

Continuity and  
Adaptation  
in Aging

*Creating Positive Experiences*

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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, ...