

EMERGING ADULthood

Jeff Arnett

- **Emerging adulthood:** a distinct period of development that differs from adolescence and young adulthood
- Takes place between **18-25** years of age and is characterized by independent role exploration and frequent change

1970: typical 21 year old

- Married or about to get married
- Caring for a child or planning for a pregnancy
- Done with education or very close to being done
- Settled into a job or role of full-time mother

Today: typical 21 year old

- Marriage & parenthood – not for another 5 years
- Education may last more years
- Will experience job change

WHY?

- Invention of birth control
- Sexual revolution of 60s and 70s
 - Sex before marriage is relatively new in our society
- Increase in years devoted to higher education
- Change in women's roles
- Change in how young people view becoming an adult
 - You don't automatically become an adult when you get married or have children

LOVE:

- **Adolescents:** dating is primarily recreational and experimental
- **Emerging Adults:** dating is a serious search for a partner
- **Young Adults:** 75% married with children

WORK:

- **Adolescents:**
 - Service job
 - Purpose of work to support leisure activities
 - 95% enrolled in school
- **Emerging Adults**
 - Laying groundwork for adult occupation
 - 60% go on to higher education
 - 32% complete 4 or more years of college
 - Trying out unusual work/educational possibilities
- **Young Adults**
 - Settled into career
 - Only 10% involved in higher education

Age of instability... changing the plan (Jeff Arnett)

- Changing major in college
- Dropping out of college
- Dissatisfaction with work
- Romantic relationships

MOVING...

- Emerging adults have the highest rate of residential change of any age group
- **Why do emerging adults move so much?**
 - Going to college, wanting to move away from parents, dropping out of college, changing roommates, wanting to live with significant other, breaking up with significant other, graduating from college, new job, graduate school

EXAMINING WORLDVIEWS

- Enter emerging adulthood with worldviews learned in childhood and adolescence
- College students are exposed to greater diversity, and as a result, change worldviews
- Emerging adults who do not attend college are as likely as college students to examine existing worldviews and form their own set of beliefs and values

Most emerging adults are pessimistic about the future of society

Reports of drug use and loneliness are higher during emerging adulthood than at any other time during the lifespan

- Emerging adults can go out and drink 3 or 4 times a week without looking like alcoholics

What are the top 3 criteria for achieving adulthood?

- Accepting responsibility for yourself
- Making independent decisions
- Being financially independent

A few more points...

- EA extends identity development
- Vastly different from others
- Play a more active role in own development
- Without college, there is "less excitement and personal growth" in EA

INTIMACY

- Open, supportive, and tender relationship without the fear of losing one's self (TRUST)
- Able to put aside self at times because self is secure (SECURE IDENTITY)

ISOLATION

- Self-absorption, fear of losing one's self, unwillingness to compromise

FRIENDSHIPS COME BEFORE ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

- **In Adolescence**
 - Female friendships are "face to face" with emphasis on self- disclosure
 - Male friendships are "side by side" with emphasis on cooperation, leadership, and competition
- **In Adulthood**
 - Males demonstrate more competitiveness, less agreement, and less self-disclosure than females

Self-disclosure levels in friendships:

- LOWEST: male/male
- HIGHER: male/female
- HIGHEST: female/female
 - Females feel lonely if they are not self-disclosing (need to tell someone)

- In heterosexual marriages, males most often name their wives as their best friends
- Women most often name another female as their best friend (not their husband)
- Divorce is therefore emotionally devastating for men

IDENTITY STATUS AND INTIMACY

- FORECLOSED: (not conflict, commitment made)
 - Avoid conflict (in relationship and in life)
- DIFFUSED: (no conflict no commitment)
 - Difficulty with commitment, adopt partner's identity, lack depth
- MORATORIUM: (conflict but no commitment)
 - Still figuring it out/ in and out of relationships
- ACHIEVED: (conflict experienced and commitment made)
 - Most success in relationships

CAREER PLANS

- Males are more likely to enter into a committed relationship AFTER career plans are made
- Females need clarification of interpersonal relationships preceded career plans
- Women marry younger
- Women initiate divorce more often