

Adult Development

PSYCH 322

(T. Th. 3:15 – 4:45 p.m.)

Winter Semester, 2007

Instructor: Owen A. Anderson, PhD
Office: Ricks 110K
Phone: 496-1354
Office Hours: M, W, F. 9:00 - 10:00 a.m., 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. or by appointment
Email: andersono@byui.edu

Text: Lemme, B. H. (2006). Development in adulthood (4th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.

Overview:

In this course, we study the longest phase of the life cycle-adulthood. Thus, we will focus on human development from the early adult years through the final stages of life. The emphasis is on breadth--the range of influences on individual growth and development during the adult years. The textbook includes recent psychological studies of adult development and aging, outlines methodologies used in research on adulthood and discusses the ways theories of adulthood shape research. Topics to be covered include: age-related changes in cognitive processes, intellectual functioning, and personality; social relationships, physiological changes; psychopathology associated with aging, and implications of all these areas for delivery of educational and mental health services to adults, particularly older adults.

Course Objectives:

1. Learn the basic concepts and issues in the field of adult human development.
2. Participate in implementing activities with people at various points across the adult life span. Apply knowledge about adult development and aging to one's own development and/or the development of others
3. Discuss the developmental and non-developmental factors that influence growth and decline from conception to death.
4. Gain first hand experience assisting the elderly as a volunteer (service learning) opportunity in a community adult care program.
5. Gather rich information from family members and others regarding adult development, as to the impact of aging and the growth process.

*** In compliance with applicable disability law, qualified students with a disability may be entitled to "reasonable accommodation." It is the student's responsibility to disclose to the teacher and the Services of Students with Disabilities Office, 496-1158, any special need she/he may have before the end of the first week of class. Services are coordinated with the students and the instructor by this office.

*** If you have encountered unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination from faculty, staff, or fellow students, please contact the Personnel Office at 496-1130.

*** "If you leave this university with knowledge and skills and a degree but **lacking integrity and honesty**, then you have failed." (Elder David A. Bednar, BYU-I Devotional, Sept. 10, 2002)

CLASS POLICIES

Please pay watchful attention to the following information.

1) In the event of extenuating circumstances, the schedule and procedures detailed herein are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Should such changes occur, every attempt will be made to provide timely advance notice, in writing, if possible.

2) If you are having difficulties or problems in this class because of personal reasons, let me know **in advance** of due dates and deadlines. I have a difficult time commiserating with students and their problems during the last week of class.

3) Keep all returned assignments. I will notify students twice during the semester of my record of assignment and test scores. Your returned assignments can verify accomplished work.

4) If you cannot hand in an assignment on the due dates or deadlines announced, plan ahead and turn them in before their assigned dates. To get full credit, all work submitted must have your name, the date, the class name and time, and the instructors name; all papers **must be typed neatly** (-25%) and exhibit correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

5) **No assignments will be accepted outside of class!** Do not leave assignments at my office, or with the secretary. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates listed! Late papers will be accepted, but there will be a penalty of **15% per class day**. Finally, no late papers will be accepted after the last day of class instruction.

6) You are expected to do your own work on assignments and exams unless designated by instructor as collaborative efforts involving two or more students. Violation of this policy will result in a zero for that exam or assignment. Violating this policy a second time will result in an "F" as your final grade for the course.

7) Tests will be administered on the dates and times scheduled. Make up exams will be given only in cases of verified excused absences. The final exam will be administered in the assigned classroom during the exam period designated by the college. There will be a 50% deduction to final test scores that are requested and completed early.

Grades will be distributed as follows.

A (94 - 100.0%)	B- (80 - 82.5%)	D+ (67 - 69.5%)
A- (90 - 93.5%)	C+ (77 - 79.5%)	D (63 - 66.5%)
B+ (87 - 89.5%)	C (73 - 76.5%)	D- (60 - 62.5%)
B (83 - 86.5%)	C- (70 - 72.5%)	F (0 - 59.5%)

I. Exams	50%	
4 Exams (80 pts)		320
1 Double highest test score		<u>80</u>
		subtotal 400
II. Service Learning	22%	
10 Hours		100
3 Logs (10 pts)		30
3 Papers (10, 15, & 20 pts)		<u>45</u>
		subtotal 175

III. Assignments	28%	
15 In-class disco (3 pts)		45
1 Book essay		50
1 Biography: Elderly family		40
1 Death & dying/obituary		25
1 Individual case study		65
? Extra credit (5-10 pts)		_____
		subtotal 225

Grand Total 800

CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic & Readings	Assign Due & Tests .
Jan. 4	Introduction to Course	
9	The Study of Development in Adulthood Ch. 1	
11		Book Approval
16	Theories of Psychosocial Development Ch. 2	
18		
23	The Self: Development Issues Ch. 3	SL#1 L&P (1-2 hours)
25		*Test #1 (Ch.1-3) -Fri. Sat. & Mon
30	Cognitive Processes in Adulthood, Part 1 Ch. 4	CS Topic
Feb. 1	Cognitive Processes in Adulthood, Part 2 Ch. 5	Family Case Study
6		
8	Social Development, Friends & Mate Selection Ch. 6	1 st Book Summary
13		CS Article Summary
		*Test #2 (Ch 4-6) -Wed. Thur. & Fri.
15	Family Ties, Transitions, and Challenges Ch. 7	
20		CS Questions
22	Physical Development and Aging Ch. 9	SL#2 L&P (5-6 hours)
27		2 nd Book Summary
Mar. 1	Death, Dying, and Bereavement Ch. 12	
6	In-Class Book Discussion	Book Essays
8		Death & Dying / Ob
		*Test #3 (Ch 7,9,&12) -Fri. Sat. & Mon.

	13	No Class Today	
	15	Work and Retirement Ch. 8	CS Paper
	20	Heath, Longevity, and Prevention Ch. 10	SL#3 L&P (10 hours)
	22		
	27	Coping, Adaptation & Mental Health Ch. 11	
	29		
Apr.	5 (Thur.)	Final (in the classroom) 3:40 – 5:40 p.m.	Test #4 (Ch 8,11,&12)

*** Plan your semester well, know what you can do, and succeed!

EVALUATION

Evaluation of this course will depend on three major components: Tests, a service learning experience, and assignments.

1) **Test**

There will be four exams given over the course of the semester worth/ or converted to 80 points each. Exams will be multiple choice/short answer format and cover the material discussed both in the textbook and in class. You will be responsible for the material covered in both the assigned chapters and class discussion. All test, but the final, will be given at the Testing Center over a three-day time period and use scantron sheets. Your highest test score percentage (not to exceed 100%) will be added twice into the total test scores.

Format for Test:

- bring a pencil / last test given 60 minutes before closing
- in testing center / no time limit

Quizzes (Reading the Chapter)

Read the textbook material at least once before coming to class. You are strongly urged to outline the chapters from the text. There is a great deal of information presented and you will need to develop good study habits in order to master this information. You **must** take the chapter quizzes that appear weekly on blackboard. You will have 20 minutes to answer 15 questions. You can take the quiz as many times as you would like, however only your last score will be recorded. **Your GOAL:** When your final score is 12 (80%) or higher for a chapter quiz, 2 bonus points per chapter will be added to your test score. If your final score is 9 or lower (60%) on a chapter quiz, 1 point will be deducted from your test score. Finally, students will lose 5 points per chapter on the test when a quiz is missed (two misses/skips are allowed).

Format for Quizzes:

- 20 minutes to answer 15 questions for each chapter quiz
- retake as much as you need, only last score in recorded to me
- 12 or higher (80%) on a quiz: bonus 2 points towards the test (+6 pts.)
- 9 or lower (60%) on a quiz: minus 1 point from the test (-3 pts.)
- missed/skipped quiz: minus 5 points from the test (-15 pts.)
- 2 skips/misses allowed

Time frame for Quizzes:

Chapter	Date Opens	Date Closed	Closing Time
1	Jan 4 (Thur)	Jan 10 (Wed)	11:55 p.m.
2	Jan 11 (Thur)	Jan 17 (Wed)	" " "
3	Jan 18 (Thur)	Jan 24 (Wed)	" " "
	Test #1		
4	Jan 25 (Thur)	Jan 31 (Wed)	
5	Jan 29 (Mon)	Feb 5 (Mon)	
6	Feb 5 (Mon)	Feb 12 (Mon)	
	Test #2		
7	Feb 10 (Sat)	Feb 16 (Fri)	
9	Feb 17 (Sat)	Feb 23 (Fri)	
12	Feb 24 (Sat)	Mar 2 (Fri)	
	Test #3		
8	Mar 3 (Sat)	Mar 16 (Fri)	
10	Mar 17 (Sat)	Mar 23 (Fri)	
11	Mar 24 (Sat)	Mar 30 (Fri)	
	Test #4		

2)

Service Learning Experience**Service Learning**

You will have the opportunity to link experience with learning while taking this Adult Development course. During the first two weeks of the semester, you'll choose an agency in which to volunteer for a **MIMIMUM** of 10 hours. You can volunteer at a long term care center, an assisted living center, or some other agency that serves older adults, for 1-2 hours per week. You'll be spending a minimum of 10 hours in a community organization that is intended, at least in part, to meet developmental needs of older adults. You will keep a log of your hours and your activities each week. In addition, you will submit three page papers during the semester that integrate what you observe and experience at your service learning site with what you are learning from your reading and class attendance. Student will receive 10 point per hour of Service Learning, and can earn up to 100 points.

Service Learning Papers & Logs

After each visit, record the date and time (i.e., Jan. 15, 5:00-6:00 p.m.). Your log is your personal account of your work experiences. Write down your observations, emotions, and ideas that enriched your service learning visit. Be thorough and *pay particular attention to how your experience connects to course material*. Record ½ -1 page of experiences for a 1 hour visit. The following are some suggestions to guide your writing, but feel free to write about **your** experience in your own way.

-Prior to this weeks service learning, write your expectations, hopes, and/or concerns for the week. What are you focusing on this week?

-During or soon after your service learning time, write your experiences. What happened? Try to be detailed in your observations.

-Draw connections between your experiences/observations and your expectations, hopes, and/or concerns. How well (or poorly) do the concepts discussed in class apply to what you are experiencing?

-What difficulties are you having, if any? What is happening that is great, if anything?

Paper #1

Due: Jan. 23

Briefly describe the agency or organization where you are volunteering and its mission toward older people. Describe the older adults with whom you will have contact as well as the staff with whom you will interact. Discuss your own personal goals for the semester as you volunteer at this site. Although you have not read more than two chapters of the text, nevertheless, you should describe explicit linkages between what you have learned so far and what you observe at your volunteer site. Be sure to give proper citations to the information from the text. Your paper should be approximately 1 ½ - 2 pages (double spaced) and is worth 10 points. As an appendix to the paper, hand in a copy of your log to date.

Paper #2

Due: Feb. 22

Describe a specific situation that you have observed. Who were the players (e.g., older adult, staff, family members)? What were their motivations? What components in the environment influenced the situation and what individual variables played a role? Analyze your own reaction. Make specific connections between your observations of this situation to readings and class discussions. Your paper should be approximately 2-3 pages (double spaced) and is worth 15 points. As an appendix to the paper, hand in a copy of your log to date.

Paper #3

Due: Mar. 20

Summarize your experience at the volunteer site. Organize it by themes. For example, if you are volunteering at a nursing home, you could describe the residents, the staff, the resident/staff interactions, the daily activities, etc. Or you could analyze the emotional environment, intellectual stimulation, goals and how they're reached, social interactions, etc. In this paper, you should also describe changes you observed in yourself in terms of your interactions with older adults and staff. Be sure to include specific references to information learned in your readings and in class. Your paper should be approximately 3-4 pages and is worth 20 points. As an appendix to the paper, hand in a copy of your final set of logs.

3)

Assignments

In-Class Discussions

You will be expected to attend class, to be on time, and to participate actively in all class learning activities. Occasionally you'll be asked to do some in-class writing that will count toward this part of your grade. Frequently class time will be used to discuss issues in greater depth. Those in attendance who participate will receive 3 points. In class assignments may **NOT** be made due to absences for any reason. A total of 45 points will be awarded.

Book Essay**Due: Mar 6**

This activity should focus on what you learned about aging persons from reading a book you've selected. In particular, you should note what you learned about human virtues and strengths, sources of psychological well-being and overall life satisfaction. Your book summaries assignments should clearly demonstrate that you have read and understood the book you read. Your book essay should use the book to provide examples of various human qualities (e.g., wisdom, courage, creativity, curiosity, spirituality, playfulness) that contribute to older adults' resilience. If your book reveals the difficulties people experience when they lack these qualities, be sure to address that also. Finally, you should discuss how the book affected your own views of aging and older adults, not only in terms of what you know intellectually, but also in terms of your feelings for and with older people. You could talk about whether reading the book had any effect on your empathy for older people.

Each student in the course will select one extra book to read and review from the following list:

- Albom, M. (1997). *Tuesdays with Morrie: An old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson*. New York: Doubleday.
- Delany, S. L., & Delany, A. E. (1993). *Having our say: The Delany sisters' first 100 years*. New York: Dell Publishing.
- Lustbader, W. (1991). *Counting on kindness: The dilemmas of dependency*. New York: The Free Press.
- Snowdon, D. (2001). *Aging with grace: What the nun study teaches us about leading longer, healthier, and more meaningful lives*. New York: Bantam Books.
- ***or a book of your own choosing, with approval from the instructor

Start reading the book you selected as soon as possible! You will submit two book summaries, one on each half of the book. They will be worth 10 points each and your book essay will be worth 30 points. Five of the 30 points awarded will be given if you are in class with your typed essay in hand when we discuss the books in class. As an appendix to the book essay paper, hand in a copy of your book summaries. Your grade on the papers will be assigned points for several criteria as follows:

Format for Book Summaries and Essay:**Book Summaries:**

1. Clearly demonstrate that the book has been read and understood; include chapter subheadings. Book summaries can be done in bullet form.
2. Length of each summary: approximately 1 ½-2 pages and is worth 10 point.
3. Summary due: 1st half of the book due **Feb 8**; 2nd half due **Feb 27**.

Book Essay:

1. Discuss what was learned from the book about aging and older adults.
2. Make connections between the book and what has been learned from the text, other readings, class discussions, etc., about aging and human strengths and virtues.
3. Finally discuss your personal response to the book in terms of perspectives on aging and older adults.
4. Length of essay: approximately 2-3 pages and is worth 30 points. Writing mechanics includes: organization, spelling, punctuation, and the reference of your book.
5. An appendix must include: the graded copies of both your book summaries.
6. Book essay due: **March 6**. You **must** be in class with your paper to receive full points.

Biography: Elderly Family Member**Due: Feb. 1**

One of the purposes of this class is to be able to apply the theories and principles to real life. This assignment gives students the opportunity to interview an elderly family member. Their comments can be a rich source of information about adult development and aging. When you have chosen a family member to interview, explain that you are doing this for a course in adult development and that their name will not be used in the report. The main purpose of this study is to help you see how textbook knowledge applies to real life. Thus you will examine the life of a close family member through practical experience and the theories that are studied in class.

In doing this activity, students will enjoy the process of covering a life story and history of a family member. Your assignment (found on blackboard) is to answer a series of questions across different developmental aspects of this course, in order to enhance your knowledge of adult development, as well as some of the concepts used in this course. This assignment is worth 40 points.

Format for Paper:

1. Write a 6-8 page paper (typed, double-spaced) that addresses most if not all of these questions.
2. The format of the paper is up to you. Provide headings throughout your paper.
3. You may personalize this project in anyway you see fit (e.g., adding pictures), but you still need 6-8 pages of text.
4. Grading is based on the amount of effort you put into your answers as well as the entire project.
5. All biographies are considered confidential and will not be shared with anyone. Late papers (15% loss per class day). See class policy #5.

Death & Dying/Obituary**Due: Mar. 8**

Death is a subject that many people feel uneasy about, but is a huge part of human development. Being aware of our mortality (the fact that we will die) can actually enhance and improve our life in the present. Accepting death also helps us through the grieving process that often seems unbearable when we lose a loved one. Your assignment is to visit the following website:<http://www.trinity.edu/mkearl/death.html>

Read the information on the Sociology of Dying. Run the "Death Clock" and see how many more years it calculates you have left to live. Once you have this information, you need to consider what you would like to accomplish in your "remaining" years. Consider your values, affiliations, goals, relationships, activities, hobbies and what would be important to have done in your lifetime. Then write a one paragraph obituary that spells out what you have done in your life (assuming that the life clock calculates that you have a full life span to live). I expect you to use your imagination, and even your sense of humor, but I'd like you to try to create a constructive notion of what you would like to accomplish and believe is achievable in your lifetime.

Here is an example of an obituary:

Last night, Barta Beeley died peacefully in her sleep. She was 92 years old. She leaves behind her husband, 2 children, four grandchildren, her pet parrot, and many friends. Dr. Beeley got her PhD at BYU-I in 2015, was a professor at Upper Valley State College and an advocate for the

educational rights of students in Idaho. She was a college professor for 30 years, and retired from UVSC in 2040. Post retirement, Dr. Beeley was an educational consultant and worked on a variety of projects in developing countries, partnering corporations with education for impoverished areas of the world. She has written many educational materials and electronic products on technology implementation and dispersion, and numerous interactive educational products. An avid reader, Dr. Beeley was involved in literacy programs for more than 60 years. She met once a month with the "DIVAS," described as a "women's group that includes conversation, social activism, dinner and books." She also enjoyed skiing, traveling, cooking, and gardening. She visited 40 different countries in her lifetime, and was a frequent participator in 5 K charity walks until the age of 86. Dr. Beeley was a proponent of social responsibility, kindness to all living things, and of thinking globally and acting locally. She divided her time between the Upper Valley State College and Lower Valley where she had a small farm. Her family plans to scatter her ashes over the farm and will have a psychedelic theme at her wake, by request of the deceased. In lieu of flowers, people are asked to make a donation to National Public Radio or their favorite education foundation.

Then you need to explore some of the links in the site. Then write 1½-2 pages tying in information from the site with what you have learned from this class about human development and where death fits in. This assignment is worth 25 points and **due Mar. 8.**

Some ideas of links to explore and topics to discuss include (but are not limited to):

- Death in the Natural Order
- Death Across Cultures and Time
- Death's Impact on Social Order Link
- How we Die
- Bids for Symbolic Immortality & Longevity
- Death and Social Institutions
- Moral Debates of our Times
- Personal Impacts of Death
- Funeral Guides and Planning

Format for Death & Dying/Obituary

1. Report the "Death Clock" years it calculates for you to live / comment on it's accuracy of your life expectancy.
2. Write your imaginative / sense of humor obituary / include what you would like to accomplish and believe is achievable in your lifetime (worth 10 points).
3. Identify at least four areas you explored and discuss your discoveries, perceptions, and reflections (worth 15 points).

Individual Case Study

Due: Mar. 15

This activity is intended to give students an opportunity to explore a facet of individual development in adulthood that is of personal interest or particular relevance to their own research/practitioner interests. I will be particularly interested in students' ability to **critically evaluate** theory on adult development and aging, and to **apply** concepts, theories, and research findings to a concrete situation in their own field or to a specific research issue in the study of adult development.

This activity involves closely studying an adult and writing up your findings. The information presented should involve some aspect of their biosocial, cognitive, and psychosocial development, and include predictions about the person's future as well. When you have chosen an adult for your study, explain that you are doing this research for a course in adult development, that the person's name will not be used in the report, and that the main purpose of this study is to help you see how textbook knowledge applies to real life.

Assignments related to the Individual Case Study

1) Topic of Paper

Students will turn in the topic paper, selecting a topic to explore. Please discuss why you chose the topic. This assignment is worth 5 points and is due at the beginning of class. If you change the topic of your paper, you must re-submit a new paper with your new topic to keep your points. **All topics must be approved** by the instructor (**by Jan 30**) before students begin work in earnest on the paper. Late papers, see class policies.

Format for Research Topic:

1. In sentence/paragraph form state the topic you wish to explore, why you chose this topic, and what you hope to learn.
2. Submit a double space, 1/2 page, typed paper.

2) Article Summaries

After your topic has been approved students need to select at least **2** articles to summarize for their case study paper. The articles **MUST** come from professional journals (must have a reference list). **No books, pamphlets, or material off the Internet will be accepted.** Your goal is to condense each article into a one page, double spaced summary. These summaries **MUST** be written in the students own words and not copied word for word (plagiarism) from the articles. Articles summaries are **due Feb 13**, and each summary will be worth up to 5 points and due at the beginning of class. These articles **must appear in your final paper** or your final paper will not be accepted. You can redo articles to maintain your points. Late papers, see class policies.

Format for Article Summaries:

1. Need article citation: 1) Author's name/s. 2) Date/year. 3) Title of Article. 4) Name of journal where article was found. 5) Volume number, and, 6) page number/s. (example) Elkind, D. (2004). Understanding late adulthood. Journal of adulthood development and aging, 13, 127-134.
2. One page summary in your own words; include following headings: Introduction, Methods, Results, and, Discussion.
3. Single or double space, one page, typed

3) Interview Questions

To be sure you get the proper information during the interview, you should develop a list of questions in advance (**due Feb. 20**). In review, select a topic of interest, read the information about this topic in our textbook and the two articles you selected, and then draw up a list of questions that you want answered by your interview subject. Be sure your questions are open-ended (questions that require more than a yes/no response).

Format for Questions:

1. List the open-ended questions you intend to ask during the interview
2. Single or double space, typed

4) Individual Case Study

People are usually willing to talk about their lives if they feel that the researcher will treat their information confidentially and ethically. Their comments can be a rich source of information about human development. Begin the interview by telling the subject that you will be asking some questions, but he or she should feel free to expand on the topic or talk about related ideas. Set a definite schedule for the interview (such as five minutes per question) and stay on that schedule. Either tape-record the session (with your subject's permission) or take thorough notes. If a subject's answers are too brief or uninformative, follow up with questions like, "Why did you choose X?" or "Why do you think X happened?" If something the subject says seems important, follow up with additional probing questions, like "Tell me more about X." You should be getting rich, lengthy responses to your questions. Remember, you are interested in your subject's life and ideas. Do not involve yourself in a conversation, offer advice, or talk about your own experiences during the interview, except as a way of encouraging your interviewee to talk. Remember, your questions are to guide the interview process, but you can deviate, embellish, expand upon, skip-over questions, as the interview dictates.

The interview subject should be encouraged to talk freely about topics related to your original questions or to explore the questions in more detail. When the interviews are analyzed, both structured answers and related information should be considered. The final paper (50 pts) should be approximately 5 pages and is **due Mar. 15**. As an appendix to the paper, hand in a copy of your graded topic paper, articles summary papers, and questions.

Format for Individual Case Study Paper

1. Write a 5 page paper (typed, double-spaced) that includes an introduction, thesis statement, organizational statement, body, summary, and a conclusion. (15 pts)
2. Papers must be written as a narrative, in paragraph format, and not just questions and answers. (15 pts)
3. Relate the findings from your interview back to the professional articles you selected to see if your work validates what the professional field is saying. (10 pts)
4. An appendix must include: a copy of your graded topic paper, articles summary papers, and questions (and any added question that emerged during the interview).
5. All papers submitted to me for credit must be typed, double-spaced, and reflect college-level writing (i.e., free from grammatical, spelling and typographical errors). Late papers (15% loss per class day). See class policy #5.

Biography of a Family Member

Suggested interview Questions

Introduction & Childhood

To start of with, I'd like to get a sense of what a typical day is like for you. Was yesterday a fairly typical day? (if not, go back another day or two until you find one the person says was pretty typical.) Why don't we go through that day and you can describe what you did, where you went, who you saw, and so on. How did you spend the morning, the afternoon, and your evening?

Can you recall your first memory? Also, can you tell me a little about your earlier life, before you become an adult? Where did you grow up? What your family was like? What you enjoyed doing when you were young? What are some of your fondest memories of childhood?

Young Adulthood

At what point do you think you stopped being a child and move into being an adult? What made that happen? Was adulthood everything you expected it to be? Was it better or worse than being a teenager? What do you think are the important challenges that people face when they're just entering adulthood?

Personality / Self-Concept

If I asked someone who really knew you well to tell me what you were like, how do you think they would describe you? (what are you like, as a person? What is important to you?).

Do you think you are the same sore of person now that you were as a teenager or young adult, or have you changed? In what ways are you the same now as you were back in the beginning of adulthood? In what ways have you changed? What accounts for the changes? (what made them happen, or how did they happen?).

Some people say they experienced a "mid-life crisis," Has that happened to you? (if yes, tell me about it. If no, how did you avoid it, or do you not believe it exist?)

Some people talk about turning 40 or 50 (or some age) years of age as being a little difficult to accept, or a traumatic experience. Did anything like that happen to you?

Social/Cultural Background

What kind of community did you grow up in? How has that affected your life and/or the kind of person that you are? What kind of community do you live in now? How does it affect your life now?

Stress and Coping

What would you regard as the major high points of your life so far? Why? (take advantage of opportunities to probe for the person's major life responsibilities, vocations, hobbies or interest, important social relationships, living situation, etc.). What have the major low point been? How did you get through those?

There's a lot of talk these days about stress. What are the major sources of stress in your life right now? When you encounter a stressful situation, how do you respond to it? Do you have certain ways to try to reduce or avoid stress?

Cognitive Development

How well do you think your mind is functioning now, compared to 10 or 20 years ago? Do you think you're as "sharp" intellectually as when you were a teenager or young adult? Have you noticed any changes, as you've grown older, in your ability to concentrate, or to learn new things, or in the way your memory works? Some people say that the older we get, the wiser we get. Has that been true for you?

Social Development

Outside of your immediate family, how much energy do you put into social relationships these days—relationships with friends, neighbors, co-workers, and so on? How often do you get a chance to be with friends and acquaintances? What sorts of things do you enjoy doing with them? What do you find to be particularly satisfying and meaningful in your friendships and social relationships these days? Do you think that, with age, friendships become more important, less important, or stay about the same? Explain.

Growing Older (for those under age 65)

As you think about growing older, becoming a "senior citizen" —is that something you look forward to, or something you're not too thrilled about? Explain. Have you thought about when you retire, or when you don't have the responsibilities of raising children any longer? What do you expect life to be like then? Have you made any plans for your "retirement" years?

Death and Dying

I guess one certainty about life is that it comes to an end for all of us. Have you thought much about your own mortality, your own death? Do you regard death and dying as something to fear, or something to look forward to, or just something that's going to happen? If someone were to tell you that you had 6 months to live, how would you respond to that? Do you feel prepared to die? Do you feel comfortable talking about dying?

Miscellaneous

Most of us are pretty satisfied with the way our life turned out, but once in a while we wish something could have been different. How about you? If you were able to change something about your current life or your past life, what would it be?

If you could be any age that you wanted to, what age would you choose to be? Why? What do you think the (best & worst) age period is, or time in of life is? Why?

Are there some major principles or values that you think have guided your life? What are the major lessons that you've learned from life?