

Respond to the questions below based on your review of Chapter 10, Late Adulthood & Very Late Adulthood.

1-Describe two theories of aging and provide an example of how each might influence practice with older adults.

Social-emotional selectivity theory- While aging is often associated with loss and illness, socioemotional selectivity theory indicates that aging has positive benefits. During aging, many may feel as if they are too old to live their lives to the fullest. The approach is based on the idea that humans change their goals as they age due to the uniquely human ability to understand time. This theory redirects the way some older people may feel about aging and gives them happier times to look forward to. This theory influences the way that you practice with older adults. This theory gives them hope and helps them understand the true meaning of living every day to the fullest, as tomorrow is not promised to anyone, not just the elderly.

Activity theory- The activity theory of aging is a theory that proposes that older adults who stay active and maintain social interactions have higher life satisfaction, self-concept, and adjustment. Staying active as an older adult is essential for physical and mental health. Staying physically active helps to maintain healthy physicals and helps to lower the probability of obesity, diabetes, arthritis, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease. Keeping a busy social life helps reduce the likelihood of depression, isolation, and suicidal ideations. Remaining active positively affects life in general and gives older adults a sense of life satisfaction as they are mobile, healthier, and happier. This theory may influence practice with older adults as I would help the person with the benefits of staying active and the effects that it will have on their physical, mental, and spiritual self. This theory would be the opposite of the disengagement theory.

2-What are three typical “tasks” for late adulthood?

Developmental Tasks in the Later Maturity stage (61-death) include adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health, adjusting to retirement, and meeting social and civil obligations. As a person starts to age, in some instances, if the person does not maintain a healthy diet and remains physically active, the person’s health can begin to deteriorate and cause a decrease in both health and physical strength. The second task is older adulthood when a person starts thinking of or going through the motions of retiring. Retirement is a time of adjustment. It’s an adjustment to the day-to-day of the person as well as an adjustment financially. Some may retire and be able to live comfortably, while others may retire and live on a fixed income. Unfortunately, some may retire and later obtain a new employment source for financial gain. In addition, the third task is a social and civil obligation. This would include maintaining a circle of friends, socializing regularly, attending family functions and events, as well as the responsibility of being a grandparent, great-grandparent, and senior citizen. These three tasks align with the Activity Theory as maintaining a balance within the three task allows the person to have an active lifestyle essential in maintaining healthy social, physical, and mental health and well-being.

3-Explain the concept of “compression of morbidity.”

Compression of morbidity is a term that means reducing the length of time a person spends sick or disabled. The idea is to maximize a healthy lifespan and minimize the time spent less than well. These efforts have resulted in significant findings about how to slow and, in some cases, even counteract the physical decline that occurs with age. Some methods that can be utilized are exercise, particularly strength exercise, aerobic exercise, and proper nutrition are essential. Lack of adequate exercise can cause muscles to diminish as the person ages, driving conditions such as frailty and disabilities. Regular exercise helps keep the heart muscle in shape and ward off common cardiac problems. Exercising at a light intensity will raise the heart rate and improve overall fitness. Cardiovascular training for the elderly increases respiratory intake and helps fight common illnesses like colds or flu. By utilizing exercise, rest, and proper nutrition, morbidity is lowered in older adults.