

PHYSICAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFE STAGES 1

The different aspects of growth and development across an individual's lifespan can be remembered with the acronym 'PIES' – physical, intellectual, emotional and social. Physical development concerns the functions, systems and abilities of the body.

GROWTH PATTERNS

Newborn babies have limited control over their muscles, meaning they are largely immobile and entirely dependent on their caregivers. Infancy is a period of rapid growth and development, which allows for increasing coordination and follows particular patterns:

Top to toe

Infants are first able to control their head, then their back and lower body.

Inner to outer

Infants gain control over 'core' muscles (those in the centre of the body) first, so that they can sit or hold themselves up. They then gain control over their limbs and extremities, e.g. fingers.

Children follow the same patterns of development (i.e. reaching one **milestone** before another), but at different rates. This means some children may reach milestones earlier or later than expected.

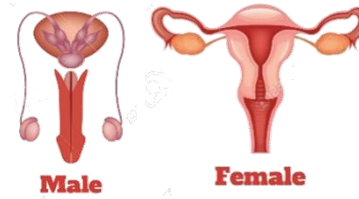
Milestone – a skill or ability a child is typically expected to gain by a certain age

PUBERTY

Adolescence is a time of significant physical and emotional change, triggered by the release of sex **hormones** which eventually turn a child into an adult capable of reproduction. 'Growth spurts' – e.g. rapid increases in height – are also seen at this stage.

Primary sexual characteristics

These are present since birth – for example, sex organs such as the uterus, vagina (female), testes and penis (male). These mature during puberty due to the release of sex hormones, as the testes begin to produce sperm and the **menstrual cycle** commences for females.



Hormone – a chemical produced by the body that controls body functions and processes

Secondary sexual characteristics

These develop during puberty, but are not required for reproduction.

Boys	Girls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadening of chest/shoulders Voice deepens Facial and pubic hair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breast development Hips widen Pubic hair

Sexual characteristics – traits that distinguish males and females

Menstruation – regular shedding of the womb lining, if the egg has not been fertilised

MENOPAUSE

For women, the **menopause** is caused by a decrease in the female sex hormones.

This means a woman can no longer get pregnant naturally, and **ovulation** and menstruation stop. This leads to a range of physical and mental symptoms, which differ across individuals.

Menopause – the end of natural fertility for women

- Hot flashes
- Insomnia
- Weight gain
- Low mood
- Difficulties concentrating
- Reduced sex drive
- Headaches
- Hair thinning

Ovulation – regular release of egg cells

CHANGES TO SKIN ELASTICITY

An individual's appearance during later life stages will show evidence of ageing. For instance, the skin loses **elasticity** and becomes less efficient at repairing itself, which causes **wrinkles** to appear.



MOTOR SKILLS

Young children pass through key 'developmental milestones' (such as walking and talking). The acquisition of these first key skills helps to prepare children for the challenges in later life stages. These skills are categorised into:

- Gross motor skills:** Control over large muscle groups, e.g. the core muscles, legs and arms.
- Fine motor skills:** Control over small muscle groups and precise movements.

Age	Fine	Gross
4 months	Reaches towards objects	No head lag, rolls from front to back
6 months	Moves items from hand to hand	Lifts head and chest when lying on front, sits with support, takes weight on legs
12 months	Pointing with index finger, pincer grip, and lifts objects	Crawling and cruising (walks when holding furniture), rises from lying down
18 months	Builds a tower; scribbling, turns 2-3 book pages at a time, can feed self	Walks backwards, runs and jumps with both feet
2 years	Builds tower up to seven blocks, copies vertical and circular strokes, turns individual book pages	Able to run well, kicks and throws a ball without problems, can squat and rise without help
3 years	Draws lines and circles, builds tower of up to nine bricks, can draw a person with a head	Can walk on tiptoes, stands on one foot, rides a tricycle, walks upstairs
5 years	Writes own name, copies simple pictures	Catches a ball with hands, walks along a line, forward rolls
7 years	Writes letters and numbers correctly, dresses independently	Able to use a skipping rope, rides a bike

PEAKS IN PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

During early adulthood, individuals have reached **maturity**. This means that their physical strength and sensory abilities peak.

In early adulthood, fertility also peaks, and many people choose to have their own children during this life stage.

Maturity – reaching the full development of adulthood

LOSS OF MOBILITY, MUSCLE TONE AND STRENGTH

During later adulthood, individuals are likely to experience a reduction in their mobility. For example, they may experience painful and stiff joints due to **arthritis**, bones will lose strength and density, and muscles will lose tone and strength.

Fine motor skills may also be affected, as older adults may find it harder to make more precise movements as they age.

Maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle can help to offset some of these problems (but the effects of a poor lifestyle can also 'catch up' with individuals at this stage).



Arthritis – breakdown of the cushioning between joints

Later adulthood may see a decrease in fine motor skills, which affect ability to live independently.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFE STAGES

'Intellectual development' means the development of cognitive, or thinking, ability. This involves gaining knowledge about the world and building problem-solving skills, creativity and memory. Brain development and maturation is critical for these processes.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Learning to communicate is a key part of understanding the world around us and building relationships with others. Key language development milestones are:

	Age	Milestone
Infancy: 0-2 years	0-3 months	Recognises caregiver's voice; smiles at caregiver
	4-6 months	Laughs; gurgles; notices music
	7 months - 1 year	Starts to use gestures; can say one or two words
Early childhood: 3-8 years	1-2 years	Understands simple questions; can string two words together
	2-3 years	Can name objects; uses short phrases
	3-4 years	Can answer simple questions; talks about activities
	4-5 years	Adult-level grammar starts to develop; can form detailed sentences
	5-7 years	Understands that words can have multiple meanings

ABSTRACT AND CREATIVE THINKING

To think abstractly about a problem, you need to be able to use your imagination. This skill develops fully around 12 years of age – this is important for adolescents, as this is a time which involves making decisions about one's future. The ability to think about the possible future consequences of actions helps teenagers to decide on their future goals and careers.

Adolescence:
9-18 years

Pragmatic thinking – considering a problem realistically

Abstract thinking – considering a problem without it being laid out physically in front of you

PROBLEM-SOLVING

In infancy, children rely on their **sensory perceptions** and motor skills to explore their environment. They use trial and error to solve problems, and show an interest in toys, colours and bright lights.

Sensory perceptions – input from the senses, i.e. touch, taste, sight, hearing, smell

Infancy:
0-2 years

During early childhood, children between the ages of three and four are unable to solve problems which are not laid out in front of them. Young children lack abstract thought – they can only perform concrete problem-solving. As they cannot use their imagination to think about problems, putting the problem in front of them physically or using **visual representation** (e.g. counting on their fingers) is usually required.

Visual representation – using images or objects to turn an abstract concept into a concrete one

Early childhood:
3-8 years

As children grow, they become even more interested in the world around them, and develop the patience to try multiple solutions to a problem. Children also start to ask more 'why' questions, which help to build their knowledge and understanding.



Problem-solving across other life stages:

Life stage	Problem-solving at this stage
Adolescence	Adolescence is a time of exposure to new ideas and increasing independence. Young people may use this new information to question previously held beliefs and try out new ways of solving problems for themselves.
Adulthood	Knowledge gained throughout life experience can be used to inform problem-solving and make realistic decisions.
Later adulthood	Some older adults face a decline in cognitive processing speed, which can make it more difficult to solve complex problems.

DEVELOPMENT OF MEMORY

The brain is still maturing when a baby is born, meaning that their memory ability is still maturing too. However, very young babies are able to make memories – for instance, they learn to recognise their primary caregiver's voice between zero and three months.

As a baby gets older, the length of time they can remember information for increases. By about six years of age, memory is well-developed. This helps them to become successful at problem-solving.

Infancy:
0-2 years

Early childhood:
3-8 years

LOSS OF MEMORY

Memory abilities naturally decline as part of ageing. In later adulthood, individuals often find it more difficult to recall very specific information (such as the names of people or places). However, **procedural memory** (memory for how to do things and perform certain actions) is usually unaffected during normal ageing.

It's important to distinguish between normal memory loss during ageing, and conditions such as **dementia**. People in late adulthood are at higher risk of dementia, which causes progressive decline to memory and other intellectual abilities.

Later adulthood:
65+ years

Dementia – collective term for a group of neurological conditions which involve serious memory decline

Procedural memory – remembering how to perform certain sequences of actions

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFE STAGES

Emotional development involves the ability to understand emotions and express them in a socially acceptable way. This is key for developing relationships with others too, which involves being sensitive and empathetic towards other people.

BONDING AND ATTACHMENT

'Attachment' refers to the bond between an infant and their primary caregiver. Depending on the caregiver's behaviour, the attachment is either secure or insecure:

- **Secure:** the infant trusts the caregiver to respond appropriately to their needs. This aids independence, as the child feels secure enough to explore their environment.
- **Insecure:** the caregiver is not trusted by the infant to respond appropriately or sensitively to their needs.

A child's attachment pattern influences their later relationships. For instance, an insecurely attached infant is more likely to have problems trusting others.

INDEPENDENCE

Independence means being able to do things for oneself.

Infancy	Infants are entirely dependent on caregivers at first, but start to explore their environment when crawling and walking.
Early childhood	Learning to clothe and feed oneself.
Adolescence	Developing a separate identity from one's family, and making decisions for one's future.
Early adulthood	Moving out of home, starting a career, and possibly starting one's own family.
Middle adulthood	Peak of career reached, fully able to make decisions for oneself. Children may have grown up and left home.
Later adulthood	Retirement can give more control over how one spends one's time. However, some older adults may need care and support to live safely. Loss of fine motor skills and ability reduce independence.

SELF-ESTEEM

'Self-esteem' means how you feel about your own value and worth. In an individual's early years, their caregivers help to build this by giving support and encouragement.

Self-esteem is particularly important during adolescence, as there is often a strong desire to fit in with peers. Many different life experiences and events influence self-esteem.

Positive influences	Negative influences
Supportive friends; taking on new challenges; positive thoughts; family and friends' encouragement	Overprotective parents; excessive criticism; bullying; social media comparison; unsupportive friends
Confidence; optimism; trusting; strong problem-solving ability; awareness of personal strengths	Mistrust in others; fear of taking risks; blaming yourself; worry and anxiety

SECURITY

For infants, caregivers should provide a sense of security, as they depend on them for comfort and reassurance. Infants will often show **separation anxiety** when their caregivers leave the room.

Separation anxiety – feeling worried when apart from a primary caregiver

During adolescence, many individuals may feel less secure as this is a time of significant change and preparation for the future as an adult.

In adulthood, security is often boosted by having close and supportive relationships with partners and friends.

CONTENTMENT

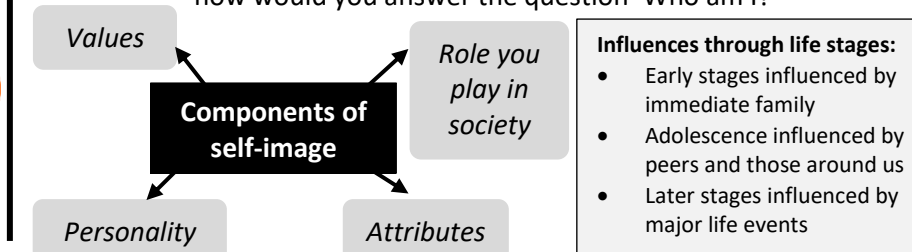
Contentment means a state of satisfaction. For very young children, this means that their caregivers have met all their needs. Infants will elicit responses from their caregivers by communicating discontentment if their needs are not met, e.g. crying when they are hungry.

During adolescence and adulthood, contentment often involves having a fulfilling occupation, having satisfying relationships and/or enjoying one's hobbies. For people in late adulthood, feeling as though life goals have been achieved contributes to a sense of contentment.



SELF-IMAGE

Self-image is about how someone would describe themselves – how would you answer the question 'Who am I?'

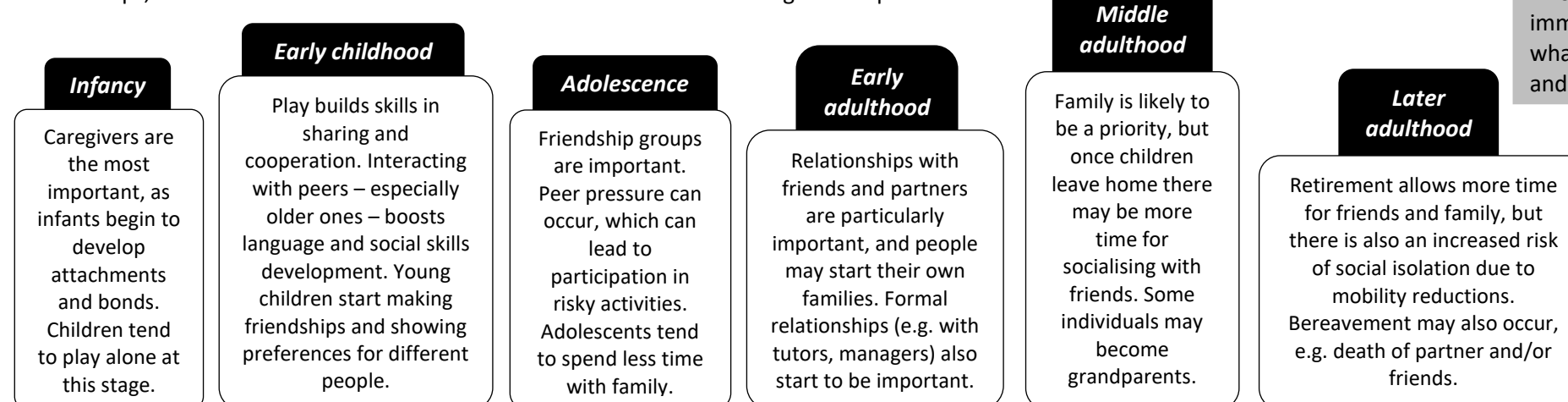


SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFE STAGES

Humans are naturally social beings, and desire communication and interaction with others. Social development involves the ability to understand and build relationships with other people.

FORMATION OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

Relationship formation differs across the life stages in terms of which relationships are prioritised and have the most influence on an individual. Having language abilities aids the development of many of these relationships, as individuals can communicate with one another about feelings and experiences.



PRIMARY SOCIALIZATION

This involves learning about social norms from your immediate family. Young children will observe and learn what is socially acceptable from their parents/caregivers and siblings.



SECONDARY SOCIALIZATION

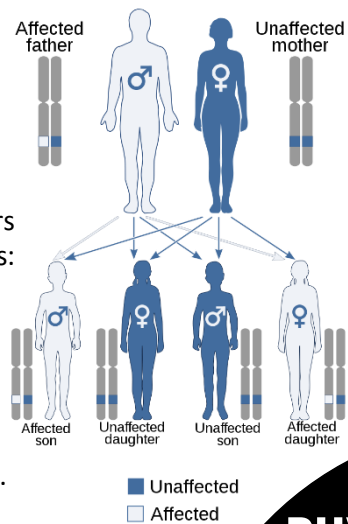
This involves learning social norms in a wider variety of contexts, outside of an individual's immediate family. For instance, starting to attend school allows children to learn how to behave appropriately in the classroom, with their peers and towards teachers. This continues through the lifespan, e.g. learning socially acceptable behaviour in the workplace.

GENETIC INHERITANCE

Genetic information inherited from your parents can influence growth and development. Genes carry DNA, which instructs our bodies how to function and develop. Inheriting damaged, mutated or faulty genes can lead to a range of health conditions. The diagram to the right illustrates the 'autosomal dominant' inheritance pattern. This means that if only one parent has an affected gene, there is a 50% chance each child will be affected too.

Genetic predisposition – being more likely to develop a health condition due to your genes

Autosomal dominant



EXAMPLES OF GENETIC CONDITIONS

Condition	Influence on development
Cystic fibrosis	Thick, sticky mucus builds up in the lungs. This can cause breathing and digestive difficulties.
Down's syndrome	Causes learning disability, increases the risk of heart conditions, and is indicated by a distinct facial appearance.
Sickle-cell anaemia	Red blood cells have an abnormal shape, which can cause painful blockages in the blood vessels.

GENETIC PREDISPOSITIONS

Having a **genetic predisposition** means you are more likely than others to develop a health condition, such as:

- cancer
- diabetes
- high blood cholesterol

However, this does not definitely mean you will develop that condition. The influence of lifestyle factors – such as following a healthy diet and exercising – can offset your increased risk in some circumstances.

APPEARANCE

This relates to the way we look – part of our appearance is down to our genes, but it can also be altered (e.g. through fashion, hair styling, body modifications, etc.).

How an individual feels about their appearance can have a major impact on their growth and development. For instance, dissatisfaction with appearance can lead to low self-esteem and even mental health conditions such as **body dysmorphic disorder**.

Concerns over appearance can also be heightened during adolescence. Puberty is a time of rapid physical change, and individuals may compare their changing appearance to that of their peers.

Body dysmorphic disorder – obsessive worries and compulsive behaviours that centre on perceived flaws in appearance

Wanting to feel good about one's appearance can also have a positive effect on growth and development. For example:

- Wanting clear skin and good teeth can increase motivation to maintain personal hygiene.
- Wanting to be at a healthy weight can increase motivation to eat a balanced, healthy diet full of fruits and vegetables.
- Wanting a toned and fit appearance can cause someone to exercise regularly.

All of these have the knock-on effect of reducing the risk that an individual will develop a health condition.

PHYSICAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

'Physical factors' means the influences upon an individual's growth and development which relate to their bodies and physiology.

Some of these we are born with – such as our genes – but some of these are modifiable, meaning we can change them (e.g. by changing lifestyles).

ILLNESS AND DISEASE

Becoming unwell can significantly impact all aspects of an individual's development, particularly if this occurs in childhood or adolescence. In terms of PIES:

- **Physical** – symptoms such as pain, fatigue, nausea, loss of mobility and/or sensory abilities (depending on illness).
- **Intellectual** – some conditions cause memory or cognitive decline. Individuals may also have to miss school/work.
- **Emotional** – stress, low mood and/or anxiety over one's condition can be experienced.
- **Social** – being unwell can make it difficult or impossible to socialise, and some illnesses carry a social **stigma**.



Stigma – shame and negative associations attached to a particular thing by society

Acute		Chronic
Short-term illnesses, lasting only a few days or weeks. These have a sudden onset .		Illnesses which last for a substantial period of time – months, years, or even a lifetime. These often involve long-term and/or complex management to minimise the impact on an individual's everyday life.
Examples:		Examples:
Mild	Serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asthma • Hypertension (high blood pressure) • Arthritis and osteoporosis • Diabetes
Common cold; influenza	Heart attack; pneumonia	



DIET

A healthy diet balances the main food groups, providing the body with energy and the nutrients it needs to maintain body functions.

Eating too much fat and sugar can lead individuals to become obese, which carries numerous health risks. Examples include high blood pressure, cancer, increased heart attack risk, and strain on joints.

EXERCISE

Engaging in regular exercise of moderate intensity is essential for maintaining healthy growth and development. Exercise improves muscle tone and function, boosts mood and improves the quality of sleep.

Those that live a **sedentary lifestyle** are at an increased risk of developing conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, and becoming overweight.

LIFESTYLE CHOICES

This refers to choices we make about how we live our lives. Following a healthy lifestyle greatly reduces an individual's risk of developing serious health conditions.

Sedentary lifestyle – a lifestyle which involves limited physical activity

SMOKING

Smoking cigarettes carries a wide range of health risks, including cancers, respiratory disorders, and a higher risk of stroke.

Many smokers are addicted to the nicotine in cigarettes, which make it very difficult to quit. Second-hand smoke (inhaling smoke from other people's cigarettes) also carries health risks. This means that parents who smoke around their children can cause serious harm to their child's development.

ALCOHOL

The short-term effects of alcohol consumption include a reduction in inhibitions, meaning that individuals are more likely to engage in risky behaviours. This can lead to accidents and injuries.

Over the long term, excessive alcohol consumption can cause health problems including liver disease/failure, mental health problems, cancer, and heart failure.



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

CULTURE

'Culture' refers to the shared characteristics of a group of people, including customs, beliefs, language, social habits, cuisine and the arts.

	What is it?	How can it affect development?
Community involvement	An individual's 'community' is a group of people that they identify with. This could be people living in the individual's local area, or a group they share experiences with (e.g. a religious organisation).	Belonging to a community builds self-esteem and has positive effects on mental health. The risk of social isolation is also reduced, as an individual is likely to meet new friends with shared interests.
Religion	Religions with a large number of followers around the world include Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. An individual's religious beliefs are likely to give them guidance on how to live their lives.	Religious beliefs can influence an individual's diet (e.g. many people following Hinduism are vegetarians); personal hygiene routine (e.g. many Muslims prefer to wash in running water); and which medical procedures are acceptable (e.g. Jehovah's Witnesses are more likely to refuse blood transfusions).
Gender roles/expectations	These refer to society's expectations about how women and men should act.	Women are often more likely than men to be expected to take on caring responsibilities, and men are stereotypically expected to be stronger and the 'breadwinner'.

Stereotype – a generalised belief about a group of people, not based on fact

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Getting a positive start in education in an individual's early years can have positive influences on their development throughout later life stages.

Enjoying education is likely to encourage a person to achieve higher levels of qualifications, which can ultimately lead to having a more satisfying and well-paid job.

On the other hand, some individuals may be bullied at school, which can significantly impact on self-esteem, confidence and mental health.

Social isolation – withdrawal from, or lack of contact with, wider society and other people.

SOCIAL ISOLATION

This refers to a lack of contact with society or other people, or a withdrawal from participating in society. Not having support or not socialising with other people can have a severe impact on an individual's mental health, and raise the risk of conditions such as depression.

Older adults may be at particular risk of social isolation, for several reasons:

- Reduced mobility
- More likely to be in ill health
- Financial strain in retirement
- Friends and/or partner have died
- Family may live a long way away

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

The quality of relationship that an individual has with others around them can significantly impact on their growth and development, in multiple ways.

Supportive relationships	Unsupportive relationships
+ Motivation and positivity	- Abusive – e.g. physical, or isolating the individual from others
+ Increase confidence	- Negative impact on self-esteem
+ Emotional support	- Stress, anxiety, depression
+ Encourage healthy behaviours, e.g. eating healthily	- Peer pressure

ROLE MODELS

A role model is someone who an individual looks up to as a good example of how to behave. Role models can be people they know – e.g. a parent or teacher – or someone from the media, such as a successful athlete.

Positive role models can have a positive influence on others:

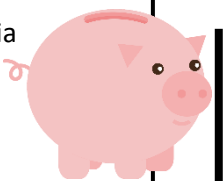
- Encourage healthy behaviours (e.g. regular exercise, avoiding drugs)
- Encourage kindness and respect towards others
- Improved confidence and self-esteem
- Motivation to work towards a particular goal (e.g. a career, learning new skills, playing sports)
- Demonstration of effective communication and social skills

If a child's role model shows negative behaviours, unfortunately the child may be more likely to imitate these negative behaviours. For example, a child growing up in a household in which both their parents are heavy drinkers may be more likely to do the same as they grow up.



INCOME/WEALTH

Two key ways of obtaining an income are via employment, or by the receipt of welfare benefits from the government (if eligible – e.g. unable to work due to disability).



Having sufficient income means that an individual can pay for essential housing and living costs, making it more likely that their basic needs are met. If an individual is not stressed about finances, they are more likely to spend high-quality time with others, and concentrate on other interests.

Being on a low income can have a knock-on effect on all other areas of development. For example:

- Physical** – if unable to afford healthy food or to heat the home
- Emotional** – higher risk of mental health conditions, such as depression and/or anxiety
- Intellectual** – stress over money can affect someone's ability to concentrate at work/school
- Social** – being unable to pay for leisure activities with friends/family can increase the risk of loneliness



MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

This means the items that an individual owns. Someone on a higher income is likely to be able to purchase the items they want, which can have either a positive or negative impact on development.

Purchasing exercise equipment – such as a bike, or even a home gym – could improve someone's physical development. Alternatively, someone could buy an expensive computer and spend most of their spare time using this, resulting in an unhealthy and sedentary lifestyle.

Mobile phones could also increase social wellbeing by making it easier to interact with others. On the other hand, use of social media can reduce self-esteem for some people (e.g. by comparing themselves to others).

How do the items that you own influence your growth and development?

LIFE EVENTS – PHYSICAL EVENTS AND RELATIONSHIP CHANGES

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

SOCIAL

More likely to become socially isolated or miss out on social events, due to reduction in mobility, etc.

May experience a change to role, e.g. no longer able to work due to disability.


INTELLECTUAL

May have to take time off school/work to recover. If the accident was severe, they may no longer be able to participate in these activities.

PHYSICAL

Change to mobility or ability level.

Pain, fatigue and/or nausea.



Rehabilitation – the process of restoring someone to their previous level of functioning and/or activity level

PHYSICAL EVENTS

Accidents, injuries and ill health can all severely impact an individual's physical health and development. Depending on the degree of severity of these incidents, there may be a long process of treatment and **rehabilitation**.

Remember that all life events (including accidents and ill health) can affect all aspects of health:

- **Physical:** Relating to the body, its functions and physiology
- **Intellectual:** Relating to thinking (or cognitive) abilities
- **Emotional:** Relating to someone's feelings and psychological wellbeing
- **Social:** relating to someone's relationships with other people

Becoming unwell can happen very suddenly and unexpectedly – for example, contracting a very serious infection.

Many illnesses are treatable (e.g. with medication or surgery), but some can have long-lasting impacts on an individual's development (e.g. brain damage caused by a stroke).


Ill health can also be predictable, to a degree. If someone has followed an unhealthy lifestyle for a long period of time (e.g. heavy smoking and/or drinking), the development of conditions such as liver disease or high blood pressure would not be unexpected.

ILL HEALTH

Examples include:

- **Meningitis** – a severe condition in which the meninges – these cover the brain and spinal cord – become inflamed.
- **Emphysema** – damage to the air sacs in the lungs. A key symptom is shortness of breath.
- **Chronic bronchitis** – a condition involving inflammation of the airways, causing a persistent cough.

RELATIONSHIP CHANGES



ENTERING INTO RELATIONSHIPS

Adolescence is a time that many individuals first enter into romantic relationships with others.

A healthy and loving relationship can be positive:


- Providing emotional support
- Companionship
- Increased self-esteem

Abusive and/or unsupportive relationships can:

- increase stress
- increase risk of mental health problems
- lead to social isolation

If an individual doesn't follow safe sex practices, they are also at risk of unwanted pregnancy or contracting **sexually transmitted diseases**.


Sexually transmitted diseases – infections passed person to person during sexual intercourse or sexual contact



MARRIAGE AND/OR COHABITATION

Many individuals first enter marriage or cohabitation (living together) with a partner during the early adulthood stage. The possible positive and negative effects are similar to those listed in 'entering into relationships'.

However, as marriage or cohabitation is more formal, this relationship is likely to have a much stronger influence on an individual's development. A supportive partnership can lead to an individual succeeding in their educational or career goals, and encourage the maintenance of healthy lifestyle habits.




DIVORCE

The effects of a divorce on an individual can be positive or negative, depending on the circumstances.



If the relationship was negative and unhealthy, divorce can be a relief for both parties and an opportunity for a fresh start.


However, the divorce process is likely to be very stressful – particularly if it involves changes to living arrangements or childcare. Divorce can also impact an individual's self-image, especially if the couple were together for a long time. There is also the risk that an individual engages in unhealthy coping strategies (e.g. heavy drinking) due to stress.



PARENTHOOD

Becoming a parent is one of the most significant life events an individual can go through, often requiring a total change to the way a person lives. Effects on development include:

 Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of pride and accomplishment • Bonding and attachment to the child • Learning new skills and gaining new life experience
 Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue • Financial strain • Reduced socialising • Depression/anxiety



BEREAVEMENT

Losing a loved one can be extremely traumatic, and everyone deals with grief in different ways. Some possible impacts include:

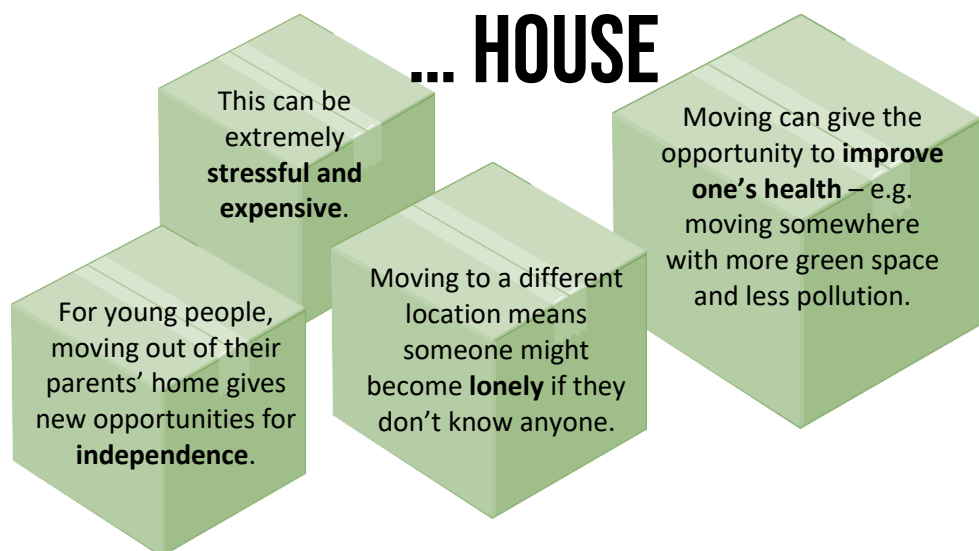
- depression
- loneliness
- anger
- confusion
- inability to focus or concentrate

However, if the loss comes following a long illness, some relief may be experienced that the person is no longer suffering. Death of a loved one can also encourage an individual to do something positive in their memory, or to make the most of their own lives due to the realisation that life is short.

MOVING...

A major transition in life can have a significant impact on an individual. Whether this is positive or negative can depend partly on whether a change was planned (i.e. **expected**) and whether an individual had **chosen** to make the move. The move is likely to be **stressful** (at least in the short term) and will require the individual to **adjust** to their new circumstances.

... HOUSE



... SCHOOL



... JOB

- Starting employment provides income, which can help individuals develop **financial independence** and have money for leisure activities.
- A new job may be more *or less* **stressful** than an individual's previous occupation.
- Starting a new job gives individuals the opportunity to build new **knowledge and skills**.
- Long hours and **fatigue** could interfere with an individual's **family commitments** and other interests.
- Having a good new job can be fulfilling and **boost confidence and self-esteem**.

LIFE EVENTS – CHANGES TO LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

Throughout an individual's lifespan, there are likely to be significant changes to their current situation. Many of these changes can be stressful, but positive changes to one's life circumstances are also likely to be exciting.

EXCLUSION FROM EDUCATION

Students may be expelled from school for poor behaviour or attendance issues. Alternatively, some students may drop out of school for reasons including unplanned pregnancy, bullying, or family emergencies.

Leaving school prematurely can negatively affect an individual's intellectual development, as they are less likely to gain the qualifications required to engage in a fulfilling career. They also may face discrimination in later life due to being poorly educated.

On the other hand, leaving education could be positive in certain scenarios. For example, if a student was bullied severely at school, pursuing other opportunities (such as starting employment or other training) could be much more positive for their overall development.



RETIREMENT

This usually occurs in the mid 60s (late adulthood, or the latter part of middle adulthood). Positive benefits of retirement include:

- + More time to spend with friends/family
- + Less stress, as no longer employed
- + More flexibility over how to spend one's time
- + Opportunities to get involved in the local community or take up new hobbies

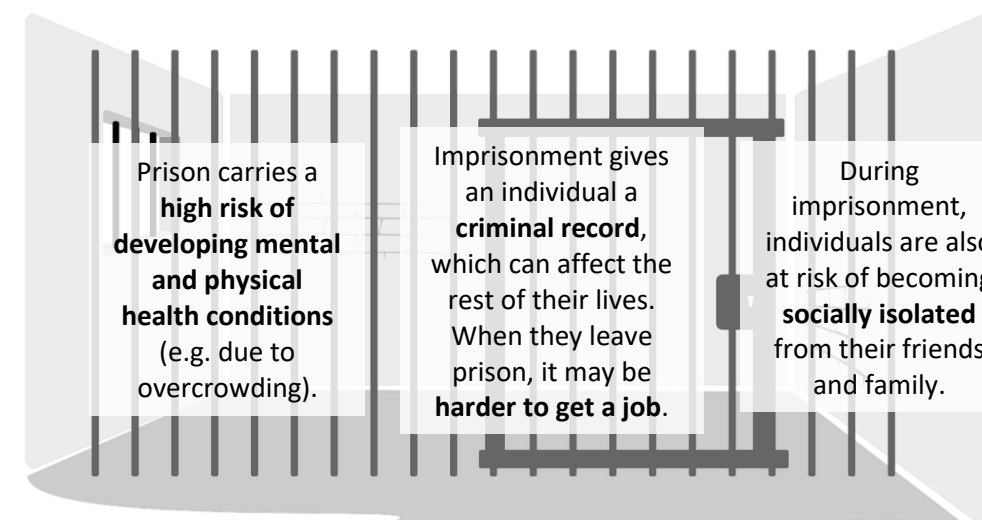
However, retirement may be a negative experience for some individuals. This is because they may struggle to adapt to the changes to their routine, and become bored with the free time. They may also become socially isolated, and if they experience mobility problems with older age, may be less likely to get out and about.

REDUNDANCY

(losing one's job because the work is no longer required by the company)



Negative impacts	Positive impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reduction in self-esteem and confidence. – Some may struggle to adjust to the role change, and may be anxious about what to do next in their career. – Stress over money can also cause individuals to become depressed and/or anxious. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Opportunity to take on new challenges. + Compensation for redundancy can reduce financial strain. + May have more spare time available for leisure activities and/or friends and family.



IMPRISONMENT

Alternatively, prison may give an individual the opportunity for a **fresh start** and **new perspective** on life. Many individuals may take up the opportunity to **engage in education or training** while imprisoned.

COPING WITH CHANGE CAUSED BY LIFE EVENTS

The impact of life events on an individual will depend somewhat on how they cope with the changes to their life. Each individual has a different way of coping, which may include drawing on different people for various types of support.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Support from other people can be invaluable when trying to cope with significant changes caused by life events. Each individual is likely to have a different group of people they can call upon (or prefer to call upon) during times of need.

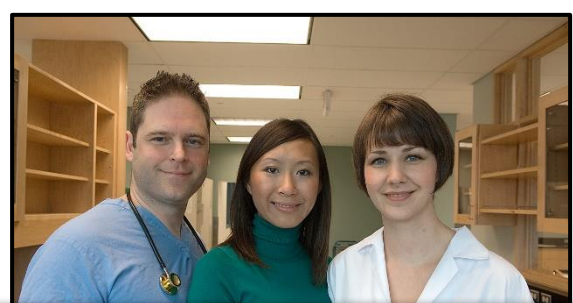


FAMILY, FRIENDS AND PARTNERS

Support from these people is sometimes known as **'informal support'**, as these people are not offering support in a formalised or paid capacity.

Strong relationships with loved ones should involve **mutual support**, meaning that people are prepared to be there to support one another during times of hardship.

Friends, family and partners can provide **emotional support**, and give you **guidance** through difficult life problems. They may also provide **assistance** with tasks such as childcare, transport, or maintaining the home.



PROFESSIONAL CARERS AND SERVICES

'Formal support' is the term sometimes given to assistance provided by individuals as part of their job. These individuals are likely to be specialised and trained in the needs of particular service user groups. Examples of professional carers include:

Domiciliary care workers	Provide care (e.g. with personal care and daily living tasks) in a service user's own home.
Social workers	Act to safeguard vulnerable groups (e.g. children, people with learning disabilities) from harm.
District nurse	Provides nursing care (e.g. wound dressing) in a service user's own home or community settings.
Psychotherapist	Trained in supporting people with mental health needs via 'talking therapies'.



COMMUNITY GROUPS, VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS

These organisations are often involved with the needs of a specific group of individuals who have something in common (e.g. people with diabetes, or those who have been bereaved).

This means they can be **highly specialised**, and can offer a wide range of advice and support specific to the needs of that group.

These organisations may also **help people avoid social isolation**, by offering opportunities to socialise with others that have had similar experiences (e.g. support groups).

HOW INDIVIDUALS ADAPT TO THESE CHANGES

How an individual responds to the changes brought about by a life event depends on:

- their personality
- their coping strategies
- whether they have support available to them

For instance, some individuals might be particularly **resilient**. Challenges in life might be viewed as an opportunity to learn more about oneself and the world, and they may use their experiences as motivation to improve their circumstances.

Resilience – being able to 'bounce back' from adversity

Others may react to the life event more negatively, such as with resistance or denial. For example, someone who has recently had a heart attack may refuse to believe how serious the condition is, and be unprepared to make the necessary lifestyle changes to prevent a second heart attack.

Involves offering encouragement and support, and listening to someone

Can help someone going through a difficult life event to feel less lonely

Talking through problems can lead to solutions

Emotional support may be provided by:

- friends
- family
- partners
- psychotherapists
- counsellors
- support workers

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

INFORMATION AND ADVICE

A sudden or significant change in circumstances can leave individuals confused about what to do, and what support is available for them. Accessing the right information can be reassuring and can greatly reduce an individual's anxiety.

Specialised organisations or community groups may be able to offer detailed, relevant advice to an individual's specific needs. For example, someone recently diagnosed with **Parkinson's disease** is likely to have a lot of questions about what their diagnosis means for their future. They could contact a charity that specialises in this condition to find out about the different options available to them.

TYPES OF SUPPORT

Depending on an individual's circumstances, they might benefit from emotional support, accessing information and advice, or practical assistance. If the impact of a life event is particularly severe, it's likely that an individual will access several types of support to cope with the changes.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Individuals may be eligible to claim welfare benefits if they are unable to work (e.g. due to illness or disability). They may also be eligible for free healthcare services (e.g. dentistry).

CHILDCARE

Free childcare is provided by the government for all 3–4-year-olds, up to 570 hours per year.

Friends and family may also help out with childcare.

TRANSPORT

Transport can be very challenging for people on a low income or with reduced mobility. Some individuals (e.g. those with disabilities) are eligible for a free bus pass. Loved ones may also assist by offering lifts, e.g. to important appointments.

PRACTICAL HELP

