

Module 5: Life Span Development

Topic 4 Content: Middle Adulthood

Introduction

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

Click the circles at the bottom of the screen to discover more about middle adulthood.



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Changes

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

CHANGES

Middle adulthood spans from forty to sixty years in age.



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Physical Changes

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

PHYSICAL CHANGES

Physical changes are subtle. While a general decline in muscle strength, stamina, and visual acuity occur, these changes are gradual.



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Male Hormones

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

MALE HORMONES

Men gradually begin to experience a decline in the hormone testosterone. This hormone maintains muscle, strength, stamina, and sex drive.



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Female Hormones

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

FEMALE HORMONES

Women experience a decline in hormone levels. In their late forties or early fifties, women experience menopause, or the end of menstruation. This leads to physical and often emotional changes. Physically, the decline of estrogen and progesterone causes muscle loss, reduced bone density, and reduced skin elasticity. Erratic hormone shifts in the years leading up to menopause may cause hot flashes and moodiness.



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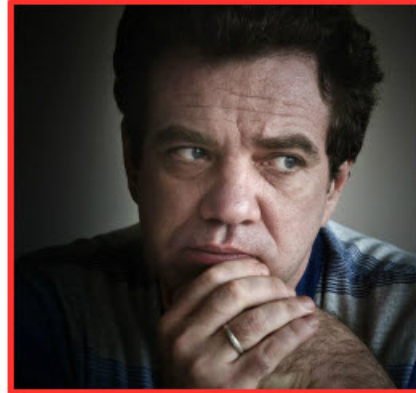
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Reassessment

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

REASSESSMENT

Around age forty, many adults start thinking in terms of the years they have left, instead of the years they have ahead. These feelings may originate from an individual's belief that half of his or her life has already been lived. Sometimes this fact is highlighted by a major life event, like a serious illness or the death of a parent.



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Midlife Crisis

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

MIDLIFE CRISIS

Although not everyone has one, a midlife crisis occurs when a person reassesses his or her current path in life and considers making changes. Some of these changes may be big, like switching careers or getting a divorce; others changes may be less dramatic, like getting a make-over or purchasing a car.



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Sandwich Generation

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

SANDWICH GENERATION

The term “Sandwich Generation” refers to the time when those in middle adulthood find themselves simultaneously caring for their children and their aging parents. Trying to find a balance and provide adequate attention and care for two generations can cause tremendous stress. The number of adults in the “Sandwich Generation” is increasing.



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Empty Nest Syndrome

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

EMPTY NEST SYNDROME

Empty nest syndrome occurs when children mature and leave home to begin their own lives. With all children gone and more free time on their hands, some middle aged adults see this as an optimistic time to begin a new chapter in their lives; others experience a period of difficult adjustment due to the sense of loss. Married couples often report increased happiness in their relationship.



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