

# Adulthood

## MODULE OVERVIEW

Module 16 takes us from middle adulthood through old age and dying and death. It describes the physical, cognitive, and social development that occur in each group. At one time, psychologists believed that adolescence marked the end of developmental growth; today, they know that development occurs throughout the life span and that how we age depends on how we live.

Module 16 briefly discusses one of the major issues introduced in Module 13: whether the individual's personality remains stable or changes over the life span.

NOTE: Answer guidelines for all Module 16 questions begin on page 139.

## MODULE REVIEW

First, skim this section, noting headings and bold-face items. After you have read the section, review each objective by completing the sentences and answering the questions that follow it. In some cases, Applications help you to know how well you understand the material. As you proceed, evaluate your performance by consulting the answers beginning on page 139. Do not continue with the next section until you understand each answer. If you need to, review or reread the section in the textbook before continuing.

### Physical Development

**Objective 16-1:** Identify the physical changes that occur during middle and late adulthood.

1. During adulthood, age \_\_\_\_\_ (is/is not) a very good predictor of people's traits.

2. The mid-twenties are the peak years for \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ . Because they mature earlier, \_\_\_\_\_ (women/men) also peak earlier.
3. During early and middle adulthood, physical vigor has less to do with \_\_\_\_\_ than with a person's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ habits.
4. The cessation of the menstrual cycle, known as \_\_\_\_\_, occurs within a few years of \_\_\_\_\_. A woman's experience during this time depends largely on her \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Although men experience no equivalent to menopause, they do experience a more gradual decline in \_\_\_\_\_ count, level of the hormone \_\_\_\_\_, and speed of erection and ejaculation during later life.
6. Worldwide, life expectancy at birth has increased from 49 years in 1950 to \_\_\_\_\_ years and beyond in 2010 in some developed countries. Women outlive men by nearly \_\_\_\_\_ years worldwide.
7. With age, the tips of our chromosomes, called \_\_\_\_\_, shorten.
8. The human spirit also affects life expectancy. The death rate increases when people reach their birthdays, a finding referred to as the \_\_\_\_\_ phenomenon.

9. With age, the eye's pupil \_\_\_\_\_ (shrinks/enlarges) and its lens becomes \_\_\_\_\_ (more/less) transparent. As a result, the amount of light that reaches the retina is \_\_\_\_\_ (increased/reduced).
10. Although older adults are \_\_\_\_\_ (more/less) susceptible to life-threatening ailments, they suffer from short-term ailments such as flu \_\_\_\_\_ (more/less) often than younger adults.
11. Aging \_\_\_\_\_ (slows/speeds/has no effect on) neural processing and causes a gradual loss of \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Physical exercise stimulates \_\_\_\_\_ development and \_\_\_\_\_ connections, thanks perhaps to increased \_\_\_\_\_ and nutrient flow.
13. The mental erosion that results from progressive damage to the brain is called \_\_\_\_\_.

14. The irreversible disorder that causes progressive brain deterioration is \_\_\_\_\_ disease. This disease has been linked to a deterioration of neurons that produce the neurotransmitter \_\_\_\_\_.



### Cognitive Development

**Objective 16-2:** Assess the impact of aging on memory.

15. Studies of developmental changes in learning and memory show that during adulthood there is a decline in the ability to \_\_\_\_\_ (recall/recognize) new information but not in the ability to \_\_\_\_\_ (recall/recognize) such information. One factor that influences memory in older people is the \_\_\_\_\_ of material.
16. Adults' \_\_\_\_\_ memory remains strong when events help trigger recall.

17. Cognitive abilities among 70-year-olds are \_\_\_\_\_ (less/more) varied than among 20-year-olds.
18. A research study in which people of various ages are compared with one another is called a \_\_\_\_\_ study.
19. A research study in which the same people are retested over a period of years is called a \_\_\_\_\_ study.
20. Especially in the last three or four years of life, cognitive decline typically accelerates. Researchers call this near-death drop \_\_\_\_\_.

### APPLICATION:

21. Which statement illustrates cognitive development during the course of adult life?
  - a. Forty-three-year-old Sophia has better recognition memory than 72-year-old Kylie.
  - b. Both Sophia and Kylie have strong recall and recognition memory.
  - c. Kylie's recognition memory decreased sharply at age 50.
  - d. Forty-three-year-old Sophia has better recall memory than 72-year-old Kylie.

### Social Development

**Objective 16-3:** Discuss the themes and influences that mark the social journey from early adulthood to death.

22. Contrary to popular opinion, job and marital dissatisfaction do not surge during the forties, thus suggesting that a midlife \_\_\_\_\_ need not occur.
23. The term used to refer to the culturally preferred timing for leaving home, getting a job, marrying, and so on is the \_\_\_\_\_. Today, the timing of such life events is becoming \_\_\_\_\_ (more/less) predictable. More important than age are \_\_\_\_\_ and chance encounters.
24. According to Erikson, the two basic tasks of adulthood are achieving \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. According to Freud, the healthy adult is one who can \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

25. Human societies have nearly always included a relatively \_\_\_\_\_ bond. Marriage bonds are usually lasting when couples marry after age \_\_\_\_\_ and are \_\_\_\_\_.
26. Marriages today are \_\_\_\_\_ (half/twice) as likely to end in divorce as they were in the 1960s. Couples who live together before marrying have a \_\_\_\_\_ (higher/ lower) divorce rate than those who do not.
27. Marriage is a predictor of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and physical and mental \_\_\_\_\_. Lesbian couples report \_\_\_\_\_ (greater/less) well-being than those who are alone.
28. As children begin to absorb time and energy, satisfaction with the marriage itself \_\_\_\_\_ (increases/decreases). This is particularly true among \_\_\_\_\_ women, who shoulder most of the burden.
29. For most couples, the children's leaving home produces a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ (increase/decrease) in marital satisfaction.
30. During the first two years of college or university, most students \_\_\_\_\_ (can/cannot) predict their later careers.

**APPLICATION:**

31. After a series of unfulfilling relationships, 30-year-old Carlos tells a friend that he doesn't want to marry because he is afraid of losing his freedom and independence. Erikson would say that Carlos is having difficulty with the psychosocial task of
- trust versus mistrust.
  - autonomy versus doubt.
  - intimacy versus isolation.
  - identity versus role confusion.

**Objective 16-4:** Describe trends in people's self-confidence and life satisfaction across the life span.

32. From early adulthood to midlife, people typically experience a strengthening sense of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
33. According to studies, older people \_\_\_\_\_ (do/do not) report as much happiness and satisfaction with life as younger people do. In addition, their feelings \_\_\_\_\_ (do/do not) mellow.
34. As we age, the brain area called the \_\_\_\_\_ shows \_\_\_\_\_ (increased/decreased) activity in response to negative events.
35. More and more people flourish into later life, thanks to \_\_\_\_\_ influences.

**APPLICATION:**

36. The text discusses well-being across the life span. Which of the following people is likely to report the greatest life satisfaction?
- Billy, a 7-year-old second-grader
  - Kathy, a 17-year-old high-school senior
  - Mildred, a 70-year-old retired teacher
  - too little information to tell

**Objective 16-5:** Describe the range of reactions to the death of a loved one.

37. Grief over a loved one's death is especially severe when it comes \_\_\_\_\_.
38. Reactions to a loved one's death \_\_\_\_\_ (do/do not) vary according to cultural norms. Those who express the strongest grief immediately \_\_\_\_\_ (do/do not) purge their grief more quickly.
39. Terminally ill and bereaved people \_\_\_\_\_ (do/do not) go through predictable stages.
40. According to Erikson, the final task of adulthood is to achieve a sense of \_\_\_\_\_.