

# Adult: Early/Middle

Shaw 7-8; Harwood 2-4; Sunwolf 5

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# AGING

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- Increasing risk to physical health
- Increased ability to engage in relativistic thinking
- Fluid intelligence (abstraction) and crystal intelligence
- Emotional intelligence:
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-management
  - Social awareness
  - Relationship management
- Increasing role behaviors
- Manage "life events" and "life crises"
- Group affiliations (Super groups—Sunwolf)

Aging and Health

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## Aging

### Typical or Normal

- Short term memory changes in capacity (e.g., people's names)
- Abilities to understand and produce complex sentences changes
- Hearing capacity changes
- Changes inhibitory capacity (e.g., off-target verbosity, increased self-focus)

### Problematic or Pathological

- Dementia
- Alzheimer's disease (AD)
- Syntax = OK; Semantics and lexical processes (pronoun usages) impaired
- Indirect repair when communicating with person with AD

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- Complex sentence effects less likely to impact daily functioning
- Selective compensation and optimization model in effect
- Most severe cognitive and linguistic effects at 80+ years of age
- Although under-studied, there are some capacities improve with age—creative writing, long-term memory, vocabulary increases, pronunciation can improve, improvements in lexical diversity, story-telling abilities, and more
- Some communication problems the result of societal negative attitudes, negative stereotyping, negative Pygmalion effects
- Levels of communicative capabilities— interpersonal, mass communication, and inter-group

### Positive Approach to Aging

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## Propositions Guiding Future Research and Education

1. Communication reflects and shapes our understanding of aging.
2. Communication shapes people's experience of aging
3. Age-group memberships are fundamentally important to our sense of self (Social Identity Theory—ingroup/outgroup)
4. Age-group memberships influence communication phenomena

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STEREOTYPING AND AGING

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- Stereotype: cognitive representation of a group (framed in terms of traits)
  - Attitude: overall emotional response (consisting of beliefs and valuations)
  - Harwood (pp.51-51): Measure of Attitude Toward Aging
- Stereotyping Basics and Aging

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- Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986)
    - Identification with group
    - Me/not me
  - Stereotype content model
    - Positive and negative content
  - Age identity
- Stereotyping Basics and Aging

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- Social mobility (Identify with younger groups)
- Social Creativity ([Red Hat Society](#), [Blue Thong Society](#), [Gray Panthers](#))
- Social competition ([AARP](#), [AMAC](#), [American Seniors](#), etc.)

Responses to Negative Stereotyping

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## INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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## Theories

- Communication Accommodation Theory (Howard Giles)
  - Convergence/divergence
  - Over-accommodation (Patronizing elderspeak/baby-talk)
  - Under-accommodation (not knowing what to say in response to painful self-disclosure)
- Communication Predicament Model (Hummert)
  1. Recognize cues (Old age)
  2. Activate stereotyping (see. P. 81)
  3. Modify speech behavior
  4. Constrain communication/ reinforce stereotypes
  5. Loss of personal control/self-esteem;
  6. Changes—physiological, psychological, socio-cultural

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