## Contents

### 4 Adaptive Capacity

- Proactive Coping and Motivation for Continuity .................................................. 78
- How Did Respondents Cope? .................................................................................. 82
- Coping with Specific Changes: Retirement, Widowhood, and Functional Limitations ................................................................. 85
- Functional Limitation and the Self ......................................................................... 93
- Patterns of Coping with Functional Limitations .................................................. 107
- General Patterns of Adaptation ........................................................................... 118
- Factors Linked to Negative Outcomes in Later Life ........................................... 126
- Summary .................................................................................................................. 130

### 5 Goals for Developmental Direction

- Continuity of Personal Goals .................................................................................. 133
- Disposition toward Continuity .............................................................................. 136
- Spiritual Development ............................................................................................ 139
- The Theory of Gerotranscendence ....................................................................... 142
- The Study of Goals for Developmental Direction in Later Life ........................... 145

### 6 Conclusion

- Assessing Continuity Theory ................................................................................ 148
- Evidence on the Assumptions and Propositions of Continuity Theory ............... 150
- Continuity Strategies Are Generally Effective .................................................... 154
- Methodological Issues Related to the Study of Continuity Theory .................... 155
- Future Research Using Continuity Theory ............................................................ 156

### Appendixes

- A. Tables .................................................................................................................. 159
- B. The Ohio Longitudinal Study of Aging and Adaptation ................................. 161
- C. The 1995 Study Questionnaire .......................................................................... 172
- D. Worksheets Used to Examine Longitudinal Patterns ..................................... 197

- References ............................................................................................................. 203
- Index ....................................................................................................................... 209
The continuity theory of normal aging states that older adults will usually maintain the same activities, behaviors, relationships as they did in their earlier years of life. According to this theory, older adults try to maintain this continuity of lifestyle by adapting strategies that are connected to their past experiences. The continuity theory is one of three major psychosocial theories which describe how people develop in old age. The other two psychosocial theories are the disengagement theory. An official in California’s Office on Aging indicated that employers who hire older people would be happy they did so: “You know the person’s going to come in and you know they’re going to accomplish something while they’re there. And, they are a wellspring of knowledge.” Source: Barkas, 2011

Barkas, S. (2011, September 5). Still working: Economy forcing retirees to re-enter workforce. Internal continuity is lost in a patient with Alzheimer who loses awareness of herself, but external continuity allows adaptation to changing environmental demands. The range of sociocultural theories is vast and multilayered. Aging is viewed within the context of our relationship with the larger society and culture. Our relationships can be defined in terms of sociocultural roles, as in SOC and continuity theory, or as a linkage to the larger group, as seen in the activity or disengagement theories. Read full chapter. Purchase book. Biological and Social Theories of Aging. Michelle Payson, ...