Chapter 9

EMERGING ADULTHOOD
Learning Objectives

LO 9.1 Name the five developmental features distinctive to emerging adulthood
LO 9.2 Describe some of the ways emerging adulthood varies among cultures, with specific reference to European and Asian countries
LO 9.3 Name the indicators that emerging adulthood is a period of peak physical functioning
LO 9.4 Summarize college students’ sleep patterns and the main elements of sleep hygiene
LO 9.5 Explain why young drivers have the highest rates of crashes, and name the most effective approach to reducing those rates
LO 9.6 Explain why rates of substance use peak in the early twenties and then decline
LO 9.7 Describe how growing abilities of pragmatism allow emerging adults to become better at addressing real-life problems
LO 9.8 Outline the development of reflective judgment in Perry’s theory
LO 9.9 Compare and contrast the tertiary education systems and college experiences in developed countries
LO 9.10 Name the various long-term benefits of tertiary education
Learning Objectives

LO 9.11 Describe the course of self-esteem from adolescence through emerging adulthood and explain the reasons for this pattern

LO 9.12 Describe the various forms identity development can take in emerging adulthood, and consider patterns of cultural and ethnic identity

LO 9.13 Summarize the changes in American gender beliefs in recent decades and include findings from research on gender stereotypes among college students

LO 9.14 Summarize Smith and Snell’s description of the religious beliefs and practices of American emerging adults

LO 9.15 Explain why emerging adults have often been at the forefront of political movements, and contrast this with their involvement in conventional politics

LO 9.16 Describe patterns of home-leaving in the United States and Europe and how this transition influences relations with parents

LO 9.17 Describe the role of intimacy in emerging adults’ friendships and the most common activities of emerging adult friends

LO 9.18 Explain how romantic relationships and sexual behavior change during emerging adulthood
Learning Objectives

LO 9.19 Describe the transition from school to full-time work in Europe and the United States, and explain why unemployment rates among emerging adults are higher than for older adults

LO 9.20 Explain how emerging adults use the internet and mobile phones to maintain social contacts
Physical Development
The Emergence of Emerging Adulthood

• Time between adolescence and adult roles:
  ▪ Marriage
  ▪ Increased education
  ▪ Opportunities for women
Map 9.1  Median Age at First Marriage in the United States

Which states have the lowest and highest age of first marriages? How does the median age of marriage differ between men and women? How might you explain these differences? (continued on next slide)
Map 9.1  Median Age at First Marriage in the United States  Which states have the lowest and highest age of first marriages? How does the median age of marriage differ between men and women? How might you explain these differences? (continued from previous slide)
There are five distinctive characteristics of emerging adulthood:

- Age of identity explorations—explore various possibilities of work and love
- Age of instability—exploration leads to instability
Figure 9.1  Rate of Residential Change, Past Year, in the United States  Why does the rate of residential change peak in emerging adulthood? Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (2003)
The Emergence of Emerging Adulthood

- Self-Focused—learning to be more self-sufficient before committing
- Age of feeling in-between—feeling of being in transition
- Age of possibilities—potential for dramatic changes

LO 9.1 Developmental Features of Emerging Adulthood
Figure 9.2  Do You Feel You Have Reached Adulthood?  Emerging adults often feel adult in some ways but not others. Source: Arnett (2000)
The Emergence of Emerging Adulthood the Cultural Context

- Europe—has longest emerging adulthood time
  - Age of marriage and parenthood around 30
- Asian—capable of supporting parents financially
  - This may curtail identity exploration seen in European countries

LO 9.2 Cultural Variations in Emerging Adulthood
The Emergence of Emerging Adulthood the Cultural Context

- Emerging adulthood varies across cultures
  - Developing countries tend to split between urban and rural
  - Urban young people more likely to experience emerging adulthood
• Emerging adulthood varies across cultures
  ▪ Rural young people have fewer opportunities for schooling and exploring
  ▪ Globalization and tertiary education participation increasing spread of emerging adulthood

LO 9.2 Cultural Variations in Emerging Adulthood
Physical Changes of Emerging Adulthood
The Peak of Physical Functioning

- Emerging adulthood is a period of peak physical functioning
  - VO₂ peaks in early 20s
  - Reaction, grip strength, and bone density are at its peak
  - Least susceptibility to physical illness
- Lifestyle encourages poor nutrition, high stress, and lack of sleep

LO 9.3 Physical Functioning
Physical Changes of Emerging Adulthood

Sleep Patterns and Deficits

- College students more likely to show symptoms of delayed sleep phase syndrome
- 2/3 sleep problems; 1/4 severe sleep disturbances
- Eveningness vs. Morningness

LO 9.4 Sleep Patterns
Physical Changes of Emerging Adulthood
Sleep Patterns and Deficits

• Important for sleep hygiene
  ▪ Wake up at same time each day
  ▪ Get regular exercise
  ▪ Take late afternoon naps
  ▪ Limit caffeine intake
  ▪ Avoid excessive alcohol intake

LO 9.4 Sleep Patterns
Risk Behavior and Health Issues
Injuries and Fatalities

- Automobile accidents major threat to life and health of emerging adults
- Car fatalities highest between ages 16–24
  - Inexperienced
  - Risky driving behavior—speed, driving under the influence

LO 9.5 Automobile Accidents
Figure 9.3  Rates of Car Injuries and Fatalities by Age  Why are rates so high at ages 16-24?  
Source: NHTSA (2009) (continued on next slide)
Figure 9.3 Rates of Car Injuries and Fatalities by Age Why are rates so high at ages 16-24? Source: NHTSA (2009) (continued from previous slide)
Risk Behavior and Health Issues
Injuries and Fatalities

- Socialization impacts number of accidents
- Personality characteristics can promote high risk driving
- Reducing fatalities includes parental involvement and monitoring
- Graduate Driver Licensing is also effective

LO 9.5 Automobile Accidents
The model shows that many factors contribute to crash risk, including social environment, driver characteristics, driving behaviors, and driving environment. Source: Shope (2002), p. 15.
Risk Behavior and Health Issues
Substance Abuse

- Substance abuse peaks in early 20s
- Peak and decline possibly explained by unstructured socializing
  - College age students have more unstructured time causing peak
- Role transition causes decline in substance abuse

LO 9.6 Substance Use
Figure 9.5  Marijuana Use and Binge Drinking in Emerging Adulthood Rates of most kinds of substance use peak in the early twenties. Source: Johnston et al. (2008)
Cognitive Development
Postformal Thought
Pragmatism

• Pragmatism—adapting logical thinking to the practical constraints of real life situations
• Aware of the impact of social factors in any given situation
• Comparable to dialectical thought—problems may have no clear solution

LO 9.7 Increases in Pragmatism
Postformal Thought
Reflective Judgment

• Reflective judgment - capacity to evaluate the accuracy and coherence of evidence and arguments

• William Perry’s Dualistic Thinking
  ▪ Multiple Thinking—awareness of duplicity
  ▪ Relativism—compare merits of competing views
  ▪ Commitment—commit to certain viewpoint

LO 9.8 Reflective Judgment
Tertiary Education

- Training beyond secondary school is called tertiary education
- This has become a normative experience with women outnumbering men

LO 9.9 Tertiary Education
Map 9.2  Worldwide Enrollment in Tertiary Education  Which countries have the highest and lowest enrollment rates for higher education? How do these rates compare to the enrollment rates for secondary school (as shown in Map 8.1)? What economic and cultural factors might explain these variations?
Tertiary Education Cultural Variations in Tertiary Education

- Japan—relaxed and undemanding in university years
  - 4 years of sanctioned activities to think
- Europe—no general education
  - 6 years studying specific discipline
- US/Canada—two years of general education
  - Allows time for exploration

LO 9.9 Tertiary Education
Tertiary Education
Cultural Variations

• Most Americans will take 6 years to earn a 4 year degree
• Major reason is financial
### TABLE 9.1 Ethnic Differences in Financial Support for College

“...In high school, I knew that if I wanted to go to college, it would be possible for me to find financial support either from my family or from scholarships, loans, or other programs. “

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

“...For as long as I wished to continue my education, It would be possible for me to find financial support either from my family or from scholarships, loans, or other programs. “

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“...It has been difficult for me to find the financial support to get the kind of education I really want. “

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.1  Ethnic Differences in Financial Support for College  Based on a sample of 304 emerging adults aged 20–29. Source: Arnett (2004)
Tertiary Education
Benefits of Tertiary education

- Higher earnings and occupational status
- Verbal and quantitative skills
- Oral and written communication
- Distinct identity
- Social confidence
- Increased self concept and psychological well-being

LO 9.10 Benefits of Tertiary Education
Emotional and Social Development
Emotional and Self-Development

Self-Esteem

- Self-esteem
  - Awkwardness of physical appearance declines
  - Peer evaluations from high school less likely
  - Family relationships tend to improve
  - Greater degree of control over one’s life

LO 9.11 Self-Esteem
Figure 9.6 Changes in Self-Esteem  Why does self-esteem rise during the emerging adult years?  
Identity formation historically thought to occur in adolescence
Emerging adulthood is a time period of importance
Erik Erikson focused on identity versus identity confusion as the adolescent crisis
Key areas to form identity are love, work, and ideology

LO 9.12 Identity Development
Emotional and Self-Development
Identity Development

• Three elements:
  ▪ Assessing abilities and strengths
  ▪ Identifications that have accumulated-modeling
  ▪ Assess opportunities available to them in society

• Marcia classified adolescents into one of 4 identity statuses

LO 9.12 Identity Development
### TABLE 9.2 The Four Identity Statuses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| No          | Foreclosure|    | Diffusion
|             | Moratorium |    |    |
Emotional and Self-Development
Identity Development

• Takes longer to reach identity achievement than expected
• Progress occurs but mainly related to occupation during emerging adulthood

LO 9.12 Identity Development
Figure 9.7  U.S. Study on Identity Achievement  With age, more young people are classified in identity achievement and fewer in diffusion. (A = achievement, M = moratorium, F = foreclosure, and D = diffusion.) Source: Waterman (1999)
Emotional and Self-Development

Identity Development

- Culture influences identity
  - Many cultures view self as interdependent
  - Exploration to establish identity not possible in some cultures
    - (I.E. work/relationships)
  - Exploration of ideology occurs more in Western countries
  - Globalization impacts development of bicultural identity and/or hybrid identity

LO 9.12 Identity Development
Emotional and Self-Development
Ethnic Identity

- Identity more complex if a member of ethnic minority group
- Internal conflict between ethnic minority belief system and majority belief system
- Four ways of responding to ethnic awareness

LO 9.12 Identity Development
### TABLE 9.3 Four Possible Ethnic Identity Statuses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification With Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Identification With Majority Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicultural</td>
<td>Separated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilated</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Examples:*

- **Assimilation:** “I don’t really think of myself as Asian American, just as American.”
- **Separation:** “I am not part of two cultures. I am just Black.”
- **Marginality:** “When I’m with my Indian friends, I feel White, and when I’m with my White friends, I feel Indian. I don’t really feel like I belong with either of them.”
- **Biculturalism:** “Being both Mexican and American means having the best of both worlds. You have different strengths you can draw from in different situations.”
Emotional and Self-Development
Gender Development

• Ideas about gender become more egalitarian
• Gender stereotypes still exist especially in regards to work
  ▪ Women’s work more likely to be rated less favorable than men’s

LO 9.13 Changes in American Gender Beliefs
Emotional and Self-Development

Gender Development

• Boomerang effect also exists
  ▪ Women whose work violated stereotypical gender expectations are rated higher than men’s work

• Generally, gender stereotypes lessen in emerging adulthood

LO 9.13 Changes in American Gender Beliefs
Figure 9.8  Change in American Gender Attitudes, 1977-2006  Over recent decades, views of gender roles have become less traditional. Source: General Social Survey (GSS), 1977-2006
Cultural Beliefs
Religious Development

• Smith and Snell (2010) found that:
  ▪ Religious beliefs were stronger than behavior
  ▪ Religious doctrine is not as important as a belief in God
  ▪ More tolerant of religious differences
  ▪ Religious beliefs related to higher well-being and lower high risk behaviors

LO 9.14 American Religious Beliefs and Practices
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selective adherents (30%)</td>
<td>Many in this group identify with a particular denomination, but they believe only part of the doctrine while rejecting other parts and adding other beliefs outside the doctrine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiously indifferent/disconnected (30%)</td>
<td>This group includes emerging adults who have little knowledge of or opinion on religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritually open (15%)</td>
<td>People in this group believe there is “something out there,” some kind of god or higher power, but are not sure what form it takes and they do not locate themselves in any religious tradition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed traditionalists (15%)</td>
<td>Includes people of strong conservative faith. They are the only ones who accept a religious doctrine and a religious tradition. They are the group most likely to attend religious services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irreligious (10%)</td>
<td>Actively hostile to religion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cultural Beliefs
Political Development

- Participation in conventional politics is low
- Volunteer work and political demonstration is high
- High involvement in political extremes

LO 9.15 Political Involvement
Social and Cultural Contexts of Development Family Relationships

- In U.S. most leave home at 18–19 yrs.
  - Common reasons for leaving are college, cohabitation, and independence
- Increased quality of parental interaction occur after leaving home
- Ethnic minorities staying at home longer
- 40% of all emerging adults will return to the nest at least once

LO 9.16 Leaving Home
Social and Cultural Contexts of Development Family Relationships

- European emerging adults stay at home longer than in United States
  - Value mutual support of family
  - Higher standard of living staying at home
- Parental understanding increases in emerging adults

LO 9.16 Leaving Home
Social and Cultural Contexts of Development Friendships

• Intimacy grows in importance
• More self-disclosure and fewer shared activities
• Increased time in unstructured activities
• There is a decline in leisure activities as people age

LO 9.17 Emerging Adults’ Friendships
• Emerging adulthood includes experiencing a romantic and sexual relationship
• Intimacy is a major component of emerging adult relationship
• Seek similarities in a partner
  ▪ Consensual validation

LO 9.18 Emerging Adults’ Romantic Relationships
Social and Cultural Contexts of Development Love and Sexuality

• Cohabitation common in U.S., Canada and northern European countries
• American cohabitation tends to be unstable and of short duration
• Those from divorced families likely to cohabitate
• Cohabitation before marriage is linked to higher likelihood of divorce

LO 9.18 Emerging Adults’ Romantic Relationships
Social and Cultural Contexts of Development Love and Sexuality

• Emerging adults and sexual behavior:
  - Have higher rates of hooking up compared to older adults
  - Contraceptive use high but inconsistent
  - Premarital sex rates highest in West and African countries
  - Peak period for sexually transmitted infections

LO 9.18 Emerging Adults’ Romantic Relationships
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Men (percent)</th>
<th>Women (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>19–20</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>18–21</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>16–21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>12–21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Hatfield & Rapson (2005).
Map 9.3  **HIV Population Worldwide**  Which countries have the highest population of adults living with HIV? How might you explain these variations?
Social and Cultural Contexts of Development Finding Adult Work

- Job search is systematic for some, but involves floundering for many.
- After tertiary education many struggle to find work that pays enough to live on.
- Without tertiary education basic skills are needed to obtain employment.

LO 9.19 Transition to Full-Time Work
Social and Cultural Contexts of Development Unemployment

- Unemployment rates twice as high as for adults beyond age 25
- Unemployment for young adults and teens especially high for minorities
  - Manufacturing jobs have diminished
- Urban decline also impacted rise in unemployment
Social and Cultural Contexts of Development Unemployment

William Wilson proposed correctives:

- Upgrade education
- Improve school-to-work programs
- Improve access to employment
- Provide government-funded public service jobs

LO 9.19 Transition to Full-Time Work
Figure 9.9  U.S. Unemployment Rates for Emerging Adults (Ages 16-24)
What explains the differences among ethnic groups? Source: Based on U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010
Social and Cultural Contexts of Development Media Use

• Internet use:
  ▪ Used for college work
    – Hours online negatively correlated with grades
  ▪ Social networking
  ▪ Pornography

• Mobile phones - social networking and communicating with friends

LO 9.20 Internet and Mobile Phone Use