No Longer a Teen: Development in Young Adulthood

Human Growth and Development
Presentation Notes
No Longer a Teen: Development in Young Adulthood

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Of course, we all know that we change as we age. What kinds of changes happen in the young adult years?
Piaget is one of the leading developmental theorists. He believed there are four stages of cognitive development, the fourth being the one we use in adulthood. This stage allows us to think abstractly and make decisions based on this kind of abstract thinking.

Perry focused on intellectual and ethical development. He also talked about the way we think about things. He said that in our childhood and teen years, we often think in terms of absolutely right or absolutely wrong. As we mature, we learn that most things are relative and, as Piaget stated, we must begin to think abstractly and form our opinions and actions based on the ability to compare outcomes.

Havighurst took a different approach. He studied the “maturational tasks of early adulthood.” These are the things that move us from child to adult. We’ll talk about these a bit later in the lesson.
Beginning in 1968, Perry advanced a theory that male teenagers moving into young adulthood go through three distinct phases:

- **Dualism** – “Things are absolutely right or absolutely wrong.”
- **Relativism** – “Things can be right or wrong, depending on the circumstances.”
- **Commitment** – “Because of evidence and my own values, I have come to my own beliefs.”

Cognitive development for adults moves from the dualistic thinking of adolescence to the more flexible thought patterns of adulthood. Young adults switch emphasis from adding new knowledge to applying the knowledge gained through school and training to their new careers and life experiences.
In early adulthood, physical development finally begins to slow down.
- Females reach their full height at about age 18.
- Males reach their full height at about age 20.

Lifestyle has an impact.
- Drinking, smoking, over-eating and lack of exercise can impact the biological processes.

Things are changing! Boys are becoming men, and girls are becoming women. Boys are getting taller and gaining upper body strength. Girls are reaching their full height, and body shapes are changing. Males reach their full height at about age 20. Women will be at their full height by about age 18.

While genetics play a large part in our physical development, lifestyle also makes a difference. Drinking, smoking, nutrition and exercise habits all impact our growth and development, either in a positive way or in a negative way. Let’s explore those for a few minutes.
Smoking is still a major cause of illness and death in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has some alarming statistics.
In this short video, we see children of families impacted by lung cancer.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Cancer in the Family. A news segment about individuals with a family member whose cigarette smoking led to a cancer diagnosis. (2013).
http://youtu.be/9g-uhoCsZVc
Alcohol is a drug. It impacts the body in the same way many other drugs do. It is the third leading cause of lifestyle-related deaths in the United States.
Two problems associated with drinking are binge-drinking and alcoholism. Binge-drinking can lead to students falling behind in school, drunk driving and having unprotected sex. Binge-drinking peaks at about 21 to 22 years of age and then declines through the remainder of the twenties. One in nine individuals who drink continues the road to alcoholism.

Let’s look at this survey about high-risk drinking behaviors.

National Institute of Health
Rethinking Drinking. Alcohol and Your Health.
http://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/IsYourDrinkingPatternRisky/WhatsAtRiskOrHeavyDrinking.asp
Drug use is highest among people in their late teens and twenties.

In 2011, 23.8 percent of 18- to 20-year-olds reported using an illicit drug in the past month.

By the time individuals reach this young adulthood, many have reduced their use of alcohol and drugs. A recent study showed that only 20 percent of college male students were more likely to take drugs than their female counterparts.

Early adulthood brings some special challenges, and one of them is the widespread use of “recreational drugs.” This is a period of life when people make important decisions about how they will live the rest of their lives. No one ever sets out to become an addict.
Look at the huge spikes in drug use in the 18 – 29 age groups!
Food Behaviors

- Our culture emphasizes
  - Food
  - Exercise
  - Body shape