

Homework 3

Middle or Late Adulthood Interview

(15 points)

Purpose of this activity is to learn on a more personal level what it is like to be older—middle aged or older. You will need to find a person who currently is older than 45 and is willing to be interviewed by you. It is required that you conduct the interview in person, not over the phone or email. This report should be 3 pages long.

1. Overview You will need to understand more about this period in the lifespan (broad age category would be 45 and up). Areas such as **biological changes** (vision, skin, hair, strength, weight gain, health, lifestyle factors); **cognitive changes** (memory, expertise, job/career, practical problem solving, learning new languages, learning technology, wisdom); **and socioemotional changes** (relationship, married or single, divorced, if parent--where at in family stage, importance of friendships) are broad areas to focus on. To learn more, you should be reading, as a minimum, the textbook.

Think about life for older adults and issues likely to surround this person.

Example: If the person in middle age: how to deal with becoming “middle age” and idea of “getting older”. If you interview an individual in late adulthood: how to deal with retirement and mortality issues--someone own age dying and the impact on own sense of mortality.

Now consider what you want to learn about from this interview and begin to plan the questions. Included is a list of sample questions for you to use. Feel free to make up questions of interest to you---be sure to gain information about key areas that relate to the aging process.

How to write report of the interview and what to include in report:

1. **This APA formatted report** should begin with: Who did you interview, why did you choose this person, where did you meet for interview. Include a summary of the person. Name, age, relation to you, occupation (if basic info is left out you will lose 5 points). **Next, provide a summary of the interview questions and answers in a narrative format.**
2. Discuss your personal reaction to what you learned from the interview at the end of your report. Below are questions to answer.
 - How did you begin the interview?
 - What did you learn in general about interviewing an older person?
 - What did you learn about aging?
 - What were your expectations? Were they realized?
 - Did the interviewee conform to stereotypes about aging?
 - Do you think you'll be like the person you interviewed when you get older?
 - What was the highlight of the interview?**

You do not have to address each of the following areas, but make sure you are describing the process in detail.

How to design and conduct interview:

Design questions that will highlight areas of interest for you. Start by looking at the list of possible questions provided for you. Feel free to add as many other questions as you like. Read through and pick out questions to use, and/or plan your own set of questions. You do not need to be rigid about sticking to your list of possible questions. You may find that open-ended questions are especially good at gaining information. Review your question list before the interview. You may want to review them again for the interviewee.

Begin the interview by telling the subject that you will be asking some questions, but he or she should feel free to expand on the topic or talk about related ideas. Set a definite schedule for the interview (such as five minutes per question) and stay on that schedule. Either tape-record the session (with your subject's permission) or take thorough notes. If a subject's answers are too brief or uninformative, follow up with questions like, "Why did you choose X?" or "Why do you think X happened?" If something the subject says seems important, follow up with additional probing questions, like "Tell me more about X."

Rapport building is important. It is your job to ensure your interviewee is comfortable, communicate this to the person. Remember, you are interested in your subject's life and ideas. Be careful to limit talk about yourself, or talk about your own experiences during the interview, except as a way of encouraging your interviewee to talk. If topics seem uncomfortable for your interviewee, attempt to put them at ease.

Design the Interview—based on own curiosity and the person you are interviewing.

Included is a list of potential questions to ask. Read through and pick out questions to use, and/or plan your own set of questions. You do not need to be rigid about sticking to your list of possible questions. If something mentioned particularly interests you, feel free to insert more questions based on earlier answers. You may find that open-ended questions are especially good at gaining information. Review question list before the interview. You may want to review them again for the interviewee.

Possible Questions for Interview

1. Please tell me about your childhood, family and school life.
2. Do you consider yourself old? At what ages (or stages) did you notice that you were getting older? How do you feel about changes?
3. What is the most important historical event or period of time that you have lived through? How did it influence you personally?
4. What is the biggest change you have seen in how people conduct their everyday lives?
5. What have been the best years of your life so far?
6. How are young people today different from when you were their age?
7. What advice would you give young people to help them prepare for their old age?
8. Have you ever experienced any negative attitudes or discrimination because of your age? Please explain.
9. What are your plans for the future?
10. How do you want to be remembered?
11. What things have you accomplished that are important to you? What things do you have left to accomplish?
12. Do you fear dying? Why or why not?

Possible Relationship questions:

How did you meet your husband/wife?

How long did you date? What was a typical date like?

When did you decide to get married?

Describe each of your roles in the marriage? How did you come to have these roles? How have these roles changed?

Do you have children? How many?

How has having children changed your marriage?

Do both of you work? How do you manage? Who takes care/took care of children?

What is the bravest thing you ever did?

If you could be any age again what age would you choose? And why?

What do you like the best about this time in your life?

What is the best thing about being middle age, and what is the worst thing?

What are the most important problems facing the world today?

If you could give one piece of advice to younger adults to prepare them for reading midlife adulthood what would it be?

More sample questions

Job/Hobbies/Talents

What are your interests or hobbies?

What things do you do well?

What is the best thing about your career? What is the worst thing?

Do you look forward to, or dread retirement? Why?

Has retirement been a good or bad experience?

What advice about preparing for retirement would you give to young adults?

History

What are two of the most important changes you have seen in the world in your lifetime?

How do you think family life has changed over the years? Are these positive or negative changes?

What major events in history do you remember?

What is your favorite hobby or activity?

Do you enjoy a slower pace now, or are you as busy as ever?

If you have had to slow down because of age, what activities do you miss?

Do you have grandchildren? Do you see them often?

What things do you get to do now that you couldn't do when you were younger?

What are some of the biggest changes you've seen in your lifetime?

Which president did you admire most during your lifetime? Was there another public figure you particularly admired?

What age has been the best age of your life? Why?

Conclusion

What are the most important problems facing the world today?

What do you see as the major problems of college life?

How do you think older adults and students can help each other?

What contributions have you made to make the world a better place to live? What contributions would you like to make in the future?