

**MODULE 54 ADULTHOOD: PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE, AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Women experience MENOPAUSE, as menstrual cycles end, usually within a few years of age 50.
- With age, sexual activity lessens.
- Physical exercise not only enhances muscles, bone, and energy and helps to prevent obesity and heart disease, it also stimulates brain cell development and neural connections, thanks perhaps to increased oxygen and nutrient flow.
- We are more likely to rust from disuse than to wear out from overuse.

**COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

- Remembering seems also to depend on the type of information we are trying to retrieve. If the information is meaningless – nonsense syllables or unimportant events – then the older we are, the more errors we are likely to make.
- CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY is a study in which people of different ages are compared with one another. LONGITUDINAL STUDY is research in which the same people are restudied and retested over a long period.
- Memory declining with age is known as terminal decline.

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

- SOCIAL CLOCK is the culturally preferred timing of social events such as marriage, parenthood, and retirement.
- Erik Erikson declared that two basic aspects of our lives dominate adulthood. Intimacy and Generativity... affiliation and achievement, attachment and productivity, connectedness and competence. Sigmund Freud put it most simply: the healthy adult is one who can love and work.
- Marriage is a predictor of happiness, sexual satisfaction, income, and physical and mental health.
- Work can help to increase the likelihood of happiness.
- Brain scans of older adults show that the amygdala, a neural processing center for emotions, responds less actively to negative event and it interacts with the hippocampus, a brain memory-processing center. Brain-wave reactions to negative images also diminish with age.
- Erik Erikson called a sense of integrity – a feeling that one's life has been meaningful and worthwhile.

**BE ABLE TO ANSWER:** Research has shown that living together before marriage predicts an increased likelihood of future divorce. Can you imagine two possible explanations for this correlation?

**PRACTICE FRQ:** Describe two changes in cognitive ability during adulthood. What is one factor that can prevent the steepest decline?