



SECOND EDITION

# Counseling Individuals Through the Lifespan

Daniel W. Wong  
Kimberly R. Hall  
Lucy W. Hernandez

# **Counseling Individuals Through the Lifespan**

**Second Edition**

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# Counseling Individuals Through the Lifespan

**Second Edition**

**Daniel W. Wong**

*Our Lady of the Lake University*

**Kimberly R. Hall**

*Mississippi State University*



Los Angeles | London | New Delhi  
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne



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# Preface

Since the inception of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards, human growth and development has been maintained as one of the eighth required core content areas in counselor education. The objective of this textbook is to present human development from a counseling perspective, and this unique perspective can be applied in practice across the lifespan of clients. Professional counselors have distinguished themselves among helping professionals through a focus and foundational framework in normal human growth and development over the lifespan. Knowledge of human development incorporated within the counseling practice makes the counselor more sensitive to the complexities of human development and able to translate sound theoretical knowledge into effective counseling practice. Professional counselors are trained and dedicated to the promotion of human growth and development across the lifespan of individuals from diverse backgrounds. They engage in practices that are developmentally appropriate in nature and life stages and act as advocates against any barrier that limits human development.

When we embarked on the journey to work on the second edition, we included updated information on the 2016 CACREP standards, added the latest information on updates and best practices in counseling, and revised and updated the references. We also added pertinent issues that presently affect school children, their families, and school counselors, such as bullying and acts of violence in schools and the issues related to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic crisis of 2020 that affected large groups of people from diverse backgrounds across their lifespan.

We appreciate all the feedback we received from our colleagues and students about this textbook over the past 3 years, and some have taken their precious time to make valuable suggestions and point out errors made in the text. Learning and writing are a journey that will never end, and we will continue to improve our work on this very important topic in the years to come.

We hope that this textbook will provide practical, knowledge-based, and educational information to students, professional counselors, and counselor educators about the relationship between human development and counseling. We believe that our mission is accomplished if this textbook can facilitate a positive learning experience for readers.



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PART

# I



*Every human being is the author of his own health or disease.*

Buddha

The study of human development is complex and involves an in-depth analysis of the processes of change and stability through one's **lifespan**. These processes require a comprehensive and systematic **scientific inquiry** to investigate human development while considering growth, development, and **maturation** through the lifespan. Scientists refer to the elements of change and constancy over the lifespan as development, which is defined as the orderly and sequential changes that occur with the passage of time as an organism moves from **conception** to death. Development occurs through processes that are biologically programmed within the organism and processes of interaction with the environment that transform the organism. Human development over the lifespan is a process of becoming something different while remaining in some respects the same. Perhaps what is uniquely human is that we remain in an unending state of development. Life is always an unfinished business, and death is its only cessation. The study of human development, from earlier days, grows out of Darwin's desire to understand evolution. The field of human development research became a recognized **discipline** when scientists from different disciplines demonstrated interest in better understanding **human growth and development** through the lifespan, as it relates to the contributions of **genetic traits and composition**, physical and psychological development, parental influence, and school and learning contributions, including cultural, community, and societal contributions. Scientists who pursue the study of human development intend to describe, explain, predict, and modify human growth development through the lifespan (Bornstein & Lamb, 2005).

The objective of this textbook is to present human development from a counseling perspective and to show how this unique perspective can be applied through the lifespan. According to the 2016 Standards of the **Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)**, it is essential to understand human development as students, educators, and professional counselors in the counseling field.

This chapter provides an overview of those factors influencing consistency and change and highlights the complexity and multidimensional nature of human development as it unfolds

through one's lifespan. In addition, this chapter describes the importance and essential contribution that the knowledge and understanding of human development provides to counselors and their effective practice. Specifically, after completing this chapter, readers will be able to

1. describe what is meant by viewing development from a lifespan perspective,
2. explain the multidimensional and multidirectional nature of lifespan development,
3. describe what is meant by viewing development within a contextual framework,
4. discuss the biopsychosocial approach to defining human development and the multiple interactive forces that shape human development, and
5. explain the value of understanding human development across the lifespan for the counseling process.

## THE COUNSELING CONNECTION

Counselors, by the very nature of their vocational calling, tend to be doers. As professionals, we review the research and the emerging theories in an attempt to better understand the human condition. However, it is more than for the sake of understanding that we pursue these endeavors. Counselors seek to translate theory, research, and knowledge into practice. As such, the question to be asked as you proceed through this text is: “What value does understanding human development through the lifespan, or more specifically this theory, have for me, as I attempt to make practice decisions in service of another?”

While this question may be challenging and difficult to answer, it needs to be asked. This question can serve as a guide to extracting meaning throughout the remainder of this text. And it is a question that we feel will not only be answered in the pages that follow but will be answered in a way that makes you a more effective counselor.

## Uniqueness of the Counseling Profession Identity

Professional counseling has been defined as “the application of mental health, psychological, or human development principles, through cognitive, affective, behavioral or systemic **intervention** strategies, that address wellness, personal growth, or career development, as well as pathology” (American Counseling Association, 1997). Further, as noted in the **ACA Code of Ethics**, counselors are dedicated to the promotion of human growth and development across the lifespan, engage in practices that are developmentally appropriate in nature, and act as advocates against any barrier that limits human development (American Counseling Association, 2014). Professional counselors have distinguished themselves among helping professionals through their focus on different aspects of human growth and development over the lifespan. It is in our DNA and is the core of our professional identity.

In contrast to other helping professionals, counselors dedicate their professional lives to issues of wellness, prevention, and personal growth and development. This is not to suggest that we are not engaged in processes that help those experiencing major disruptions to their lives. Certainly, as counselors, we engage in remediation and therapeutic interventions with those who present with problems, dysfunctions, or pathology. However, even when counselors serve in that capacity, they seek to not only assist clients back to the path of stability but to do so in a way that prevents future disruption and promotes or fosters their clients' ongoing wellness and development.

## Essential to Counseling Practice

As noted above, counselors engage in practices that foster ongoing wellness and development and act as advocates against barriers that limit human development. Such a professional calling, or mission, is both noble and valuable. However, this mission is clearly impossible to fulfill without (a) professional knowledge of the nature of human development across the lifespan, (b) the understanding of both normative and exceptional challenges that can be and are experienced, and (c) the use of research and theory on human development to guide professional practice decisions.

Without a full understanding of what defines the nature of human development across the lifespan, counselors would be unable to discern that which is normative from that which is a deviation or to engage in processes that continue to support healthy development or intervene when behaviors are less than healthy or optimal. Knowledge of the theory, principles, and research of human development is essential to professional counseling practice. Guided Practice Exercise 1.1 highlights the value of understanding human development when confronted with client concerns. As you review this exercise, ask yourself whether knowledge of human development would influence your responses.

To be effective as a counselor and to truly understand one's client, a counselor must understand the various elements and processes that impact human growth and development. It is important to understand how factors such as an individual's experiences, life maturation processes, and **culture** shape the individual's life at any one stage of human development. Further, it is important to know (a) how individuals cope with and make sense of their environment and surroundings, (b) how they use their learning experiences to cope with adversity and stress, (c) how they develop **resilience** and coping skills, and (d) how all of this could be affected by gender, cultural, physical, psychological, and sociological factors.

## Integrated in Our Studies

The importance of understanding human development is highlighted by the fact that most professional bodies or associations require formal training in developmental theory and research. For example, CACREP, the premier accreditation body of counselor education programs, has articulated standards (see Table 1.1) and requires its accredited programs to include at least a course in human growth and development in their curricula (Council for Accreditation of Counseling Related Educational Programs, 2016; Korsmo, Baker-Sennett, & Nicholas, 2009).

Even without a specific course in human development, the value of this information is evident by the very fact that numerous courses within the counseling professional training experience find grounding in human development theory and research. For example, consider the following brief sampling of course titles typically found in a counselor education program. Although these courses are unique, each offers insight into the nature and dynamics of human development and provides critical information to better understand the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels in a diverse cultural and psychosocial context.

1. *Counseling Theory*: theories of human and personality development, including how genetic, psychosociological, neurobiological, and cognitive factors contribute to behavior and learning development.
2. *Family Counseling*: theories of family and individuals as related to the transition across the lifespan.
3. *Abnormal Psychology*: theories of human behavior, both normal and abnormal behavior, to be affected in the development stages of happiness, sadness, loss, crises,



## GUIDED PRACTICE EXERCISE 1.1

### REFLECTIONS ON SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS

Below is a description of a specific behavior. Reflect on the questions and consider the changing nature of your response as additional (developmental) data are provided.

**Situation 1:** Your client presents as noncommunicative, has poor social skills, and appears as if totally occupied by and within his or her own mental constructs and fantasies.

- a. Do you feel this client is in need of counseling?
- b. If engaged in counseling, what might be a target or goal for the intervention?
- c. What type of approach might you try?

How might your responses change if you knew that

- a. The client was 9 months old?
- b. The client was 14 years old?
- c. The client was 41 years old?

**Situation 2:** The client presents with behaviors related to dressing up in female attire. The client is particularly attracted to feminine undergarments and has been reported to have been stimulated while wearing these garments.

- a. Do you feel this client is in need of counseling?
- b. If engaged in counseling, what might be a target or goal for the intervention?
- c. What type of approach might you try?

How might your responses change if you knew that

- a. The client was a 13-year-old female?
- b. The client was a 27-year-old male?
- c. The client was 4 years old (gender unknown)?

**Situation 3:** Your client has been described as sullen, moody, withdrawn, and exhibiting a dark side that includes focusing on issues of death and dying.

- a. Do you feel this client is in need of counseling?
- b. If engaged in counseling, what might be a target or goal for the intervention?
- c. What type of approach might you try?

How might your responses change if you knew that

- a. The client was a 14-year-old self-described gothic male?
- b. The client was a 27-year-old postpartum female?
- c. The client was a 96-year-old patient with cancer?

**TABLE 1.1 CACREP 2016 Human Growth and Development Standards**

Human Growth and Development: Provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, including all of the following:

- a. theories of individual and family development across the lifespan
- b. theories of learning
- c. theories of normal and abnormal personality development
- d. theories and etiology of addictions and addictive behaviors
- e. biological, neurological, and physiological factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior
- f. systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior
- g. effects of crisis, disasters, and trauma on diverse individuals across the lifespan
- h. a general framework for understanding differing abilities and strategies for differentiated interventions
- i. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for promoting resilience and optimum development and wellness across the lifespan

**Source:** Council for Accreditation of Counseling Related Educational Programs (2016).

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health, disability, and situational and environmental factors that may contribute to growth and development stages.

4. *Addiction:* theories of addictions and addictive behaviors, including strategies for prevention, intervention, and treatment.
5. *Counseling Intervention and Prevention:* theories for the study of facilitating optimal development, enhancing **quality of life**, and maintaining wellness over the lifespan.
6. *Crises Intervention:* theories of individuals, families, and communities coping with disasters and post-traumatic stress and how resilience contributes to the transition of healing and recovery.
7. *Assessment:* theories of psychosocial, cultural, and economic contributions to the **holistic** assessment of human growth and development.
8. *Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy:* theories that guide proper diagnoses and appropriate counseling treatment to enhance and optimize the counseling outcome, all placed within the context of the human condition and normative challenges.

The recognition by accrediting bodies of the need for and the value of knowledge of human development, along with the integration of developmental principles and concepts throughout the counselor education curriculum, speaks to the value of this knowledge for professional practice. As you continue with your training and reading this chapter, it is our hope that you will come to see that it is more than knowledge that is gained by studying human development across the lifespan. As you begin to understand the complexity of human development, it is our intention that you will also develop an increased appreciation for and value of uniqueness and commonality, strength and vulnerability, and the simple wonder of the human condition.

## THE COMPLEXITY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Human development, while so natural, is very complex and multidimensional. It means developing mentally and socially through growing and experiencing life and learning new things through the lifespan. As such, the study of human development is challenging and requires an in-depth analysis of the processes that contribute to change while maintaining stability, as uniquely experienced and evidenced throughout one's lifespan. The study of human development attempts to define the elements that contribute to the healthy as well as less than healthy unfolding of the human condition. Identifying and defining all of the factors that come together to stimulate growth, development, and change in what is anticipated to be an orderly fashion is quite a task.

The magnitude and complexity implied by the previous statement may be lost to our understanding unless we take time to reflect on our own experience of human development. Consider the apparent seamlessness and fluidity of moving from a two-celled organism to a state of infancy, sleeping in a cradle and depending fully on a caregiver, to the development of



Source: Courtesy of the author.

abilities such as walking, talking, remembering, imagining, hypothesizing, empathizing, and even reflecting on one's very being. Certainly, we all celebrate these markers of development, but for most, we also simply take them for granted unless or until something goes wrong. It is at those times of developmental disruption that we seek understanding. And it is that need for understanding and the following direction for intervention that leads to the study of development through the lifespan.

### Development: Change and Stability

For the purposes of this chapter and theme, development is defined as the orderly and sequential changes that occur with the passage of time as an organism moves and adapts from the very beginning until the end of life. These changes occur through complex interactions between processes that are biologically programmed within the organism and elements presented within the environment. These interactions transform the organism through the process of orderly, sequential change.

This interactive process is complex, multidimensional, and not always clear-cut or easily understood. Guided Practice Exercise 1.2 highlights the complexity of this process of development as it gives form to the intricate interplay and interaction between biological and environmental processes.

Perhaps what is so uniquely human is that we remain in an unending state of development throughout our lifespan. Life is always an unfinished business, and death is its only cessation. Even having stated that change is the essence of the human condition, our understanding of human development highlights the fact that we exhibit stability during change and the nature of this change is predictable.

Understanding this orderly, sequential nature of human development not only allows us to understand when development has been thwarted, but it also provides us with the markers that serve as beacons to guide our decisions as we attempt to facilitate the continuation of healthy growth and development. As a simple illustration, consider the sequence of moving from being an infant to being a toddler. When you reflect on this transition, what changes would you expect to observe? Would you assume increased mobility? Would language and social interaction improve? Would you be concerned if these changes were not evident?

While we can appreciate the realities of individual differences and that development does not adhere to a rigid time structure, our knowledge of human development helps to establish markers denoting expected orderly sequential change and our concerns are heightened when these changes do not occur.

### Development: The Result of Interactive Forces

Human development involves growth, maintenance, and regulation of loss and is constructed through the interaction of biological, cognitive, sociocultural, environmental, and individual factors working together interactively throughout one's lifespan. Human development is both multidimensional and multidirectional. Our development reflects the internal direction of our biological substrate while at the same time is responsive to environmental and contextual demands. Throughout it all, our development demonstrates a unique plasticity that allows each of us to adapt and to promote positive change when confronted with challenges (Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 2006; Baltes & Smith, 2003).

The complexity of developmental interactive forces and the interaction of elements can be seen by simply considering a child's initiation into the world of crawling (see Case Illustration 1.1).

## GUIDED PRACTICE EXERCISE 1.2

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: A PRODUCT OF COMPLEX INTERACTIONS

To more fully appreciate the complexity of human development, respond to each of the following questions. After responding, read what is presented. Was this a surprise? Did it change your view? Does it highlight the interactive and complex nature of development?

1. **Identical Twins:** Identical twins share the same genetic makeup and thus share physical traits. Many have tried and proved successful in fooling friends and family who may confuse their identities. Can they fool a forensic specialist employing fingerprint analysis?
2. **Sex Role Behaviors:** Much has been written and discussed about the development of sex role behaviors. Some emphasize the cultural influence of boys learning to be boys and girls enculturated to be girls. Others have pointed to the influence of the unique XX and XY genetics. What is your position: nature (genetics), nurture (cultural influence), or perhaps something else?
3. **The Adolescent Brain:** It is likely that you have read about or heard discussions about the storm-and-stress nature of adolescence, which depicts adolescents as hormonally driven, emotional, unpredictable, and impulsive. Some have argued that the emotional and social liability and upheaval experienced in adolescence is a function of biological/hormonal changes, whereas others suggest that it is merely a function of adolescents' frustration of being socially in between childhood and adulthood. What is your position?

Here are some additional data for consideration. Does the following information reshape your initial opinions or expand your view of the complexity of these developmental issues?

1. **Identical Twins:** While identical twins could certainly be said to be genetic carbon copies, their fingerprints are not. Research shows that the fine details of ridges, valleys, and swirls that define one's fingerprints are influenced by random stresses experienced in the womb. Even a slightly different umbilical cord length can change one's fingerprints.
2. **Sex Role Behaviors:** Research provides evidence regarding the prenatal influences of gonadal steroids on human sexual orientation, as well as sex-typed childhood behaviors that predict subsequent sexual orientation. The evidence supports a role for prenatal testosterone exposure in the development of sex-typed interests in childhood, as well as in sexual orientation in later life, at least for some individuals. However, other factors, in addition to hormones, appear to play an important role in determining sexual orientation. These factors have not been well characterized, but possibilities include direct genetic effects and effects of maternal factors during pregnancy. Although a role for hormones during early development

has been established, there may also be multiple pathways to a given sexual orientation outcome, and some of these pathways may not involve hormones.

3. **The Adolescent Brain:** Some of the most exciting new discoveries in neuroscience focus on adolescent brain development. Researchers now know that the adolescent brain is different from an adult's brain and that development continues well into a person's 20s. One finding sheds light on the characterization of adolescents as dramatic and overly emotional.
4. Neuroscience research has shown that adolescents process information differently than do adults. While adults usually rely on the frontal lobes, the center of reasoning and language, to respond to situations, adolescents rely more on the amygdala, which controls a wide range of emotions. As a result, teens are more likely than adults to respond emotionally to a situation.

## CASE ILLUSTRATION 1.1

### TRANSITIONING TO CRAWLING

The simple act of initiating crawling highlights the multidimensional and multidirectional nature of development as well as the unique contribution of biological and environmental forces. An infant's engagement in crawling not only signals amazing changes that have occurred but also serves as the source, or the impetus, for additional change to come. Crawling is evidence that the infant is strong enough to sit and to support himself or herself on hands and knees. Crawling indicates the infant's ability (and environmental support) for risk-taking, even when the risk is to trust one hand or one knee being placed one before the other. Once the infant is engaged, crawling contributes to the infant's ongoing development. Crawling contributes to the development of balance, to the practice of bilateral motion, and to the strengthening of muscles that will eventually be used in walking. The increased mobility afforded by crawling provides the

infant with increased, and sometimes scary, independence. Being able to move, sit, and hold the body stable and erect changes the infant's visual perspective and invites new experiences, which in turn stimulates new cognitive development. Increased mobility results in increased social interaction, such as playing with the family pet or siblings or responding to parents and caretakers who encourage the infant to crawl while at the same time remove obstacles and potential danger.

Reflect on the following: What appears to be such a small thing moving—from sitting up, to learning and trusting to rock back and forth, to eventually finding the ability to push off one's knees in order to become a crawler—is anything but simple or small. The effects of engaging with these new competencies impact physical development, cognitive development, social engagement, and even development of a worldview with its joys and risks.

Case Illustration 1.1 is certainly simple but, upon reflection, dramatically poignant. The subtle yet impacting interplay between the infant's internal drives, developing muscles, perceptual awareness, environmental supports and encouragers, and the leap of faith exhibited in those first few movements speaks to the multifaceted and multidimensional nature of our development. Further, in reviewing the illustration of the crawling infant it becomes apparent that often these forces are bidirectional, where the biological influences can affect the development of the cognition and vice versa.

This bidirectional quality becomes apparent when one considers what is required and what results from developing the ability to speak, to reflect on one's own thoughts, to balance and ride a two-wheeled bike, or to feel sympathy, empathy, or loss. Each of these new abilities serves as both the result of the complicated process called development and at the same time is the stimulant, contributor, and even foundational element for what is to follow.

### Development: A Lifespan Perspective

There was a time when we viewed children as merely miniature replications of adults. Early pictorial presentations of children, at least those before the 17th century, showed them in adult dress, with eerily adult facial features—truly mini adults. It has been argued that the idea of *childhood* was a social creation that appeared during the 1600s (Cunningham, 2006). It is not until the 1600s that we see evidence of children being presented as unique and different from adults. Thus, the study of human development, prior to the 1600s, would have focused simply on the adult experience, generalizing that experience to children as miniature expressions of adults. It could be argued that, somewhat reactively, once childhood was viewed as a unique stage of development, the pendulum swung too far to the emphasis of childhood experience as if development ended with one's passage to adulthood from adolescence.

We now understand that while these early years and experiences are critical, they are not the entire story. As will be presented in the upcoming chapters, research has provided us with ample evidence of the continuing nature of our development. Our developmental journey and the changes encountered as we move from childhood to old age are not merely changes of quantity but changes in quality.

Cognitively, for example, an adult not only has more information stored (i.e., quantity) but is also able to employ that information in ways (e.g., hypothetico-deductive reasoning) that are qualitatively different from those used by a school-age child. Similarly, the socioemotional motives that drive people in their 30s are qualitatively different from those that direct life and decisions for people in their 70s. Our development (i.e., the adjustments we make and the changes we experience) is truly a lifelong process (Charles & Carstensen, 2010; Hoyer & Roodin, 2009).

### Lifespan: A Series of Human Developmental Periods

In the upcoming chapters, you will see how the interplay between biological, cognitive, and socioemotional processes that impact development takes on unique characteristics as defined by specific time frames within a person's life. These time frames, or developmental periods, are marked by the appearance of unique features, tasks, capabilities, and challenges. For the purposes of this text's organization, we have identified 11 periods where developmental changes and challenges appear to be somewhat unique. Table 1.2 provides a classification of these periods of human development.

As you scan these periods of development, begin to consider the challenges, those tasks encountered by an individual at each period, and the role that you, as counselor, could play in facilitating the individual's development through that period. Your thoughts on these issues will take greater form as you proceed in your reading.





Source: Stockphoto.com/Tana26.

## Development as Contextual

While Table 1.2 points out some generalized tasks or challenges confronting individuals at each period of their development, the nature of the challenges as well as the quality of the responses can be influenced by the context in which the development is occurring. Simply consider the situation of two individuals entering a late adult period of their development. Imagine that one has a healthy retirement plan, wonderful physical health, the support of an intimate partner and extended family, and job-related health benefits. Addressing the tasks of this period will be different for that individual as opposed to one who is without family support, living on Social Security and food stamps, and has to employ emergency hospital services as his or her only form of health care. These are contextual variables, and they clearly impact the continuity of development.

Whether it is our local neighborhood or global community, our development occurs and is influenced by the setting and conditions as context. Factors such as culture, ethnicity, social values, histories, and economics come into play in the unfolding of our personal stories. We are developing, but we as people of the 21st century are developing in a different context than that of our **ancestors**. As such, when viewing development, one must appreciate the influence that context contributes.

According to Baltes and Smith (2003), context exerts three types of influences on human development: (a) normative age-graded influence that presents individuals as similar to those within their age group; (b) normative history-graded influences, such as the widespread impact of major sociopolitical events like world war, the civil rights movements, or even the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; and (c) nonnormative or highly individualized life events, such



**TABLE 1.2**    Periods of Human Development

Period	Estimated Age Range	Description
Conception/ prenatal	0	Period involving rapid and extensive growth from a single cell to a human with neurological capabilities
Infancy	Birth to 24 months	While highly dependent, the development of language, symbolic thought, social skills, and modeling takes place
Toddler	1 to 3 years (overlap)	Increasing mobility and independence; “the terrible twos”
Early school age	4 to 6 years	Increasing self-sufficiency, peer interest and interaction, and school-readiness skills
Middle childhood	7 to 12 years	Achievement drive becomes evident; the fundamental skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic are mastered
Early adolescence	13 to 18 years	Rapid physical changes and the development of sexual characteristics; increased peer interaction and influence; cognitively moving into formal, abstract reasoning
Late adolescence	19 to 25 years	The pursuit of independence (socially, psychology, and financially) and desire to identify vocational direction and personal identity
Early adulthood	26 to 35 years	Focus on establishing personal and economic independence, career development, and, for many, selecting a mate, possibly starting a family, and rearing children
Middle adulthood	36 to 50 years	While maintaining a satisfying career, interest turns toward social responsibility and in assisting the next generation
Late adulthood	51 to 75 years	Adjusting to post-work identity and retirement; adjusting to challenges of changing health
Elderhood (oldest-old)	≥75 years	Reflection and life review; preparing for the end of life

as the death of a loved one, the experience of being abandoned or abused, or even something like winning the lottery.

**LIFE DOMAINS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

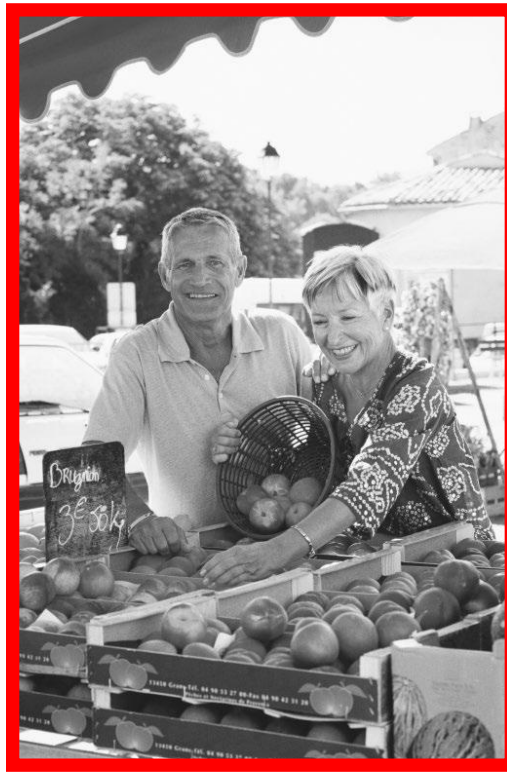
As you proceed in your readings, you will see that the upcoming chapters discuss development by way of reviewing the theories and research targeting specific domains of development within the context of a particular developmental period. These domains refer to specific aspects of growth and change as noted in socioemotional, physical, linguistic, and cognitive development.

There are times when it appears that growth in one domain is dominant, even to the point of overriding development in other domains. For example, consider the case of the crawler who almost magically transitioned to taking her first steps. While the physical

expression of this child's development may gather attention, the truth is that other domains are changing, perhaps more gradually and less prominently but changing nonetheless. The child's new physical capabilities interact and benefit from improved sensory perception and stimulate increasing cognitive development by way of infusion of new experiences. Change across domains is occurring often but sometimes not in obvious ways.

Consider the changes accompanying adolescence. While one can see and most certainly experience the physical changes (deepening of the voice, **physical development**, body hair growth, etc.) and emotional lability (adolescent moodiness) that accompany puberty, the cognitive changes that are occurring may be less apparent. Changes that are qualitative in nature provide the adolescent with an increasing ability to think about his or her own thinking and to operate in the world of the hypothetical.

Development is a multifaceted process consisting of growth, regression, and change in many different domains. Understanding the uniqueness of these changes across domains, as they take form at different chronological periods of development, is essential if counselors are to know what is *normative* and what to do when help is needed.



Source: Digital Vision/Photodisk/Thinkstock.

## A BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL APPROACH

For years, the question of the degree to which our development is the product of our biological inheritance or our lived experience has been debated. The question of nature (biological forces) versus nurture (environmental/experiential/learning forces) and the influence of each continues to rear its head, especially when addressing issues of intelligence and behavioral aberrations. Do we simply write off developmental variations and deviations as a function of the luck of genetics, positioning ourselves somewhat impotently on the sidelines and allowing nature to run its course? Or do we argue for sociopolitical and environmental changes that will ensure the proper nurturance for all in the human condition? Is it really that simple: either nature or nurture? Review of the literature and research outcomes tells us that it is not.

As noted above, human development is complicated. Development is multifaceted, multidimensional, and contextual. Our development is, at any one point, the result or outcome of the interaction of biological, cultural, and uniquely personal factors (Baltes, Reuter-Lorenz, & Rösler, 2006). As such, development should be viewed and studied from an interactive perspective valuing the influence of biology, psychology, and social context in the same environment.

In the upcoming chapters, the unique biological conditions, cognitive capabilities, and psychosocial and emotional dispositions characteristic of a specific period of development are discussed. Further, research highlighting the factors both positively and negatively affecting development through that period of one's life will also be discussed. Throughout each chapter, the unifying theme is that changes occurring in any one domain do not happen in isolation; rather, each affects the other, and the outcome of development is the result of the interplay between these various factors. This integrative model is not new.

George Engel (1980) was one of the pioneers in bringing an integrative model to the field of medicine. Engel (1980) formulated the biopsychosocial model as a dynamic, interactional view of human experience in which there is a mutual influence of mind and body, by way of the interactive forces found within the biological, psychological, and sociocultural systems.

Consider the issue of heart disease (Engel, 1977). While it is true that there is a **patho-physiological** component to heart disease (biological system), this biological state is often the end point of a large variety of sociocultural and psychological factors impinging on the **cardiovascular system**. Thus, it is important to view the condition not only from a perspective of the client's genetic vulnerability or biological makeup but also through the perspective of social and cultural conditions (e.g., poverty, nutrition, marginalization, etc.) or psychological dispositions (e.g., lifestyle choices, stress encounters, and stress management strategies). It is in employing all systems—biological, psychological, social, and cultural—that one gets a full and accurate understanding of what is and what needs to be done.

### Biological System

The biological system, as we know it, consists of a group of organs that work together to perform certain tasks. When applied to the biopsychosocial model, the need is to investigate how the biological or neurological basis affects human growth and development with respect to behavioral issues—that is, how each individual responds to his or her world or has different levels of neurotransmitters in the brain. As such, the biological component of the biopsychosocial model seeks to understand how the functioning of one's body, or biological system, contributes to the developmental difficulties encountered.

### Psychological System

The psychological component of the biopsychosocial model looks for potential contributions from psychological issues that have caused or contributed to developmental difficulty and result in mental and physical health problems, including issues such as **irrational thinking**, emotional distress, lack of self-control, and **excessive distress** (Ilham, 2000).

### Sociocultural System

The social system aspect of the biopsychosocial model directs one to consider how various social contextual factors, such as social environment, interactive patterns, socioeconomic status (SES), culture, family structure, and religion, contribute to healthy or unhealthy development. The social system draws attention to the effects of patterns of social roles and norms as well as the timing and sequence of important life events.

### Application to Counseling Skills

The perspective gained from such a biopsychosocial model of development is that normative growth and development, as well as pathology, is influenced by a number of factors. For example, age-graded sociocultural factors (race, ethnicity, family, educational setting, friendships, religion,

peer pressure, etc.), age-graded biological factors (puberty, maturation, menopause, etc.), historical factors (natural disasters, wars, etc.), and nonnormative factors (death of siblings, death of a child, early death of parents, etc.) contribute to the formation and development of any one individual at any one of his or her developmental periods.

This integrative approach parallels what we know about the multidimensional and integrative nature of development and thus will be integrated throughout the upcoming chapters of this book. While investigating the uniqueness of the human experience as encountered at each of the periods of development, the focus will remain on understanding the interplay of the biological, psychological, and social and cultural processes contributing to that uniqueness and promoting growth and development through that particular period. It is our belief that understanding of lifespan development in the absence of its biological substrate, psychological components, and sociocultural context is not possible. This is brought to life in the presentation of Charlie's case (Case Illustration 1.2).

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT KNOWLEDGE APPLIED TO COUNSELING

The noted developmental psychologist, Lawrence Kohlberg, believed that counseling is important for the development of both the counselor and the client. Kohlberg's explanation for this relationship was established in his moral development theory, originating from his earlier work and writings on **moral development** and moral education that was applied to the process of schooling, particularly as it relates to teaching and not counseling. After studying Jean Piaget's views on the **cognitive development** of children's thinking about the physical world, Kohlberg asserted that all the basic processes involved in physical cognition in stimulating developmental changes are fundamental to social development (Kohlberg, 1969). He further asserted that the counseling process between a counselor and a client is a fundamental social activity, and thus, this process should be considered a developmental process of social interaction. Kohlberg also believed that the skill of listening requires the empathy and role-taking that are important for both moral and psychological growth between the counselor and the client. Kohlberg offered the view of **progressivism**, which encourages the nourishment of the individual's natural interaction with a developing society or environment and cognitive-developmental psychology as compared to other theories offered.

While the case has been made for the value of a counselor's understanding of human development, as he or she differentiates that which is normative from that which is problematic, what might also be obvious is that knowledge of those factors impeding development positions a counselor to serve as an advocate or agent of prevention.

As you read on and begin to identify those biological, cultural, environmental, and psychological forces that influence one's development, it will become clear that some individuals, by nature of their conditions of birth or circumstances of life, are more vulnerable to the interferences of healthy development. Whether it is the absence of prenatal medical care and nutritional support or the bullying violence experienced by a teen, some individuals encounter stressors that exceed their ability to cope and thus impede development. Environmental pollution, infectious diseases, poverty, the absence of early childhood stimulation, or the experience of abuse and abandonment are only a few of the more dramatic forms of assault to human development that many people experience. While these are noted and noteworthy, there are threats that can be much more subtle yet just as insidious. Consider the situation of a student experiencing undue pressure to succeed, or the young adult displaced without social support, or the aging adult confronting physical limitations and medical needs within restricted financial resources. All of these conditions restrict individuals' ability to enjoy their current state of development and grow to the next.

## CASE ILLUSTRATION 1.2

### BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following case illustration demonstrates and highlights the biopsychosocial model as it depicts the elements contributing to the client's well-being. As you read the case illustration, highlight the biopsychosocial variables that you feel contribute to Charlie's depression, anxiety, and other concerns. Discuss your observations with a colleague or your instructor.

#### Charlie's Case

Charlie is a 28-year-old Caucasian female presenting with symptoms of possible depression and anxiety. Charlie reports that her boyfriend, Jack, asked her to marry him 2 months ago, but she has not yet accepted the proposal. Ever since, she has been feeling anxious, overeating, and sleeping 10 to 12 hours at a time. Charlie has been withdrawn from her friends because she knows that they do not support her relationship with Jack, as they believe that he is an alcoholic and has abused her. She also lacks interest in her work, has been taking numerous days off, and has demonstrated very low performance on her job duties. Charlie grew up in a very rigid and religious family. She states that her parents are very supportive of her, but they were always very critical toward her while she was growing up. Her father is very authoritative, and he is also a heavy drinker. While drunk, he often exhibits extremely violent and abusive behavior toward his wife and Charlie. Charlie's relationship with her mother is strained because she is critical of her father's behavior and often voices her disapproval of her father's actions toward her mother. Charlie reports that her relationship with Jack has been rocky, with multiple breakups and a history of heated arguments. Jack becomes extremely violent

when intoxicated, and it reminds her of her father's behavior and how that affected her family. Charlie's religious beliefs cause her to feel guilt over her father and Jack's drinking problems. She reports having a few good friends whom she sees "from time to time." She expresses that she can "rely on them to vent her frustrations" but has recently "pulled back from them" because they do not approve of her relationship with Jack. Charlie and Jack have a history of domestic violence. She reported one incident of domestic violence to the police, in which Jack was arrested and referred to participate in anger management counseling. Although there has not been an incident since then, Charlie is worried that he might do it again when he drinks. Charlie reports no homicidal ideation, plan, or intent to do so. She also denies any personal alcohol or substance abuse.

In summary, Charlie is presenting symptoms of depression and anxiety. The symptoms and findings are prominent and clinically significant: oversleeping, overeating, isolative behavior, and feelings of anxiety. The symptoms are relatively acute. Protective factors include a supportive mother and friends, as well as Charlie's insight and motivation for treatment. Significant biopsychosocial stressors include absences from work and her relationship with her supervisor and coworkers. Other stressors include her relationship with her boyfriend, Jack, and her traumatic experience while growing up with an abusive alcoholic father, a demanding mother, and also a history of domestic violence with her father and her boyfriend.

- You may want to use this case for role-playing activities in class and for discussion purposes.

As you begin to more fully understand the natural challenges experienced throughout the various periods of development, you will also come to appreciate those factors and elements that can facilitate and support healthy growth and development. With that knowledge, you will be better positioned to not only intervene as a counselor when called upon but also to proactively engage as an advocate for those who need your support.

The objective of this textbook is to present human growth and development from a counseling perspective and to show how this unique perspective can be applied through the lifespan of individuals. As discussed in this chapter, to define human development is to define the growth of humans throughout their entire lifespan. The principle of the study of human development is to understand and explain how and why people change throughout the lifespan, and this includes all aspects of human development, including psychological, physical, emotional, intellectual, social, perceptual, and personality development. These are all variables to be taken into consideration for effective therapeutic intervention. There is an urgent need to augment research in these areas and place this knowledge in the hands of educators and students.

Understanding human development is important for having a clear concept of how factors such as individuals' experiences, life maturation processes, and changes in time, including cultural implications, shape the stages of human development. This process also includes (a) how individuals cope with and make sense of their environment and surroundings; (b) how individuals use their learning experiences to cope with adversity and stress; (c) how individuals develop resilience and coping skills affected by gender, cultural, physical, psychological, and sociological factors; (d) how individuals behave and perceive life expectations; and (e) how life events and changes, transitions, and transformations form from one stage to another to contribute to individuals' identity and integration into their community and society. This is a complex process with multiple factors that are all equally important, and they need to be emphasized not only during counselor training but also during counseling practice.

Human development awareness is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and have a healthy, active, creative, and productive lifestyle. The advancement of science and technology has contributed greatly to the acceleration of human progress during the past decades. According to many recent studies, although modernization and globalization, with the advancement of technology, are generally good for societies, they can also create many disadvantages for some sectors of the population. Some individuals are more vulnerable to the wider effects of environmental degradation and social problems because of more significant stressors and fewer coping tools that weaken resilience. Vulnerable individuals must also deal with threats to their immediate environment from pollution, contaminated water, and unimproved sanitation. Forecasts suggest that a continuing failure to reduce grave environmental risks and deepening social inequalities threatens to slow decades of sustained progress by the world's poor majority and can even reverse the global convergence in human development. This is perhaps an urgent warning to develop and strengthen the safety networks of society to make sure that they reach everyone and prevent the physical and mental decline of all people. The counseling profession, with its many roles such as working with, assisting, and advocating for its clients, also has a responsibility to act and contribute.

The challenges ahead for counselor education are numerous. However, significant challenges are to conduct more evidence-based research to study this very complex topic of the relationship between counseling and human development through the lifespan; to conduct research with cultural responsibility in reference to the increased cultural and ethnic diversity among populations in the United States; and to explore and study the interaction among learning, physical ability, cultural influence, SES, environmental and ecological factors, genetic composition, and biopsychosocial implications with respect to human development through the lifespan.

The world has become a global community, and the proliferation of cultural and knowledge exchange among peoples and nations has provided great incentives for researchers and scholars to study human development from a multidimensional and multilevel perspective, with respect to cultural, psychological, and sociological factors. It is very important for helping professionals, such as counselors, to continue to apply and promote the study of human



development through the lifespan today and in the future. It is essential not only to understand human development in order to understand the individual but also to acquire knowledge of individual differences, abilities, disabilities, and other diverse characteristics that can enhance and optimize the outcome of counseling services.

## SUMMARY

- Human development is an interdisciplinary field dedicated to understanding human constancy and changes throughout the lifespan.
- The study of human development requires a comprehensive and systematic approach.
- The study of human development involves the explanation of both change and continuity.
- The field of human development has four major goals: (a) to describe the changes that occur across the human lifespan, (b) to explain these changes, (c) to predict developmental changes, and (d) to intervene in the course of events in order to control them.
- It is important to discuss human development through the lifespan perspective, consisting of the multidimensional, multidirectional, multidisciplinary, plastic, and contextual development of humans.
- The domain of human development refers to specific aspects of growth and change, and the major domains of development include psychosocial, emotional, physical, language, and cognition.
- Understanding human development is important to the counselor's competence because this knowledge will enhance the counselor's ability to apply best practices during the particular life stage of the client and to serve as an advocate for those in need of advocacy.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources include readings and websites that may be useful to readers in their search for more information and in-depth knowledge on human development and the lifespan. However, readers should be aware that the information found on websites may not always be reliable and should be verified before the source is used as a reference.

### Websites

#### United Nations

<https://www.un.org/en/>

The United Nations (UN) is an international organization whose stated aims are to facilitate cooperation in international law, international security, economic development, social progress, human rights, and achievement of world peace. The UN was founded in 1945 after World War II to replace the League of Nations, to stop wars between countries, and to provide a platform for dialogue. It contains multiple subsidiary organizations to carry out its missions. The UN currently has a total of 193 member states.

#### World Bank

<https://www.worldbank.org>

The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides loans to developing countries for capital programs. The World Bank's official goal is to reduce poverty around the world. The World Bank differs from the World Bank Group in that the World Bank comprises only two institutions, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA), whereas the latter incorporates these two in addition to three more: the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

#### National Association of School Psychologists

<https://www.nasponline.org>

The mission of the **National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)** is to empower school psychologists by

advancing effective practices to improve students' learning, behavior, and mental health. The core values of NASP are advocacy, collaborative relationships, continuous improvement, diversity, excellence, integrity, student-centered priority, and visionary leadership.

#### Council on Social Work Education

<https://www.cswe.org>

The **Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)** is a nonprofit national association representing more than 2,500 individual members, as well as graduate and undergraduate programs of professional **social work** education. Founded in 1952, this partnership of educational and professional institutions, social welfare agencies, and private citizens is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the United States.

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a federal agency under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The CDC is headquartered and based in Atlanta, Georgia. The CDC works to protect public health and safety by providing information to enhance health decisions, and it promotes health through partnerships with state health departments and other organizations. The CDC focuses national attention on developing and applying disease prevention and control (especially infectious diseases and foodborne pathogens and other microbial infections), environmental health, occupational safety and health, health promotion, injury prevention, and education activities designed to improve the health of the people of the United States. The CDC is the United States' national public health institute and is a founding member of the International Association of National Public Health Institutes.

#### Council for Standards in Human Services Education

<https://cshse.org>

The Council for Standards in Human Service Education (CSHSE) is committed to assuring the quality, consistency, and relevance of human service education through research-based standards and a peer-review accreditation process. The vision of CSHSE is to promote excellence in human service education, provide quality assurance, and support standards of performance and practice through the accreditation process.

#### Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs

<https://www.cacrep.org>

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredits graduate-level counseling programs offered by institutions throughout the United States and some international programs. CACREP accredits many programs, including addiction counseling, clinical mental health counseling, family counseling, school counseling, and rehabilitation counseling. The vision of CACREP is to provide leadership and to promote excellence in professional preparation through the accreditation of counseling and related educational programs. As an accrediting body, CACREP is committed to the development of standards and procedures that reflect the needs of a dynamic, diverse, and complex society.

#### National Institute on Aging

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/topics/healthy-aging>

The National Institute on Aging (NIA), one of 27 National Institutes of Health (NIH) institutes and centers, leads a broad scientific effort to understand the nature of aging and to extend the healthy, active years of life. In 1974, Congress granted authority to form NIA to provide leadership in aging research, training, health information dissemination, and other programs relevant to aging and older people.

#### Annenberg Learner

<https://www.learner.org>

Annenberg Learner uses media and telecommunications to advance excellent teaching in American schools. This mandate is carried out chiefly by the funding and broad distribution of educational video programs with coordinated web and print materials for the professional development of K–12 teachers. It is part of the Annenberg Foundation and advances the foundation's goal of encouraging the development of more effective ways to share ideas and knowledge. Annenberg Learner's multimedia resources help teachers increase their expertise in their fields and assist them in improving their teaching methods. Many programs are also intended for students in the classroom and viewers at home. All Annenberg Learner videos exemplify excellent teaching.



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*We know what we are but know not what we may be.*

William Shakespeare

Consider the above quote by William Shakespeare from the perspective of a person who is unfamiliar with human development and the multiple changes of transformation that take place from the moment of birth and long into the future lifespan. Imagine looking at newborn babies bundled in blankets, resting peacefully in their bassinets. You may know what you see, but you are unable to understand what may be.

Through observation, there is a difference in the babies' size, shape, skin tone, activity level, and even the degree to which hair is present. Some may be quietly sleeping with their eyes closed, while others may clearly be stressed and are red-faced and screaming. Again, observers would know what they see but certainly would be hard pressed to describe what may be.

While the process of developing from the joining of two cells to what now appears in a flesh-and-blood bundle in a nursery is quite an amazing, complex, and intricate affair, the complexity and intricacy do not cease at birth. Ask yourself, which of the bundled babies will become a president, a CEO, or a notorious criminal? Which one among those sleeping or crying may fail to thrive or may develop with major physical, intellectual, social, or emotional challenges? Which of this birth class will be tall or short, slim or obese, athletic or academic, or artistic or skilled with his or her hands? Which of those present at that moment will navigate life feeling good about themselves, accomplishing that which they desire, and reflecting at the end on a life fulfilled? These are the questions that the observer may ponder, along with one more: What are the factors, elements, and processes that give shape or contribute to that which will become?

The above questions are offered to ponder these very same questions that we may have while expanding our knowledge. If we knew what was to be and what factors gave shape to that future scenario, then we would be better positioned to intervene when dangers and barriers were clearly present and to be supportive to those conditions that facilitate optimal development. And, while we now know so much more about those very factors, there is much to research, investigate, and discover.

As noted in Chapter 1, human development is complex. It is multidimensional, multi-directional, contextual, and, in many ways, quite idiosyncratic to each individual. These

characteristics make human development difficult to study and a challenge to know factually. This chapter introduces the theories and research methodologies that are leading us to a more complete and accurate understanding of the nature and conditions of human development. Specifically, after studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. describe the general focus of eight main theories of human development: maturationist theory, psychoanalytic theory, Erikson's psychosocial theory, behaviorism theory, Bandura's social learning theory, cognitive development theory, biopsychosocial theory, and ecological systems theory;
2. identify the Piagetian stages of cognitive development as they appear at different periods of development;
3. describe the psychosocial tasks experienced at each period of development as described by Erickson;
4. explain the methods of research employed in the pursuit of knowledge and validation of developmental theories; and
5. describe the fundamental ethical concerns and principles that guide research on human development.

Like most theories used in counseling, each theory can serve as a lens through which to view human development and to guide practice decisions. As you review each theory, it is useful to consider the implication that theory presents for a counselor's intervention and prevention programming.

## THEORIES AND THEORETICAL MODELS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The complexity of human development invites the creation of multiple perspectives and theories; some are global and grand, addressing principles that apply to every domain of development, whereas others are more domain specific, focusing on cognitive development.

Theories provide a framework for the study of human development that furthers scientific vision and stimulates the application of science for public policy and social programs. Most importantly, theories help organize a large body of information and provide ways of examining facts. They also help to focus our search for new understandings, explain how findings are interpreted, and identify major disagreements among scholars (Dacey, Travers, & Fiore, 2009).

### Maturationist Theory

Granville Stanley Hall (1844 to 1924) was a pioneering American psychologist and educator. His interests focused on childhood development, evolutionary theory, and their applications to education. Hall was a firm believer in the scientific method and its application to the study of human nature. He supported empirical research in the then-emerging area of child development, developing both theories of psychological development and its application to children's education. Although Hall's understanding was incomplete and his theories were not fully accepted, his work was significant in laying the foundation for the field (Parry, 2006; Ross, 1972). His maturationist theory emphasized the importance of genetics and evolution and was based on the premise that growing children would recapitulate evolutionary stages of species development as they grew up. Hall concluded that it would be counterproductive to push children ahead of their developmental stage since each stage laid the foundation for



Source: Courtesy of the author.

what was to follow. In simple terms, his position was that everyone would need to crawl before learning to walk.

### Psychoanalytic Theories

While much attention has been given to the psychoanalytic position on issues such as determinism, instinctual drives, and the unconscious, the early works of psychoanalytic theorists, especially founder, **Sigmund Freud** (1856 to 1939), highlighted the essential role played by early childhood experiences. Freud's position was that a person's psychological responses and behaviors were reflections of instinctual biological drives. Freud postulated that objects or means for satisfying our instinctual drive for pleasure shifted throughout our early years of development, moving from the mouth and oral stimulation, to the anus and the experience of control, and eventually to the genitals and the inclusion of sex role behaviors and identification (see Table 2.1). Freud posited that it was during our childhood, our first 6 years, that we developed ways to resolve conflicts between the desire for pleasure and the demands, often repressive, encountered. For Freud, it was this dynamic process of conflict resolution that he believed shaped one's development and later lifestyle (Freud, 1962). While contemporary psychoanalytic theorists have modified many of the tenets originally presented by Freud, emphasis on the importance of early childhood experiences, especially experience in and with relationships, continues to play a pivotal role in their understanding of adult choices and behavior. Table 2.1 demonstrates Freud's psychosexual stages of development from age 1 to 18 years and their implications for human development and growth.

### Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory

Unlike Freud who focused on early childhood with an emphasis on biological instinctual urges as key to human development, Erikson presented a model emphasizing the challenges and

**TABLE 2.1** Freud's Psychosexual Stages of Development

Stage	Age	Characteristics
Oral stage	Birth to 1 year	An infant's primary interaction with the world is through the mouth. The mouth is vital for eating, and the infant derives pleasure from oral stimulation through gratifying activities such as tasting and sucking. If this pleasure is unmet, the child may develop an oral fixation later in life, examples of which include thumb-sucking, smoking, fingernail biting, and overeating.
Anal stage	1 to 3 years	With the development of new cells and the control provided by those cells (sphincters), the focus shifts from oral stimulation to controlling bladder and bowel movements. Toilet training is a primary issue for children and parents. Too much pressure can result in an excessive need for order or cleanliness later in life, while too little pressure from parents can lead to messy or destructive behavior later in life.
Phallic stage	3 to 6 years	At this point in development, the focus of the id's instinctual energies shifts to the genitals. It is during this period that children develop an attraction to the opposite-sex parent. It is also at this period that children adopt the values and characteristics of the same-sex parent and form the superego.
Latent stage	6 to 11 years	During this stage, children develop social skills, values, and relationships with peers and adults outside of the family.
Genital stage	11 to 18 years	During this stage, people develop a strong interest in the opposite sex, and the onset of puberty causes the libido to become active once again. If development has been successful to this point, the individual will continue to develop into a well-balanced person.

tasks presented across one's lifespan as key to understanding human development. Further, unlike Freud, Erickson emphasized development from within a social context. Erickson's theory is an epigenetic theory, which means it focuses on both the biological and genetic origins of behaviors as interacting with the direct influence of environmental forces over time. He suggested that this biological unfolding about our sociocultural settings takes place in stages of psychosocial development, where progress through each stage is in part determined by our success, or lack thereof, in all the previous stages.

Erickson theorized that humans pass through eight stages of development, with each presenting the individual with a unique developmental task or what he termed a "crisis" (see Table 2.2). Erickson felt that these psychosocial crises were based on physiological development interacting with the demands put on the individual by parents and society (Erikson, 1982; Stevens, 1983)

As you review the brief description of each of Erikson's stages of psychosocial development in Table 2.2, note how the resolution of any one stage may pave the way for subsequent stages. For example, the child who has difficulty developing a basic trust (trust versus mistrust, Stage 1) of his or her environment may find it difficult to risk engaging in the types of self-directed behaviors that would allow for a positive resolution to the autonomy versus shame and doubt stage (Stage 2).

**TABLE 2.2** Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Stage	Life Stage and Age	Meaning and Interpretation
Trust vs. Mistrust	Infant (0 to 1½ years)	The infant will develop a healthy balance between trust and mistrust if cared for and responded to consistently. Abuse or neglect will foster mistrust. Positive outcomes consist of the development of hope and drive, while negative outcomes could contribute to withdrawal.
Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Toddler (1 to 3 years)	Autonomy means self-reliance or independence of thought and confidence to act for oneself. Toilet training is a significant part of this stage. Positive outcomes consist of willpower and self-control, while negative outcomes could contribute to compulsive behaviors.
Initiative vs. Guilt	Preschool (4 to 6 years)	Initiative means aptitude and self-confidence to perform actions, even with the understanding of risks and failure. Guilt results from abandonment or believing an action will draw disapproval. Positive outcomes foster purpose and direction, while negative outcomes encourage inhibition.
Industry vs. Inferiority	School age (7 to 12 years)	Industry means having a meaningful activity and the competence to perform a skill. Inferiority means feeling incapable of experiencing failure or inability to discover one's strengths. This stage is crucial in the school years. Positive outcomes foster competence, while negative outcomes encourage inertia.
Identity vs. Role Confusion	Adolescent (12 to 18 years)	Identity means an understanding of one's self and how one fits into the surrounding world, while role confusion focuses on the inability to understand one's self or personal identity. Positive outcomes foster fidelity and devotion, while negative outcomes encourage repudiation behavior.
Intimacy vs. Isolation	Young adult (19 to 40 years)	Intimacy means developing relationships with friends, family, and partners. Isolation involves feelings of being excluded from relationships or partnerships. These encompass sexual maturity, reciprocal love, support, and emotional connection. Positive outcomes foster love and affiliation, while negative outcomes encourage exclusivity.
Generativity vs. Stagnation	Adulthood (41 to 65 years)	Generativity means unconditional care for one's offspring or the future generations to come, while stagnation refers to self-absorption/concentration. Positive outcomes foster care and giving, while negative outcomes encourage objectivity.
Integrity vs. Despair	Mature adult (≥65 years)	Integrity means an understanding of self and satisfaction with life, while despair contributes to feelings of wasted time, opportunity, and chances. Positive outcomes foster wisdom, while negative outcomes encourage despair.



Source: Creatas/Creatas/Thinkstock.

## Behaviorism Theory

Whereas Erikson introduced the importance of social context to development, the behavioral theory (at least in its classical form) placed nearly sole emphasis on the impact of environment, experience, and learning about the unfolding development of the human condition.

John B. Watson (1878 to 1985), deemed the father of American behaviorism, emphasized the role of environment in the shaping of human development, as reflected in the following statement:

Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my specified world to bring them up in and I will guarantee to take anyone at random and train him to become any specialist I might select . . . doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief . . . and, yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors. (Watson, 1998, p. 82)

That is quite a guarantee and highlights the value and focus that this behaviorist placed on the role of environment, experience, and learning in the creation of the human condition.

Two main themes or forms of behavioral theory explain how environment has such a formational impact. One theme proffered by B. F. Skinner (1904 to 1990) suggested that behavior was formed or shaped as a result of the consequences experienced. His operant conditioning model argued that behavior followed by a rewarding stimulus would be more likely to recur and endure than that followed by a punishing consequence (Cohen, 1987; Skinner, 1974). Thus, an infant who experiences the comfort of being picked up and cradled after crying is more likely to employ crying behavior in the future. Or an individual who has experienced ridicule after initiation of social contact may soon employ withdrawal and isolation as a developmental coping style.



The influence of behaviorism on the field of human development has been diminishing in recent years, due to its commitment to the thesis that behavior is explained without reference to nonbehavioral and inner mental (cognitive, representational, or interpretative) activity. Over the years, many scholars and researchers have pointed out that the manifestation and characteristics of human behavior do not solely depend on an individual's reinforcement history. Many critics argue that behaviorism is a one-dimensional approach to understanding human behavior. Behaviorism focuses on what is observable and measurable, but there are other important contributors to human behavior, such as one's feelings, moods, thoughts, and emotions. Further, behaviorism does not account for other types of learning, especially learning that occurs without the use of reinforcement and punishment. Behaviorists believe that much of human behavior and learning ability is attributed to the effects of external factors that serve as reinforcers or punishers. However, many critics point out that not everything can be explained by outside influence. Behaviorism provides only a partial account of human behavior and does not consider or explain important factors that can be objectively assessed (e.g., emotions, expectations, and higher-level motivation). This theory may compromise further research from another perspective that could uncover important factors that contribute to human development.

### Social Learning Theory

A second behavioral approach to the explanation of the influence of environment on development was initially presented by Albert Bandura (1997, 2008) as a social learning theory. Bandura's social learning theory posits that people learn from one another via observation, imitation, and modeling. The theory has often been called a bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation. Bandura's model expanded the classic behavioral theory to include cognitive elements. His work emphasized the importance of observational learning (also called imitation or modeling). For example, consider the situation of a child raised in an environment with much domestic arguing and physical violence and the employment of alcohol as a stress-reducing strategy. According to social learning theory, a child who is raised in this setting and observes these social exchanges and coping styles would be very likely to model the observed behavior and engage in similar domestic violence and alcohol use behaviors.

According to Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (2001), social learning is connected to perceptions and interpretations of the individual's experience. Self-efficacy, the belief that personal achievement depends on one's actions, teaches people to have high aspirations and to strive for notable accomplishments when they see others solve problems successfully. This premise is contrary to behavioral theory, which holds that behavior depends on associations between one stimulus and another and assumes that all behaviors react from a chain of learned responses. In contrast, social learning maintains that behaviors come from people acting on the stimulation of the environment.

Social learning theory provides a more comprehensive explanation of human learning by recognizing the role of mediational processes and acknowledges the role that they play in deciding if a behavior is to be imitated or not. Social learning theory is described as the "bridge" between traditional learning theory (i.e., behaviorism) and the cognitive approach because it focuses on how mental (cognitive) factors are involved in learning.

Unlike Skinner, Bandura believes that humans are active information processors and think about the relationship between their behavior and its consequences. Social learning theory focuses on how mental (cognitive) factors are involved in learning and observational learning could not occur unless cognitive processes were at work. These mental factors mediate (i.e., intervene) in the learning process to determine whether a new response is acquired.



Bandura believes that individuals do not automatically observe the behavior of a model and imitate it. Rather, individuals have thoughts, called mediational processes, that occur between observing the behavior (stimulus) and imitating it or not (response).

There are four mediational processes proposed by social learning theory:

1. *Attention*: This is the extent to which we are exposed to/notice the behavior. We observe many behaviors daily; many of these behaviors do not seize our attention and we will not imitate them.
2. *Retention*: The behavior may be noticed but is it not always remembered, which obviously prevents imitation and later repetition by the observer.
3. *Reproduction*: This is the ability to perform the behavior that the model has just demonstrated. Other people's behaviors are observed daily, but we are limited by our cognitive and/or physical ability to imitate or repeat these behaviors; even if we wish to reproduce these behaviors, we cannot.
4. *Motivation*: The observer will consider the drive to perform the behavior and the subsequent rewards and punishments that result from imitation of a behavior. The observer will be more likely to imitate the behavior if the perceived reward outweighs the perceived negative consequence.

The social learning approach takes thought processes into account and acknowledges the role that they play in deciding whether a behavior is to be imitated. Social learning theory provides a more comprehensive explanation of human learning by recognizing the role of mediational processes. Although social learning theory can explain some quite complex behavior, it cannot adequately account for how we develop a whole range of behavior, including thoughts and feelings. In 1986, Bandura modified his social learning theory and renamed it "social cognitive theory" in order to provide a better description of how we learn from our social experiences.

Some critics of social learning theory argue that this theory is limited to describing behavior solely in terms of either nature or nurture and attempts to do this underestimate the complexity of human behavior. Social learning theory cannot provide a full explanation for all behavior related to human development, and this is particularly the case when there is no role model in the person's life to imitate a behavior.

## Cognitive Theory

Whereas behavioral theory targeted the process of developing behavior and psychoanalytic models emphasized the role of the unconscious, theorists expressing a cognitive theory of development emphasized the unfolding of conscious thought and the developing abilities to process, store, retrieve, and use information. Two major players in the realm of cognitive theory are Jean Piaget, a well-known Swiss psychologist, and Lev Vygotsky, an equally well-known Russian psychologist. Both men contributed significantly to our understanding of the nature of cognitive development.

## Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

**Jean Piaget's** theory of cognitive development describes how humans gather and organize information and how this process changes developmentally (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). He believed that children are born with a very basic mental structure on which all subsequent

learning and knowledge is based. For Piaget, the focus was on how mental structures and processes evolved to help individuals make meaning out of their experience and adapt to their changing environments. To understand this process of adaptation, he employed the constructs of schema, assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration.

For Piaget, a schema (or the plural schemata) referred to the cognitive structures by which an individual organizes his or her experience and environment. For example, upon encountering a dog for the first time, an infant will experience visual, auditory, and olfactory input. These data, according to Piaget, will be linked in a neural pathway, a schema that will eventually be used as a mental template to represent *dog* each time these stimuli are encountered. However, as we know, not all dogs will be like the first one experienced, and other animals (for example, a fox or wolf) may possess some of the characteristics of our *dog* but will be different. These subtle differences will force an individual to develop new schemata to reflect and organize these categories of stimulation. The process by which this is done includes (a) first a new encounter, (b) experience of disequilibrium, the discomfort of not quite understanding or being able to make sense of the new encounter, and then (c) the process of adaptation.

When discussing this process of adaptation, Piaget noted that our first inclination is to attempt to “force” the new experience into an existing template or schema by way of the process of assimilation. Consider the infant who begins to discern the features of a male-daddy from that of a female-mommy. It would not be unexpected that when encountering a new male figure, the infant responds with “daddy.” But as the infant develops and possesses increased visual clarity and memory, discerning that the new male does not possess all the distinguishing characteristics of “daddy,” the infant will be forced to make an adjustment or to create a new schema, perhaps “uncle,” as a way of making meaning and organizing this encounter. This condition of making a new schema is called accommodation. For Piaget, humans are continually adjusting knowledge to adapt to the environment through a process of equilibration, assimilating when possible, and accommodating when necessary (Atherton, 2011).

As Piaget researched cognition and cognitive development, he concluded that a person’s cognitive development unfolds through four distinct and qualitatively different stages (see Table 2.3). He believed that these stages reflected an invariant sequence of development, with all children passing through each stage in order. Further, he posited that each stage was qualitatively different from the others, such that it was not simply a matter of more knowledge or information but a different way or ability to derive and use that information. Finally, while assuming the necessity of biological readiness as a determining factor in one’s progression through the stages, Piaget also acknowledged the potential for the environment to accelerate or even retard that progression.

Although many think Piaget’s cognitive theory is too narrow to explain human lifespan development, he is credited with discovering that thoughts, not just experience, contribute to human development. The advancement of medical research, particularly brain research, has allowed scientists to study how humans process information and react to various stimulations and will ultimately allow researchers to understand human cognition development at every age shortly (Atherton, 2011).

## Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Perspective

Like Piaget, Lev Vygotsky (1896 to 1934), a pioneer of sociocultural theory, maintained that children actively construct their knowledge. However, he disagreed with Piaget’s proposal that progression through the identified cognitive stages was natural and invariant. Vygotsky emphasized the role of culture in promoting certain types of activities (Rogoff & Chavajay, 1995) and emphasized that a child masters tasks that are deemed culturally important.

**TABLE 2.3** Piaget’s Stages of Cognitive Development

Stage	Approximate Age	Description
Sensorimotor stage	Birth to 18 to 24 months	Infants adapt and organize experiences by way of sensory and motor actions. Initially, simple reflexes (for example, sucking) help them know their world. Later, within this stage, infants differentiate themselves from the external world, and objects take on their existence. This is the time when object permanence occurs, with the infant able to symbolize the object and realize that objects exist even if they are out of the infant’s sensory experience.
Preoperational stage	2 to 7 years	While the child at this stage lacks logical operations, he or she is no longer tied to sensorimotor input but is tied to and operates via representational and conceptual frameworks. The child can employ symbols to recreate or present experiences. In this stage, the child believes that everyone sees the world the same way that he or she does. This is called egocentrism. Conservation, another achievement of this stage, is the ability to understand that quantity does not change if the shape changes.
Concrete operational stage	7 to 11 years	In this stage, the child can employ logic, however, only to concrete problems and objects.
Formal operational stage	≥11 years	At this point, children’s abstract thinking leads to reasoning with more complex symbols. They can think logically about abstract propositions and test hypotheses systematically. They become concerned with the hypothetical, the future, and ideological problems.

Vygotsky believed that human development is the result of interactions between people and their social environment. He focused on the connections between people and the sociocultural context in which they act and interact in shared experiences and cultural artifacts such as written languages, number systems, various signs, and symbols (Burns, Bodrova, & Leong, 2012). The purpose of these cultural artifacts is to facilitate the possible adjustment of a growing child into the culture and transform the way the child’s mind is formed. Initially, children develop these tools to serve solely as social functions and ways to communicate needs. These cultural tools are an achievement that expands one’s mental capacities, allowing individuals to master their behavior. Children generally learn how to use these cultural tools through interactions with parents, teachers, or more experienced peers (Burns et al., 2012).

Biopsychosocial Theory

Biopsychosocial theory was discussed in some detail in Chapter 1 and thus will not be expanded on here. However, it is important to highlight that the biopsychosocial model focuses on the integration and reciprocal effect that the biological, psychological, and social systems have on our development. This theory helps to highlight the fact that mental and psychological states



Source: Jack Hollingsworth/Photodisc/Thinkstock.

are influenced by many interacting processes, including internal and external variables and factors such as bodily processes, personality dispositions, and life events.

### Ecological Systems Theory

Theories of development classified as ecological theories emphasize environmental factors. Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917 to 2005) created one ecological theory that has important implications for understanding lifespan development. Bronfenbrenner, a Russian American, developed the ecological systems theory of human development, which posits that a child's development occurs within a complex system of relationships, including parent-child interactions (the microsystem); the extended family, school, and neighborhood (the mesosystem); and the general society and culture (the exosystem). All in all, the theory posited five environmental systems significant for understanding human development: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Table 2.4 provides descriptions of these systems, and Figure 2.1 highlights their dynamic interactive nature.

As you review Table 2.4, consider how specific forms of each system can interfere with one's optimal development. Consider, for example, the impact of living in poverty, with an abusive family, or in a war-torn culture/society on development. As you reflect on each of these systems, consider the implications for a counselor's intervention and prevention services.

The ecological systems theory developed by Bronfenbrenner has influenced the thinking of developmental psychologists and other psychologists around the world. This theory has significantly impacted the field of child and youth care. The umbrella, cube, and ecological onion models, which are widely used by professionals in child and youth care to organize ideas and information and to facilitate planning, are based on Bronfenbrenner's theory (Oswalt, 2008). Guided Practice Exercise 2.1 ("A Collision of Cultures") allows you to view a case through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.



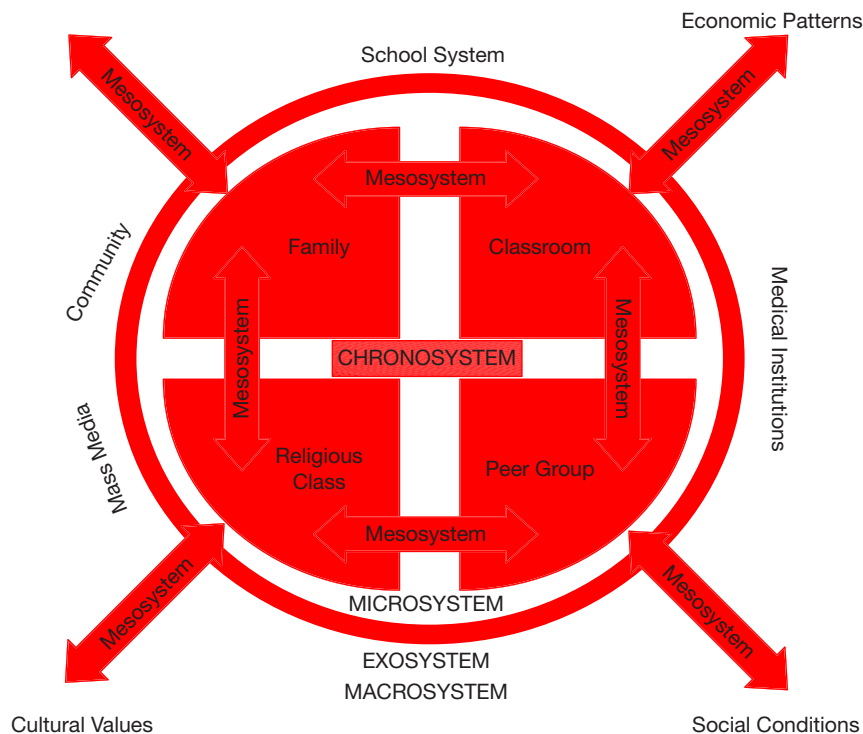
Source: Toby Burrows/Digital Vision/Thinkstock.

**TABLE 2.4** Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory

System	Description
Microsystem	<p>The <i>microsystem</i> refers to the immediate surroundings of the individual and consists of the interactions in his or her immediate surroundings. It is the setting in which a person lives; family, peer groups, neighborhood, and school life are all included in the microsystem.</p> <p>It is in the microsystem that the most direct interactions with social agents take place, with parents, peers, and teachers, for example. The individual is not merely a passive recipient of experiences in these settings but someone who helps to construct the social settings.</p>
Mesosystem	<p>The <i>mesosystem</i> connects with the structure of the microsystem. The relationship can be seen between school life, the neighborhood, and the family. The child's environment links the child with his or her immediate surroundings.</p> <p>Some common examples are the connections between family experiences and school experiences, school experiences and church experiences, and family experiences and peer experiences.</p> <p>A result of mesosystem interactions could be that children whose parents have rejected them may have difficulty developing positive relations with their friends or peers.</p>
Exosystem	<p>The <i>exosystem</i> is the outer shell surrounding both the mesosystem and the microsystem. The inner level of the exosystem is affected by the support of the macrosystem. Bronfenbrenner describes the exosystem as being made up of social settings that do not contain the developing person but affect experiences in his or her immediate settings (Berk, 2007).</p>

System	Description
	The exosystem includes other people and places that the child may not interact with often but still have a large effect on the child, such as parents' workplaces, extended family members, neighborhoods, and so on. For example, a wife or child's experience at home may be influenced by the husband's experiences at work. The father might receive a promotion that requires more travel, which might increase conflict with the wife and affect patterns of interaction with the child.
Macrosystem	The <i>macrosystem</i> influences the individual directly, but the individual has less influence in determining settings. The macrosystem includes aspects of culture and the relative freedoms permitted by the national government, cultural values, the economy, wars, and so on. The macrosystem also describes the culture in which individuals live, including socioeconomic status, poverty, and ethnicity.
Chronosystem	<p>The <i>chronosystem</i> refers to the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the life of an individual as well as sociohistorical circumstances. For example, divorce is one transition.</p> <p>Researchers have found that the negative effects of divorce on children often peak in the first year after the divorce. Two years after the divorce, family interaction is less chaotic and more stable. An example of sociohistorical circumstances would be the increasing opportunities in the last decades for women to pursue a career.</p>

**FIGURE 2.1** Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory of Dynamic Interactive Nature



## GUIDED PRACTICE EXERCISE 2.1

### A COLLISION OF CULTURES

As you read through the case of Ben, reflect on the information as you filter it through the ecological theory of development. Following your reading, respond to the questions presented. Discuss your responses with a colleague or professor.

#### Ben's Case

Ben is an American Chinese boy growing up in a very traditional American society with very traditional Chinese parents. Ben's parents communicate with each other in Chinese (Mandarin) at home. Ben's parents are highly educated individuals, and because Ben is their first child, he has been spoiled since he was a toddler. Due to their work responsibilities, Ben's parents live separately; getting together requires a 2-hour drive, and Ben's mother is his primary caretaker. His parents have been trying to get together every weekend so each parent can see Ben. Ben has been attending school, and most of his classmates are either White Americans or Black Americans. Since Ben can see his father only on weekends and his father instructed him to take care of his mother when he is not around, Ben has developed a very authoritarian attitude toward his mother. When Ben was 8, his mother gave birth to his sister, and Ben's behavior became more overbearing toward his mother and sister.

Recently, the school informed Ben's mother that Ben has been "acting up" in school, and his teachers frequently discipline him. Ben's parents are extremely concerned about Ben's mental health and biopsychosocial development, which can contribute to his growth and development as a dynamic, interactional, and dualistic individual.

#### Reflection and Discussion Points

- a. Can you identify any unique pressures or forces coming from Ben's micro-, meso-, or exosystems?
- b. What do you predict will be the impact on Ben's identity?
- c. What are your feelings about Ben and his parents' relationship moving forward?
- d. How might a counselor intervene?

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

From the cultural diversity perspective, the contributions of Bronfenbrenner and Vygotsky are significant to the study of human development because their theories focus on its socioecological