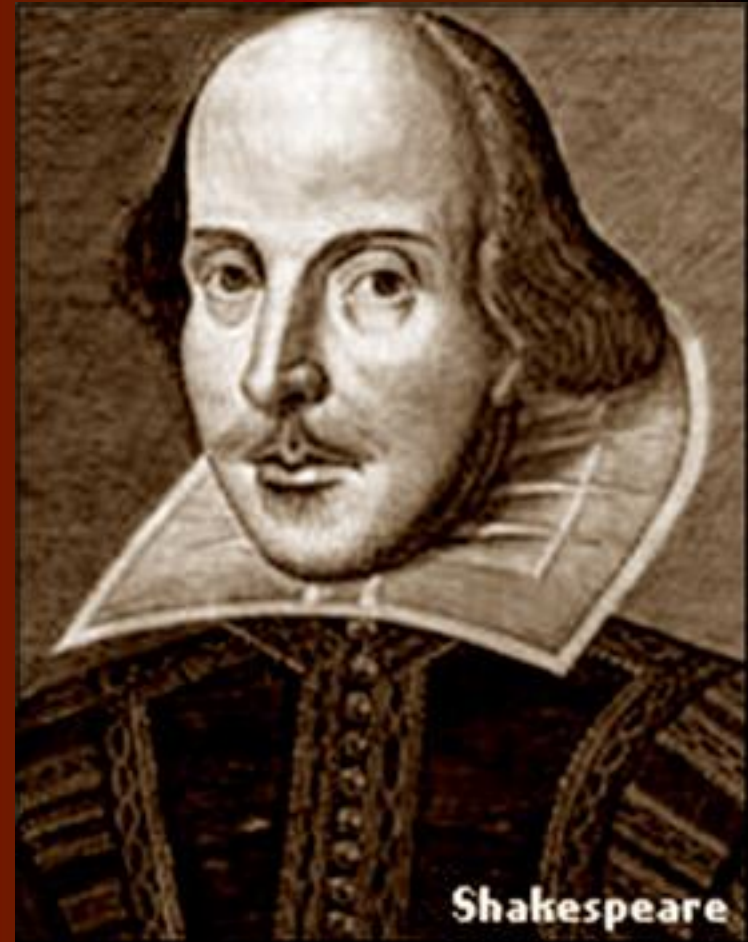
- Knowledge and vocabulary continue to increase
- Comprehension and flexible thinking improves with higher education
- Seems to peak 40-60
- Keep mind active!!

Social and Personality Development

- Personality is relatively stable over the years
- Levinson's theory of male development
- Female development

Levinson's Theory of Male Dev.

- Important transitions
 - Entering adulthood
 - Age 30 crisis
 - Settling down
 - Midlife transition
 - Generativity vs. stagnation
 - Middle adulthood



Female Development

- Women face fewer demands than men !?
- Time of opportunity
- Empty nest syndrome
 - Not all women experience
- Depression in Midlife
 - Loss of children, possibly spouse
 - Menopause
 - Not all women experience

Old Age

- What does old age really mean?
 - One step away from the grave?
 - Aging and old age is a negative?
 - Something to ridicule?
 - Trade in for a newer model?
 - Can't even use the word old? Do you know some alternative words?

Attitudes towards Aging

- Decremental model of aging – progressive physical and mental decline is inevitable
 - Part ignorance/lack of contact
- Ageism – prejudice or discrimination against the elderly
 - Older people often don't see this applying to them.



Stereotypes



- Old people sit around doing nothing
- Withdraw from life
- Are sickly
- Are inflexible
- Have dementia
- Are boring
- Have old fashioned ideas

Changes in Health

- Physical strength and senses decline 1%/yr
- 1/4 of U.S. population obese – good health in youth follows you into old age
- 40% of elderly have a chronic disease
 - Heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, arthritis
- Most die from heart disease, cancer, or stroke
- Elderly health care is inferior to that of the general population
 - Lower soc-econ. Class
 - Dr. discrimination

Changes in Life Situation

- Transitions are much different from early life
- Depression is common
 - Genetic, unhealthy, nutrition, stress
- Continue to learn and develop skills
 - Adult ed, normal abilities



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Changes in Sexual Activity



- Majority over 65 still interested and can be enjoyed into 60's -70's
- Lack of related to poor health or lack of spouse
- Considered by others:
 - Improper, silly, morally wrong
 - Change in ideas needed

Adjusting to Old Age

- Loss of control is hardest change to handle.
- Assertive persons adjust better
- Support from organizations-AARP
- Termination to culmination



Changes in Mental Functioning



- Less decline in intelligence and memory
- Older population currently is most likely not as well educated
- 2 types of intelligence:
 - Crystal – use knowledge and learning appropriately
 - Fluid – solve abstractly and generate hypotheses

Senile Dementia



- Small percentage
- Memory loss, forgetful, disorientation of time and place, inability to think, impaired attention, altered personality
- Many causes, some treatments

Alzheimer's Disease

- Most common form of senile dementia
- 4 leading cause of death (leads to....)
- Neurological disease
- Frequent forgetting, poor judgment, social withdrawal
- Slow decline
- Causes? No cure



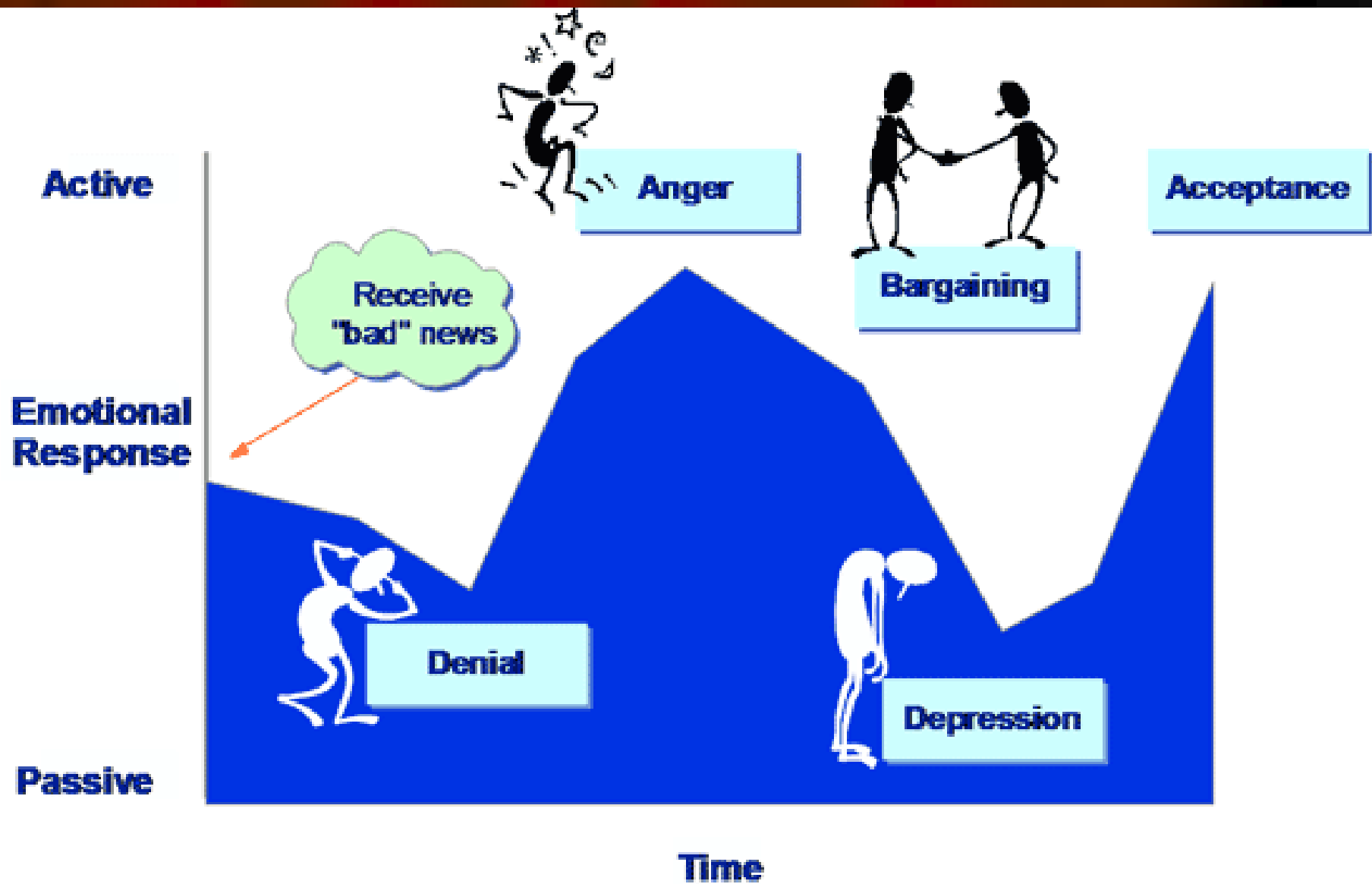
Death and Dying

- Inevitable
- Legal, medical, psychological, and social aspects
- Entangled with customs
- Complex and confusing with medical advances



Adjusting to Death

- Thanatology – the study of death and dying
- Pioneered by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross
- 5 stages of psychological adjustment
- Applies to person who is dying



Stages of Dying

- Denial – shock and numbness
- Anger – “Why me?”
- Bargaining – change ways, attend church
- Depression – losses incurred
- Acceptance – calm, peaceful, detached
- Not everyone



What do Dying People need?

- Respect, dignity
- Self-confidence
- Support and care
- Communication
- Help legally and financially



Hospice

- Discussing death taboo
- Hospice – designed to care for special needs of dying
- Comfort, improve quality of life
- Sometimes care at home is available
- Frequently used now

