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Lifespan Development

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Preface

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About *Lifespan Development*

Lifespan Development aligns to the topics and objectives of most introductory developmental psychology and human development courses taught across departments. Grounded in foundational theories and scientific research, the text teaches students about core aspects of human development—physical, cognitive, social, emotional—across the lifespan. A primary goal of the book is to incorporate content, scholarship, and activities that explore a variety of perspectives that encourage all students to feel seen and included.

Most importantly, the text is grounded in sound, current scholarship. Both researchers and practitioners in the

discipline sometimes have complicated and disparate views on issues that are simply part of understanding the lifespan and supporting people through its phases. *Lifespan Development* strives to openly address complex topics with scholarly responsibility and an effort to increase equity and inclusion in the research presented, as well as to foster student engagement in the classroom through relevant examples and applications. Focused on driving meaningful and memorable learning experiences, the narrative places concepts in contexts that give students the means to understand human development and how that knowledge can be applied to and improve their own lives and the lives of others.

Pedagogical Foundation

Learning Objectives

Every module begins with a set of clear and concise learning objectives designed to help the instructor decide what content to include or assign, and to guide student expectations of learning. After completing the end-of-module exercises, students should be able to demonstrate mastery of the learning objectives.

Key Features

- **It Depends:** Weaves scientific inquiry by presenting emerging research on topics that are complex, nuanced, and on which the scientific community may not have consensus.
- **Intersections and Contexts:** Highlights the interconnectedness of contexts, developmental systems, and the individual. It encompasses contexts such as culture, race, class, gender, and typical vs. atypical development.
- **Life Hacks:** Provide specific guidance on how students can apply the material in the chapter to improve their own lives and the lives of others.

Section Summaries

Section summaries distill the information in each section for both students and instructors down to key, concise points addressed in the section.

Key Terms

Key terms are bold and are followed by a definition in context. Definitions of key terms are also listed in the Glossary, which appears at the end of the chapter.

Assessments

A variety of assessments allow instructors to confirm core conceptual understanding, elicit brief explanations that demonstrate student understanding, and offer more in-depth assignments that enable learners to dive more deeply into a topic.

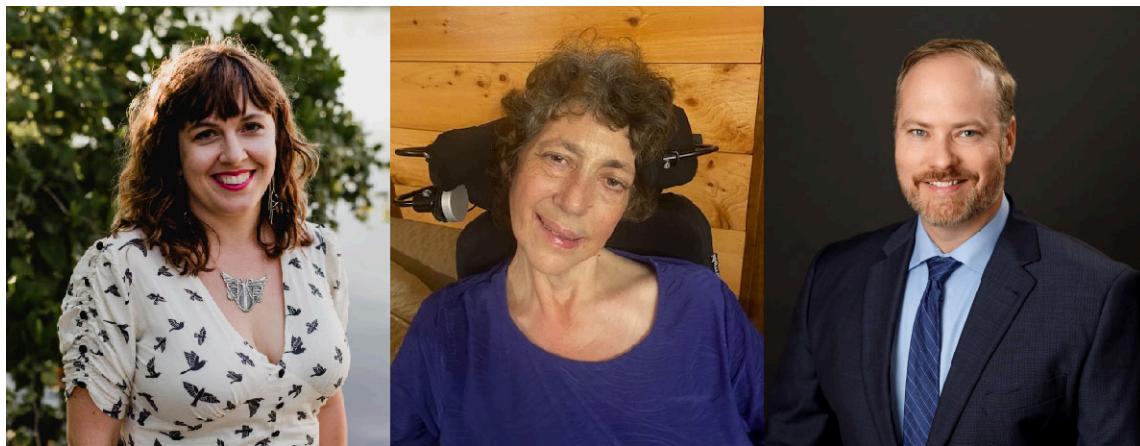
- **Review Questions** test for conceptual understanding of key concepts.
- **Check Your Understanding Questions** require students to explain concepts in words.
- **Personal Application Questions** dive deeply into the material to support longer reflection, group discussion, and life application of course concepts.
- **Essay Questions** require more complex and comprehensive analysis of concepts, including the intersection of topics as they are applied across the lifespan.

Answers to Questions in the Book

The end-of-chapter Review, Check Your Understanding, and Essay Questions are intended for homework assignments or classroom discussion; thus, only a limited number of student-facing answers for Review Questions are provided. Answers and sample answers are provided in the Instructor Solution Manual, for instructors to share with students at their discretion, as is standard for such resources.

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Senior contributing authors: Diana Riser (left), Rose Spielman (center), David Biek (right).

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Rose Spielman, Connecticut State Community College

Rose Spielman was the content lead for the OpenStax *Introduction to Psychology* textbook. She has worked as a licensed clinical psychologist for over 30 years, with the last ten years at the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services. She has also taught for decades, most recently at CT State Community College. She has a husband, two young adult children, and two rescue dogs. While working on *Lifespan Development*, Dr. Spielman was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a rare, fatal neurodegenerative disease, which attacks the body's motor neurons. Prior to her ALS symptoms, Dr. Spielman enjoyed bicycling, camping, and hiking with family and friends.

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Instructor's answer guide. The instructor's answer guide provides assessment support including comprehensive guidance for essay questions.

Test bank. With over 400 true/false, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions in our test bank, instructors can customize tests to support a variety of course objectives. The test bank is available in Word format.

PowerPoint lecture slides. The PowerPoint slides provide images, key course concepts, and teacher notes as a starting place for instructors to build their lectures.

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Lifespan Psychology and Developmental Theories

1



FIGURE 1.1 Where are each of these travelers in Grand Central Station headed? What hopes and dreams fuel their day? What experiences and responsibilities shape that day? The underpinnings of those answers lie in the study of lifespan development. (credit: modification of work “Grand Central Terminal, Midtown, Manhattan” by Jeffrey Zeldman/Flickr, CC BY 2.0)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- 1.1** Psychology and Human Development
- 1.2** Themes of Development
- 1.3** Major Theories and Theorists
- 1.4** Contexts and Settings of Development
- 1.5** Lifespan Development as a Science: Research Methods

WHAT DOES PSYCHOLOGY SAY? You’ve been looking forward to your trip to New York City. Upon landing at JFK airport, you take the subway to reach Midtown Manhattan. The train accelerates and you watch the platform disappear as you find a seat and take your first look around the car. There is life here, rocketing through the underground tunnels, and a broad cross-section of human experience. You steal glimpses of your fellow riders’ physical appearance, belongings, interactions, and facial expressions. You wonder where each of them is going and what they hope to accomplish today. At each station, the train stops, and some people exit and even more board, the crowd growing as it nears Manhattan.

Like many students studying lifespan development, you likely share a curiosity about the people around you. You may wonder:

- What are the ideal environments for people to develop and flourish in? How and why are these different for different people?
- How straightforward is the path through life’s journey? Are there twists and turns, detours, and backtracking?
- What kinds of changes can we typically expect across the lifespan?

- Are there particular points in time during the lifespan where certain experiences are essential to development?
- How does an individual perceive and respond to expectations from their social and cultural environments at different points in their life?
- How much variation should we expect to see—from person to person, group to group, culture to culture—as we attempt to uncover patterns of development across the lifespan?

In this course, you can explore questions like these, contemplate what answers can be found through psychological research, and learn more about your own life journey.

1.1 Psychology and Human Development

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the differences, similarities, and intersections between the fields of psychology, lifespan development, and human development
- Identify major questions of interest and topics of research within the field of lifespan development
- Differentiate between the various domains within the field of lifespan development

Hosea's eighteen-year-old son, Landon, is about to graduate from high school. The family has taken several road trips to visit various colleges around the region, touring each campus and attending a football game with a particular interest in each school's marching band, given Landon's dedication to the trombone. So far, Landon has only expressed interest in two of the schools—both have more than 30,000 students, an exciting campus atmosphere, and large marching bands. Hosea knows his son, though. Landon is quite capable of accomplishing just about anything he sets his sights on, but often needs prodding and a bit of time to get started on a new goal. Hosea worries about the size of the two campus communities. Will Landon get lost among the crowd? Who will keep him on track? And then there's the fact that Landon doesn't know what he wants to study. Hosea also wonders how his own role as a father will change and what the right level of support to provide his son will be. What will he do for a new exercise hobby now that Landon, his best disc golf partner, is moving farther away? All these thoughts flood Hosea's mind as he navigates the morning commute.

Hosea is grappling with various worries and uncertainties related to Landon's impending graduation and transition to college. The study of lifespan development is focused on uncovering the psychological processes behind transitions like this. These processes help us to understand and explain an individual's situation and concerns at a moment in time, as well as in all humans across the entire arc of the lifespan. As we seek to identify those connections and commonalities, we also find differences based on the wide variety of individual experiences, environmental conditions, and cultural backgrounds that make up the varied tapestry of human experience. We begin our journey into lifespan developmental psychology by defining the field, including its scope and relationship to other areas of science, outlining the major questions the discipline is concerned with studying, and previewing the components of an individual's psychological development.

Lifespan Development as a Field of Study

In studying lifespan development, you'll encounter several related scientific areas, often referred to as fields or disciplines, that are sometimes discussed nearly interchangeably. Let's first situate lifespan psychology within the broader science of psychology, and then examine the meanings of the different terms for the field of study.

Psychology

The scientific study of the mind and all the behavior it produces is **psychology**. That is a short and simple definition, but it covers nearly the entire range of human experience. It recognizes that the mind plays a central role in human functioning and is the origin of all behavior and the center of all our responses to our environment.

Our mind, believed to be located within our brain, helps us to both shape and react to the world around us