Why is it important to understand the family life cycle?
The family lifespan is often referred to as the family life cycle. The stages of the family life cycle can be described as:

- Beginning Stage
- Childbearing Stage
- Parenting Stage
- Launching Stage
- Mid-Years Stage
- Aging Stage

The stages do not occur in exactly the same way in all families. Some families can be in two stages at one time. For example, the same family could be living with an adolescent and launching an older child.

What stage is your family currently in? Your grandparents? Neighbors? Friends? What are examples of characteristics and tasks unique to specific stages of the family life cycle? What are examples of characteristics and tasks common among most or all stages of the family life cycle?
Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and even William Shakespeare have written about the developmental stages individuals pass through as their lives move from birth to death. Jay Haley, in 1973, identified a model of similar stages for families. Each of Haley’s six stages involves different emotional and physical processes.

The stages of the Family Life Cycle can be described as:

- Leaving home
- Getting married or committing to a couple relationship
- Parenting the first child
- Living with an adolescent
- Launching the children
- Retirement and old age

Remember the family life stages are fluid, without rigid boundaries, and that they can encompass the emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual aspects of life.
Acquired roles: The roles you assume because of choice such as husband, wife, co-worker or vice-president

Character roles: The roles you demonstrate because you have been labeled and can include being an athlete, brain, breadwinner, baby, scapegoat or victim.

Given roles: The roles we are given because of a birth in the family such as mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent, aunt or cousin.

Some roles happen by chance (given roles) and others by choice (acquired roles). The roles we choose for ourselves can be changed.

If we are not happy with our acquired roles, we can simply make the change such as:

• Changing positions at the workplace
• Deciding to get married or staying single
• Finding a new job
• Getting a divorce

What are some roles you have as a family member? What are some roles you have at work or at school?

Which roles do you consider to be your most important?

What roles will you probably retain throughout your life?

Which roles will you have in the future that you do not have now?

Is it ever difficult for you to choose which role to handle at a given time? If so, how difficult is it? Why?
The Beginning Stage
• Adjusting to married life
• Completing an education
• Making career decisions
• Starting a home

What roles may be assumed by individuals in this stage?
The Childbearing Stage
• Planning the arrival of a baby
• Birth of children
• Parenting roles and responsibilities
• Adjustments to lifestyles

How will roles change in the family during the childbearing stage?
The Parenting Stage – Includes toddler, preschool, school-age and adolescent children.

- Adjustments to lifestyles and schedules
- Addition of more children
- Family life revolves around the children
- Family health and safety

What roles may be assumed by individuals in this stage?
The Launching Stage
- Preparing for children to become independent
- Children leave the home
- Adjusting to the “empty nest”
- Opportunities to reconnect with spouse

How will roles change in the family during the launching stage?
Why is it called an “empty nest?”
The Mid-Years Stage
- Parents refocus on their relationship
- Height of career and earnings
- May become grandparents
- Health problems may be an issue

What roles may be assumed by individuals in this stage?

What happens when an adult child moves back home due to economic or emotional reasons?
The Aging Stage
- Grandparenting
- Health issues
- Retirement
- Travel and hobbies

What can disrupt the normal cycle? What happens to an individual’s role when an older family member needs constant care?

The family life cycle may be a combination of several stages at once.
What responsibilities do you have as a family member?

Responsibility

A duty or obligation upon one that moral, or legal accountability in to behave correctly in respect or ability or authority to act or decisions independently.

What are some responsibilities of children?
What are some responsibilities of parents?
Why is it important to share responsibilities among family members?
How can the responsibilities of the family be shared in a multigenerational household?
What are some rights and duties of parents? As you are reading the rights and duties of parents, you may opt to have the students make a list of them. Were you surprised to learn that the state of Texas has a family code specifically outlining the rights and duties of parents?

State of Texas
Family Code Chapter
http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.151.htm
Do you think maintaining a healthy relationship among family members can be considered a responsibility? If so, whose responsibility is it? How can you improve or maintain good family relationships?
Click on hyperlink to view YouTube™ video:
Laura Kastner: Extreme Emotions
Dr. Kastner discuss extreme emotions in extreme thoughts and avoiding the negativity track again.
https://youtu.be/eCskmRQA-xY
Review

- Describe roles and responsibilities in the beginning stage.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities in the launching stage.
- Explain how an individual may be in a combination of several stages at once.
- According to the state of Texas, what are some of the rights and duties of parents?
- Why is it important to maintain a healthy relationship among family members?
References and Resources

Images:
- Photos obtained through a license with Shutterstock.com™. (All photos on slides)

Textbooks:

Websites:
- State of Texas Family Code Chapter
- University of Nebraska Families Across the Lifespan: The Normal, To-Be-Expected, Satisfactions and Challenges Couples and Families Experience
  http://amtpubs.unl.edu/fixsys/2224/Build/g2224.pdf
References and Resources

Websites
- Web MD
- YouTube:
  Laura Kastner: Extreme Emotions
  Dr. Kastner discuss extreme emotions in extreme thoughts and avoiding the negativity track again:
  https://youtu.be/wC6kMrOJ3wY