Developmental Theories Factsheet

* Biological, psychological, and socio-cultural theory that attempts to explain the factors that influence differences in behaviors demonstrated by individuals by individuals at different ages

Important Terms

**Cohorts**: a group of individuals born in the same well-defined time period (used cautiously to understand the behavior of individuals of the same age)  
**Developmental tasks**: role expectations that challenge individuals to develop  
**Developmental theories**: attempt to describe patterns of growth and change throughout the human life span  
**Normative events**: in family life cycle theory, the predictable events in life that require a developmental change in behavior (also called normative crisis, contrast non-normative crisis)  
**Stimuli**:  Something causing, or regarded as causing a response

Basic Concepts/Principles

* Families, like individuals, have life spans with predictable stages marked by normative events (marriage, children, etc)
* At each stage the family faces specific developmental tasks that are prerequisites for moving on to the next task
* The challenges of stages not successfully completed may be expected to reappear as problems in the future
* Explains how a personal or a family-unit system adapts in response to internal or external stimuli

Criticisms

* Researchers must be careful to determine whether or not the differences between individuals of different ages are caused by the age-stage of the individual.
* Differences could also reflect social change rather than developmental

Erik Erikson’s Psychosocial Developmental Stages

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| **Approximate Age** | **Pyscho Social Crisis** | **Significant Relationship** | **Existential Question** | **Examples** |
| 0-2 yrs | Basic Trust vs. Mistrust | Mother | Can I trust the world? | Feeding, Abandonment |
| 2-4 yrs | Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt | Parents | Is it ok to be me? | Toilet Training, Clothing Themselves |
| 4-5 yrs | Initiative vs. Guilt | Family | Is it ok for me to do, move and act? | Exploring, Using Tools or Making Art |
| 6-12 yrs | Industry vs. Inferiority | Neighbours, School | Can I make it in the world of people and things? | School, Sports |
| 13-19 yrs | Identity vs. Role Confusion | Peers, Role Model | Who am I? What can I be? | Social Relationships |
| 20-24 yrs | Intimacy vs. Isolation | Friends, Partners | Can I love? | Romantic Relationships |
| 25-64 yrs | Generativity vs. Stagnation | Household, Workmates | Can I make my life count? | Work, Parenthood |
| 65-death | Ego Integrity vs. Despair | Mankind, My Kind | Is it ok to have \been me? | Reflection on Life |