

CHANGING RELATIONSHIP IN LATE ADULTHOOD

INTRODUCTION

The most important thing in life is relationship. Whether it is friendship or family ties, having relationships with others is what keeps us connected. Our lives are shaped and shared by the company of others-both consensual and non- consensual. Throughout our lives, a group of people journey with us (such as our family members, friends etc), providing support in good and bad times and a protective, secure cushion under ideal conditions. The term social convoy is used to refer to this group. A functioning network of social ties is necessary in times of stress, illness, and aging and includes both emotional support and practical assistance as needed. This enables the person to explore and learn about the world. The personal relationships special to late adulthood are: marital relationships, widowhood, children and grandchildren, siblings, and friends.

1. Marriage and family

relationships:- Unlike other family relationships, marriage at least in contemporary western cultures is generally formed by mutual consent. It has characteristics of both friendship and kinship ties. It can provide both the highest positive and negative emotional feelings a person experiences. Marriage relations take on a special nature in late adulthood unlike that in previous stage of the life cycle. the time perspective of the elderly together with the shift in roles away from parenting work give marriage a different focus at this time in life.



2. Relationship with the spouse:- The first important adjustment entering on family relationships of the elderly people is that they must establish good relationship with their spouses. Being in love is still important for successful marriage in late adulthood. Older spouses also value companionship and open expression of feeling, as well as respect and common interests. But problems may arise from difference in values, interest, and philosophies. With the role change from the worker to retired, most men spend much more of their time at home that they did before. How well they will adjust to each other in the old age when the retirement forces them together depends on how many interests they have in common.



3. Relationship with growing children:- Aging adults seek to spend more of their time with the people who mean the most to them, such as their children. Contrary to popular belief, older people generally do not want to live with their children. The elderly value their privacy and independence. Those with adult children prefer to live near but not with them. Ill health often makes older people more dependent and thereby increases contact with family member. When older people have to live with one of their children because of parent's failing health, they are likely to feel grateful for having someone to care for them, sad and angry about needing the care, and distressed about leaving their home. Elderly individuals who live alone usually have a high frequency of social contact with at least one of their children.

4. Widows and widowers:- One of the painful inevitabilities of intimate relationships in old age is that one partner will lose the other and face the pain of bereavement. Sometimes widowhood comes unexpectedly.



5. Friendships:- Happiness and well-being in old age are not guaranteed by having children and grandchildren. However, satisfaction and happiness in later life are consistently associated with have friends. Friendship is unique relationship involving mutual give-take-changes. By late life, a person's social network consists of friends for several decades. Among older adults, friendships typically are no longer linked to work and parenting. Instead, they focus on companionship and support. Friends serve as confidants and sources of support in ways that children, nieces, and nephews, for example, typically do not. Friends are powerful source of immediate enjoyment, the family provides greater emotional security and support. Friends are a buffer against the impact of stress on physical and mental health. Friends provide us with acceptance and companionship, which are as vital to our sense of self-worth in adulthood as they are when we are younger. Friendship is a unique relationship because people choose their friends.

6. Divorce:- Divorce in late life is rare, couple who take this step usually do it much earlier. Most couples apparently figure they have made it this far, so they will stay together, no matter what. Older divorced men and women are markedly less happy and more pessimistic about life than are their married or widowed counterparts. Divorced and separated people express much less satisfaction with family life than married people do. Divorced men also are extremely isolated, much more so than divorced women. Both sexes, mental illness and death rates are higher, perhaps because social support networks for older divorced people are inadequate.



7. Elderly singles:- “Never married”. The proportion of older men and women who have never married has declined dramatically in recent years. These people may constitute a “distinct type of social personality” that does not need or want intimacy. Recent studies have found that many elder singles have rich social networks. In general, elderly singles tend to be independent, and to express considerable satisfaction with their lives. The elderly singles who remain single tend to have more emotional and physical pathology than the married elderly does.



8. Relationship with siblings:- Many of the older people have at least one living sibling and this relationship is likely to be the longest-lasting one of their lives. Brothers and sisters play important roles in the support networks of older people. Siblings, more than their family members, provide companionship, as friends do but siblings more than friends also provide emotional support.

9. Retirement:- Leaving a career can feel like a major life change. Causing anxiety, depression and other negative changes in the self-concept and self-identity. Retirement can have indirect repercussions on the cognitive functioning of the elderly person, since retiring subjects often go through an impoverishment of their social networks and daily activities. Retirement repercussions related to emotional and subjective life also