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Ústav veřejné správy a sociální politiky



**SLEZSKÁ  
UNIVERZITA**

FAKULTA VEŘEJNÝCH  
POLITIK V OPAVĚ

# **FVPAA074 PSYCHOSOCIAL DYNAMICS ACROSS THE LIFESPAN**

NATAŠA MATULAYOVÁ

# COURSE OBJECTIVES

Present an integrated view of human development across the lifespan, linking theory to social work practice.

Examine how family dynamics and social contexts influence development at key life stages.

Equip students to analyze developmental challenges and design practical, ethical interventions that support community well-being.



## WHY THIS COURSE MATTERS (AND WHY YOU'LL ACTUALLY ENJOY IT)

After completing the course, a student will be able to:

- Analyze and compare major developmental theories and research methods relevant to social work practice.
- Evaluate the impact of family and social contexts on development across different life stages.
- Apply theoretical frameworks to assess developmental challenges and propose context-sensitive intervention strategies.
- Communicate complex psychosocial concepts effectively to diverse audiences.
- Integrate multidisciplinary perspectives to advocate for social justice and improved community support systems.



# ASSESSMENT METHOD

5 credits

Oral Exam:

A comprehensive oral examination to evaluate the ability to articulate, analyze, and apply developmental theories in practical social work contexts.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

### **Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory (Erikson):**

**Introducing key stages such as Trust vs. Mistrust and Autonomy vs. Shame**

### **Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner):**

**Understanding the multiple layers (microsystem to macrosystem) that influence development**

### **Bowlby's Attachment Theory (Bowlby, Ainsworth):**

**Examining secure versus insecure attachments within the family context**





## SESSION 1

FOUNDATIONS OF  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory: Key Stages and Concepts

Erik Erikson's (1902-1994) **psychosocial development theory** is a **lifespan theory** that describes eight stages of human development, each characterized by a **psychosocial conflict** that must be resolved to foster healthy psychological growth. Each stage builds upon the previous one, influencing personality and social relationships.

or

Erik Erikson's theory outlines **eight stages of psychosocial development**, each with a **key conflict** that shapes personality and social interactions. Successful resolution leads to **psychological strengths**, while failure may result in challenges that persist into later life.

**Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development**

Approximate Age	Psychosocial Crisis/Task	Virtue Developed
Infant - 18 months	Trust vs Mistrust	Hope
18 months - 3 years	Autonomy vs Shame/Doubt	Will
3 - 5 years	Initiative vs Guilt	Purpose
5 -13 years	Industry vs Inferiority	Competency
13 -21 years	Identity vs Confusion	Fidelity
21- 39 years	Intimacy vs Isolation	Love
40 - 65 years	Generativity vs Stagnation	Care
65 and older	Integrity vs Despair	Wisdom

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## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

### Key Early Stages of Development:

#### Trust vs. Mistrust (Infancy: 0-1 year)

- **Core Question:** "Can I trust the world?"
- **Key Influence:** The infant depends on caregivers for basic needs (food, comfort, love).
- **Positive Outcome (Trust):** If caregivers are **consistent and responsive**, the child develops a **sense of security and trust in others**.
- **Negative Outcome (Mistrust):** If caregivers are **neglectful or inconsistent**, the child may develop **anxiety, fear, and suspicion of others**.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory: Key Stages and Concepts

### Key Early Stages of Development:

#### Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (Early Childhood: 1-3 years)

- **Core Question:** "Can I do things by myself, or do I always need help?"
- **Key Influence:** As toddlers begin to explore their independence (e.g., walking, choosing clothes, toilet training), they need encouragement.
- **Positive Outcome (Autonomy):** When supported, children **develop confidence and a sense of control over their actions.**
- **Negative Outcome (Shame and Doubt):** If overly criticized or controlled, they may feel **ashamed, doubtful of their abilities, and reluctant to explore.**

These early stages **lay the foundation for later social and emotional development**, influencing how individuals approach relationships, challenges, and personal growth. Erikson's model continues through **adolescence and adulthood**, covering identity, intimacy, productivity, and integrity in later life.





## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory: Key Stages and Concepts

### Key Early Stages of Development:

#### Initiative vs. Guilt (Preschool: 3-6 years)

- **Core Question:** "Is it okay for me to do things?"
- **Key Influence:** Encouragement of curiosity and decision-making.
- **Positive Outcome (Initiative):** Leadership, ability to take initiative.
- **Negative Outcome (Guilt):** Fear of failure, guilt over trying new things.

#### Industry vs. Inferiority (School Age: 6-12 years)

- **Core Question:** "Can I keep up with my peers?"
- **Key Influence:** Encouragement of effort and achievements.
- **Positive Outcome (Industry):** Competence, work ethic, confidence in skills.
- **Negative Outcome (Inferiority):** Feeling inadequate, fear of failure.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory: Key Stages and Concepts

### Key Early Stages of Development:

#### Identity vs. Role Confusion (Adolescence: 12-18 years)

- **Core Question:** "Who am I and where do I fit in?"
- **Key Influence:** Exploration of identity, social roles, values.
- **Positive Outcome (Identity):** Strong sense of self, clear personal goals.
- **Negative Outcome (Role Confusion):** Uncertainty about self, identity crisis.

#### Intimacy vs. Isolation (Young Adulthood: 18-40 years)

- **Core Question:** "Can I form meaningful relationships?"
- **Key Influence:** Deep connections with others, romantic and platonic.
- **Positive Outcome (Intimacy):** Strong, healthy relationships.
- **Negative Outcome (Isolation):** Loneliness, fear of commitment.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory: Key Stages and Concepts

### Key Early Stages of Development:

#### Generativity vs. Stagnation (Middle Adulthood: 40-65 years)

- **Core Question:** "Can I make a difference in the world?"
- **Key Influence:** Work, family, and community involvement.
- **Positive Outcome (Generativity):** Contribution to society, sense of purpose.
- **Negative Outcome (Stagnation):** Feeling unproductive, lack of motivation.

#### Integrity vs. Despair (Late Adulthood: 65+ years)

- **Core Question:** "Was my life meaningful?"
- **Key Influence:** Reflection on one's life experiences.
- **Positive Outcome (Integrity):** Acceptance, wisdom, fulfillment.
- **Negative Outcome (Despair):** Regret, fear of death, dissatisfaction.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory: Key Stages and Concepts

### Key Early Stages of Development:

#### Key Takeaways:

- ✓ Each stage builds on the previous one, shaping personality and social relationships.
- ✓ Successfully resolving each conflict fosters psychological strengths.
- ✓ Unresolved conflicts can lead to **challenges in later life**, but growth is still possible at any stage.

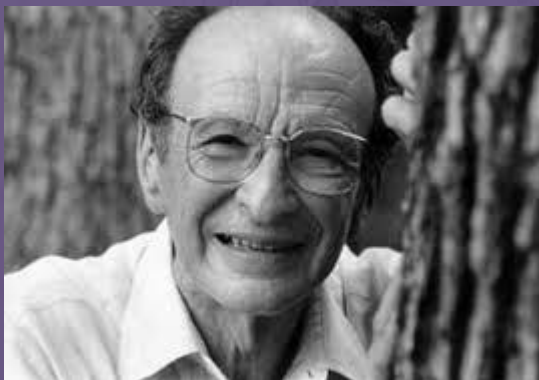
#### **TASK:**

**How do we apply Erikson's theory of psychosocial development in social work practice?**

**Research paper – max 2 pages – min. 3 resources**



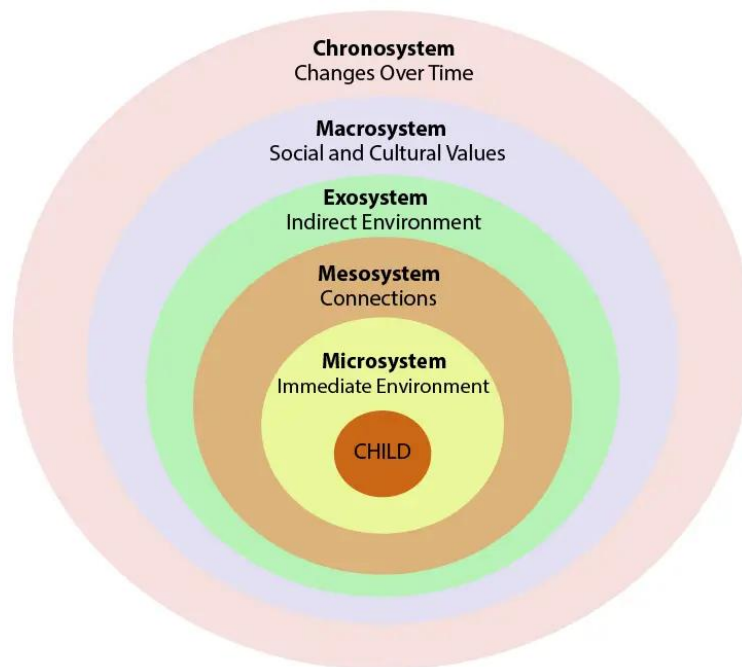
## SESSION 1

FOUNDATIONS OF  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Urie Bronfenbrenner – 1917-2005): Understanding the multiple layers (microsystem to macrosystem) that influence development

Urie Bronfenbrenner's **Ecological Systems Theory** explains how human development is influenced by different levels of environmental systems, ranging from immediate surroundings to broader societal structures.

This theory is crucial in **social work, education, and psychology**, as it highlights the **interconnectedness of individual and social influences**.





## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner):

### The Five Layers of Influence on Development:

#### 1. Microsystem (Immediate Environment)

1. **What It Includes:** Family, friends, teachers, caregivers, peers, and direct social interactions.
2. **Impact:** The most **direct** influence on development; **supportive or harmful relationships** can shape a person's behavior, emotional well-being, and cognitive growth.
3. **Example:** A child with caring parents and positive peer interactions is likely to develop **strong social skills**.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner):

### The Five Layers of Influence on Development:

#### 2. Mesosystem (Connections Between Microsystems)

- **What It Includes:** The **interactions** between different microsystems, such as family-school relationships or parent-peer group influences.
- **Impact:** Positive connections can strengthen development, while conflicts or inconsistencies between settings can create stress.
- **Example:** A child benefits if **parents and teachers communicate well**, reinforcing educational support.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner):

### The Five Layers of Influence on Development:

#### 3. Exosystem (Indirect Environmental Influences)

- **What It Includes:** Settings that **do not directly involve the individual but still affect them**, such as a parent's workplace, local government, or media.
- **Impact:** Stressful or supportive work environments for parents, for instance, can affect their children's emotional and economic well-being.
- **Example:** A **parent's job loss** can impact a child's life through financial hardship and stress at home.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner):

### The Five Layers of Influence on Development:

#### 4. Macrosystem (Cultural and Societal Influences)

- **What It Includes:** Broad cultural values, laws, customs, and social norms that shape individual and community life.
- **Impact:** Cultural expectations influence identity formation, opportunities, and access to resources.
- **Example:** Growing up in a **society that values education** can encourage academic success, while systemic discrimination can limit opportunities.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner):

### The Five Layers of Influence on Development:

#### 5. Chronosystem (Time and Life Transitions)

- **What It Includes:** The dimension of time, including **life transitions, historical events, and changes over time.**
- **Impact:** Can be personal (e.g., parental divorce) or societal (e.g., economic crisis, technological advancements).
- **Example:** A child's development may be affected by **growing up during a pandemic** or experiencing major life transitions like moving to a new country.





## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

### Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner):

Development is shaped by **multiple, interconnected systems** rather than just individual choices.

The **microsystem is the most immediate** and influential, but indirect systems (exosystem, macrosystem) also play a role.

Changes over time (chronosystem) can **reshape** developmental outcomes.

**Practical Use:** Social workers, educators, and policymakers can apply this theory to create **holistic interventions** that address multiple environmental influences.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner):

### Application in Social Work Practice

#### Microsystem: Direct Support for Individuals & Families

- ✓ **Application:** Strengthening family relationships, peer support, and school environments to promote positive development.
- ✓ **Example:** A social worker helping a child in foster care ensures a stable and supportive home environment while also addressing school and peer relationships.

#### Mesosystem: Strengthening Connections Between Microsystems

- ✓ **Application:** Building collaboration between family, school, and community services to provide comprehensive support.
- ✓ **Example:** A social worker facilitates communication between a school and a single-parent household to support a struggling student.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner):

### Application in Social Work Practice

#### Exosystem: Addressing Indirect Environmental Factors

- ✓ **Application:** Advocating for **better workplace policies, social services, and community resources** that impact clients.
- ✓ **Example:** A social worker **assists a parent dealing with job loss** by helping them access financial aid, ensuring family stability.

#### Macrosystem: Policy & Social Change

- ✓ **Application:** Advocating for **equitable policies, anti-discrimination laws, and cultural awareness in services**.
- ✓ **Example:** Lobbying for **better housing policies** to support families in poverty.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner):

### Application in Social Work Practice

#### Chronosystem: Adapting to Life Transitions & Social Change

- ✓ **Application:** Providing support during **life transitions and historical changes** that impact well-being.
- ✓ **Example:** Helping refugees **adjust to a new culture** or providing trauma-informed care for children affected by war or displacement.

#### SUMMARY

**Holistic Understanding:** Social workers and educators can **assess the full picture of a client/student's life** rather than focusing only on personal traits.

**Systemic Solutions:** Addressing **multiple layers of influence** (family, community, policy) leads to **sustainable change**.

**Prevention & Intervention:** Recognizing **risk factors at different levels** helps professionals design **proactive and responsive** programs.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS



### Bowlby's Attachment Theory – The Foundation

**Key Idea:** Attachment is a **biological** and **emotional** bond between a child and their caregiver, essential for survival and psychological development.

**John Bowlby (1907-1990)** proposed that early attachments shape **future relationships, emotional regulation, and mental health.**

Attachment behaviors (crying, clinging, smiling) ensure **proximity to caregivers**, increasing survival chances.

The **Internal Working Model (IWM)** – Children form expectations about relationships based on caregiver responsiveness.

#### Implication:

- ✓ Secure attachment fosters **confidence, independence, and emotional well-being.**
- ✓ Insecure attachment can lead to **anxiety, difficulty in relationships, and mental health challenges.**





## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS



## Secure vs. Insecure Attachments (Mary Ainsworth's (1913-1999) Research)

Mary Ainsworth's 'Strange Situation' Experiment (1978) classified attachment into:

### ✓ Secure Attachment (Ideal, 60-70% of children)

- **Caregiver Response:** Consistently sensitive and responsive.
- **Child Behavior:** Feels safe exploring, seeks caregiver for comfort when distressed.
- **Future Impact:** Strong relationships, emotional regulation, high self-esteem.

### ✗ Insecure Attachment (Risk Factors for Development)

#### ◆ Avoidant Attachment

- **Caregiver Response:** Emotionally distant or dismissive.
- **Child Behavior:** Avoids seeking comfort, appears independent but suppresses emotions.
- **Future Impact:** Struggles with intimacy, fears rejection.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Secure vs. Insecure Attachments (Ainsworth's Research)

Mary Ainsworth's 'Strange Situation' Experiment (1978) classified attachment into:

### ✗ Insecure Attachment (Risk Factors for Development)

#### ◆ Ambivalent/Resistant Attachment

- **Caregiver Response:** Inconsistent (sometimes nurturing, sometimes neglectful).
- **Child Behavior:** Clingy, anxious, resists comfort but also seeks it.
- **Future Impact:** Fear of abandonment, emotional ups and downs.

#### ◆ Disorganized Attachment

- **Caregiver Response:** Abusive, neglectful, frightening.
- **Child Behavior:** Confused, fearful, lacks clear attachment strategy.
- **Future Impact:** High risk for mental health issues, difficulty trusting others.



## SESSION 1

# FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Importance of Attachment in the Family Context

- ✦ **Why Does Attachment Matter for Families & Social Work?**
  - ◆ Early attachment experiences shape future emotional resilience and relationships.
  - ◆ Secure attachment provides a foundation for **trust, empathy, and healthy coping skills**.
  - ◆ Insecure attachment patterns may lead to **behavioral issues, anxiety, and difficulty in relationships**.
  
- 💡 **Practical Implications for Social Work & Parenting:**
  - ✓ **Support early parent-child bonding** (e.g., responsive caregiving, skin-to-skin contact).
  - ✓ **Intervene in at-risk families** to prevent neglect or inconsistent care.
  - ✓ **Provide attachment-focused therapy** for children with trauma or insecure bonds.



## SESSION 2

# COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDHOOD

**Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory (Piaget):** Covering stages from sensorimotor to formal operational, with implications for learning and socialization.

**Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky):** Emphasizing the role of social interaction and the zone of proximal development in cognitive growth.



## SESSION 3

# ADOLESCENCE AND IDENTITY FORMATION

**Erikson's Identity vs. Role Confusion Stage (Erikson):** Focusing on the development of self and identity during adolescence.

**Bandura's Social Learning Theory (Bandura):** Understanding the impact of observational learning and peer influence.

**Marcia's Identity Status Theory (Marcia):** Analyzing exploration and commitment in identity formation.





## SESSION 4

# EARLY AND MIDDLE ADULTHOOD – RELATIONSHIPS AND VOCATIONAL IDENTITY

**Erikson's Stages of Intimacy vs. Isolation and Generativity vs. Stagnation (Erikson): Addressing relationship building and contribution to society.**

**Levinson's Seasons of Life Theory (Levinson): Outlining adult developmental transitions.**

**Super's Career Development Theory (Super): Discussing vocational identity and role evolution in work-life balance.**



## SESSION 5

# LATE ADULTHOOD AND ADVANCED AGE – ADAPTATION AND COPING

**Erikson's Integrity vs. Despair Stage (Erikson): Evaluating life review processes and the quest for meaning in later years.**

**Baltes' Theory of Selective Optimization with Compensation (Baltes): Identifying adaptive strategies for aging successfully.**

**Continuity Theory (Atchley): Examining the importance of maintaining consistent social relationships and personal habits.**





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THANK YOU 😊