Media and Aging

Ageism (1969) – ideas, attitudes, beliefs and practices on the part of individuals that are biased against persons or groups based on their older age.

National Institutes of Aging
"As society becomes more modernized, older people lose political and social power, influence and leadership. These social changes also may lead to disengagement of aging persons from Community life."

What is “Old”

- Is 40 old to a 21 year old?
- Is 40 old to a 60 year old?
- “Old” is socially constructed
Telomeres: 101

“Geneticist Richard Cawthon and colleagues at the University of Utah found shorter telomeres are associated with shorter lives.”

http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/chromosomes/telomeres/
Progeria

Unraveling the Mysteries of Progeria

Hutchinson-Gilford progeria syndrome is a rare and devastating genetic disorder in which patients appear normal at birth, but by 12 to 18 months display signs of premature aging such as hair loss, slowed growth, weakening of bone and joint integrity, and cardiovascular disease. Because no treatments currently exist, most patients with progeria die in their mid-teens from heart disease or stroke.

In 2003 a mutation in the lamin A gene, resulting in an incompletely processed version of the protein, was identified as the cause of progeria. Lamin A is one member of a family of lamin proteins that regulate the structure of the nucleus, which houses a cell’s genetic information. It is unclear how mutations of this nuclear protein cause the physiological effects seen in progeria patients or why there is a delay of 12 months in the onset of the disease phenotype since lamin A is equally expressed before and after birth.

Aging Statistics, or Why People Don’t Age

Last year 2,468,435 people didn’t get to age successfully-

- Heart disease: 597,689
- Cancer: 574,743
- Chronic respiratory diseases: 138,080
- Stroke (cerebrovascular diseases): 129,476
- Accidents (unintentional injuries): 120,859

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6208a8.htm
What I Would Like You to Remember...

- We strive to reduce the risk and effects of....
  Heart disease, Cancer, Respiratory diseases, stroke...

When we plan for retirement, we plan for the future at a certain point in our lives.
Life Course Model of Aging

- Preserve the health that you have
- Do as little damage to our bodies as possible
- Strengthen what we can
- Proactive aging versus reactive aging
  - Exercise versus taking medication to control the effects of a condition
Reframing Diet

- To make a positive change, we may need to first clearly define it.
Caloric Restriction

“Calorie restriction or Caloric restriction (CR) is the practice of limiting dietary energy intake in the hope that it will improve health and retard aging.

In human subjects, CR has been shown to lower cholesterol, fasting glucose, and blood pressure.”

http://www.sciencedaily.com/articles/c/calorie_restriction.htm

Talk to your Healthcare provider
Diet – What Does it Mean?

- Diet = Nutrition

“Studies on mice and rats have demonstrated that calorie restriction (CR) slows primary aging, has a protective effect against secondary aging, and markedly decreases the incidence of malignancies.” Exp Gerontol. Aug 2007; 42(8): 709–712.

http://www.walford.com/
Eating and Nutrition

- Percent of adults age 20 years and over who are obese: 35.9% (2009-2010)
- Percent of adults age 20 years and over who are overweight, including obesity: 69.2% (2009-2010)

Source: Health, United States, 2012, table 63

- Percent of adolescents age 12-19 years who are obese: 18.4% (2009-2010)
- Percent of children age 6-11 years who are obese: 18.0% (2009-2010)
- Percent of children age 2-5 years who are obese: 12.1% (2009-2010)


http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/overwt.htm
Reframing Exercise

- What happens if a limb is set in a cast for 6-8 weeks?
Exercise, or Movement?

- Exercise = movement
  - Muscles and atrophy
  - Look for “hidden” exercise
Inflammation and Aging

“Chronic inflammation is associated with a broad spectrum of neuro-degenerative diseases of aging... Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis...”

Inflammation and Diet

- Reduce chronic inflammation based on nutrition—replace animal fats, dairy products, MSG, alcohol with good fats such as avocados, nuts, fish and Olive oil.

http://www.medimiss.net/2012/10/foods-that-cause-inflammation.html
Mid-like Crisis, or, Mid-life Correction?

- The mortgage might be paid off = more disposable income
- The kids leave home, which means that we can develop a new relationship with our spouse or partner
- We have more leisure time to invest in ourselves and our hobbies
- We realize that life is finite and not infinite
- Fewer relationships, though with more focus and energy
Exercise the Mind

“Studies show that training, practice and education can enhance mental ability in old age.” Novak: Issues in Aging: (2012)

What Happens In the College Classroom

As an older student, you get to see what the Department of Education has done to the system. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was implemented to ensure that all students learn at the same pace and no one gets left behind. This Act applies to first and secondary schools, but its promising ability has echoed throughout post-secondary schools as well.

This is good, you say. It depends. If you require a little more explaining to get up to speed—which is highly probable since you’re an older student—you don’t mind paying higher taxes for the educational system. In fact, you might even send a letter to your local government thanking them for finally getting their acts together. On the other hand, if you’re a quick learner, you’re in for a treat. Your days will slosh ahead like the little engine that never did. You’re compelled to hear the same instruction repeatedly and over again, sparking visions of your professor getting his or her foot stuck between the metro train cars on their way to class.

Education and Midlife

“Many have turned to taking college courses as a way to learn new skills, have a career change, or get an advanced degree. Some see it as a way to reinvent themselves.”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/larry-atkins/adult-college-students_b_954199.html
Midlife Epiphany

James Herriot – began writing at age 50 (23+ Novels)

http://riddicksrealm.blogspot.com/2012/01/james-herriot.html
102-Year-Old Professor Hailed as Oldest U.S. Worker

Anna Brendle for National Geographic News
September 26, 2002

"I guess you could say living has been my hobby," said Ray Crist, a 102-year-old professor of environmental science at Messiah College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Crist was honored as America’s Oldest Worker in 2002 at a conference held earlier this month in Washington, D.C. The event was organized by Experience Works, a national, nonprofit organization that provides training and employment services for mature workers.

Retired at age 104
Please Remember This...

Cognitive impairment can be caused by stress, lack of proper nutrition, lack of social stimulation, the effects of medications, injury, an illness or disease.

Which one of the above do we have control over?

Forgetting where one parked their car, versus forgetting what their car looks like.
Continuity Theory of Aging

Older persons maintain a consistent pattern of behavior as they age, substituting similar roles for lost ones. Individuals do not change dramatically as they age. As we age, we become more of what we were when we were younger.

Social Networks

“Social networks encompass interrelationships among individuals that affect the flow of resources and opportunities. Family, friends, neighbors and acquaintances… can be powerful antidotes to some of the negative social consequences of the aging process….”

Aging and Culture

- Biological vigor/Crossover effect
- Psychological strength
- Skills for coping with stress
Networks and Support Systems

The networks that older persons of color and women:

• Spiritual
• Cultural, such as beliefs and values
• Social – friends and family
• Fictive kin
Coping With Stress in Later Years

• Did we control the situation, emotionally, or did the situation control us emotionally?
• Acknowledge what you have control over and what you do not have control over
• Use humor whenever possible
• Pets can significantly reduce stress
Activity Theory

The aging process is delayed when older persons remain active both socially and interacting with their environment.
Self-limiting Beliefs

• A renewed interest starts with a passion or sincere interest in a topic
• Sometimes these passions are not developed due to what might happen, or, fear of the unknown by making life changes
• When this happens, you can use the **but**... **however**... scenario, for example:

  • *I would like to write a book… but, I don’t know the first thing about writing a book,*
  • *however, I could take a writing class at the local community college*

  • *I would like to open my own business… but, I don’t have any capital to start with*
  • *however, I could take a course from the local Credit Union on writing a business plan*
A Renewed Interest in Religion

1,000+ articles were written on religion and mental health from 2000 – 2002, compared with 100 written from 1980 – 1982. Paul, 2005.
Do Older Persons Become More Spiritual, Later in Life?

“There seems to be little evidence of an aging effect whereby people get more religious as they grow older”  

“Over 50% of persons age 65 or older attend church at least weekly and 75% of older adults are members of a local church or synagogue”.  
Reported Health Benefits of Faith/Spirituality

• Using religious beliefs to cope with stress
• Higher self esteem
• Lower suicide rates
• Lower blood pressure, possibly leading to lower incidences of chronic heart disease  
  \[\text{Koenig, 1996}\]
• Boosted immune system,  \[\text{Koenig et al, 1997}\]
• Overall better subjective health,  \[\text{Drevenstedt, 1998}\]
Life Reimagined
Discovering Your New Life Possibilities

Richard J. LEIDER
Bestselling author of Repacking Your Bags

Alan M. WEBBER
Cofounder of Fast Company

Real Possibilities from AARP
The perfect way to rediscover what you want to do with your life.

Get Started

Here is just some of what Life Reimagined has to offer.

http://lifereimagined.aarp.org/
Aging with GRACE
What the Nun Study Teaches Us About Leading Longer, Healthier, and More Meaningful Lives
DAVID SNOWDON, PH.D.
Thank You For Taking Care of Yourself - Be Well

“Now Also When I Am Old and Gray Headed, O God, Forsake Me Not: Until I Have shewed They Strength Unto This Generation, and Thy Power to Every One That Is to Come” Psalm 71:18 KJV

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Sources


http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/overwt.htm

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/larry-atkins/adult-college-students_b_954199.html

http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/chromosomes/telomeres/

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http://www.sciencedaily.com/articles/c/calorie_restriction.htm


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