SUCCESSFUL AGING IS THE ULTIMATE TASK OF THE OLDER ADULT
DEFINITION

To age successfully is to live a life of:

- Highest quality
- Maximal longevity
- Minimal disease and disability

Hazzard 2001
WHERE DO NURSES BEGIN?

Theory
“Nursing has evolved from an occupation to a profession... 

...from task orientation to skilled professionalism based on well-developed knowledge”. Martin (2002)
Gerontological Nursing Theory

Must answer two questions:

1. *What is unique about the health care issues of older adults?*

2. *How can nurses effectively care for older adults?*
Nursing Theories of Aging

“Explain the care needs that are unique to older people and provide a basis for addressing those needs from a nursing perspective”.

Miller, 2004
JEAN WATSON:

“Nursing covers an area of knowledge somewhere in the biophysical, behavioral and social sciences and the humanities.”
WATSON:

“The way to understand nursing is to identify, describe and research those central humanistic-scientific factors that are essential to effecting positive health change”.
Nursing Theories of Aging

“Explain the care needs that are unique to older people and provides a basis for addressing those needs from a nursing perspective”. 

Miller, 2004
WHAT IS A NURSING THEORY OF AGING?

- Links the concepts unique to nursing
  - Nursing
  - Health
  - Person
  - Environment
- Explain their interrelationships
WHAT IS A NURSING THEORY OF AGING?

- INTEGRATES KNOWLEDGE
- MAKES SENSE OF PHENOMENA
- TELLS HOW AND WHY PHENOMENA ARE RELATED
- LEADS TO PREDICTION
- PROVIDES PROCESS AND UNDERSTANDING
- IS HOLISTIC IN SCOPE
- TAKES INTO ACCOUNT WHAT IMPACTS A PERSON OVER HIS/HER LIFESPAN

HAIGHT ET AL 2002
WHAT IS A NURSING THEORY OF AGING?

In this context, nursing integrates knowledge from other disciplines and, for purposes of this course, utilizes information from...
THEORIES OF AGING FROM OTHER DISCIPLINES

BIOLOGIC AGING

SOCIIOLOGIC AGING

PSYCHOLOGICAL AGING
Biological Theories of Aging

- Measure of functional capacities of vital organ systems
- In other words: Explains characteristics of age-related changes
Biologic Theories of the Changes of Aging

Include changes that are:

- **Deleterious**—resulting in reduced function
- **Progressive**—occurring gradually
- **Intrinsic**—not attributable to environmental factors
- **Universal**—affecting all members of a species given a long life
Biologic Theories of the Changes of Aging

These changes are:

- Irreversible (for now)
- Genetically programmed
- Happen over time

AKA: CHRONOLOGICAL AGING
Relevance of Biological Theories of Aging to Nursing

Must learn to distinguish causes of aging:

- **Primary/Chronological Aging**—Process that occurs late in life and leads to a “natural death” at the genetically programmed age.

- **Secondary/Functional Aging**—Disease Processes and Environmental Factors (production of oxidants ie: smoking) that may accelerate and mimic primary aging but may be modified by interventions.
Sociological Theories of Aging

Roles and age-graded behaviors of people in response to the society of which they are a part.
Sociological Theories of Aging

- Aging is a life-long process
- Aging influences and is influenced by social and cultural processes
- The age structure changes overtime and is experienced differently in different groups
Relevance of Sociological Theories of Aging to Nursing

Helps nurses to view older adults in relation to their environments and how they are influenced by the society in which they live.
Psychological Theories of Aging

Evaluating older adults’ ability to use adaptive capacities to exercise behavioral control or self-regulation. Such as:

- Learning
- Memory
- Feelings
- Intelligence
- Motivation
Relevance of Psychological Theories of Aging to Nursing

These theories allow nurses to develop frameworks in which they can:

- Assess the older adults’ unique ways to bring order out of disorder
- Describe coping processes in terms of each individual and to...
- Use this knowledge to develop creative nursing interventions
NURSING THEORY

answers the questions of older adults...

“How can we live a life that is long and healthy”?
Now more than ever

older adults are experiencing the realities of living longer and,

more often than not,

meeting longevity with uncertainty.
The role of the gerontological nurse is to identify the factors that affect older adults negatively & initiate interventions that will result in positive outcomes...
“The ultimate goal of these interventions is to enable older people to function at their highest level despite the presence of age-related changes and risk factors”.

Miller, 2004
BEFORE THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION PEOPLE DIED FROM POOR HEALTH AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The leading causes of death as a percentage of all deaths in the United States, Prior to 1900

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As cited in http://www.healthypeople.gov/DOCUMENT/html/uih/uih_bw/uih_2.htm
ADVANCES SINCE THEN HAS INCREASED LONGEVITY AND THE ONSET OF CHRONIC ILLNESSES

The leading causes of death as a percentage of all deaths in the United States, 1997

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* Not all States are represented.


As cited in http://www.healthypeople.gov/DOCUMENT/html/nih/min_lw/min_2.htm
THE RESULT OF ADVANCES IN MEDICAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HAS CAUSED THE "RECTANGULARIZATION" OF THE SURVIVORSHIP CURVE.

Millier 2009
Up until the 1900’s human survivorship could be charted as downward sloping curve. (see area in yellow)
What was a “curve” in a human survivorship graph prior to the 1900’s has turned into a “rectangle” in industrialized nations over the years due to sanitation and medical advances.
Now, humans can & will live longer. They will live long enough to experience the changes of aging and whatever life circumstances that color them.
Death occurs now as a result of declining organ reserves which may or may not be affected by chronic illnesses.

(overall organ systems loose 1% of function per year after the age of 30)
Chronic disease now more a threat than acute disease for the ageing population
This phenomena can be altered by medical advances, societal changes & new diseases
Older adults will live longer with greater disability potential over time.

When they die, the trajectory of the dying process can be rapid as aging organ systems fail in succession.
The challenge will be:

Not to send older adults down that trajectory too soon.
How many older adults today walk into hospitals & leave on gurneys?

This phenomenon is know as:
CASCADE IATROGENESIS

“Serial development of multiple medical complications that can be set in motion by a seemingly innocuous first event”.

Thornlow, Anderson, Oddone 2009
In the light of the relatively ‘fragile’ organ system of the older adult, a trigger event:

- Fluid overload
- Over sedation
- Falls
- Delirium

can set the cascade into effect and if not recognized soon enough can cause...
Irreversible damage or death.

- Pre-existing co-morbidities that may or may not be sub-clinical in nature can be exacerbated or manifest themselves for the first time.

- Older adults are only as strong as their weakest link.
“More than one third of older adults are admitted and discharged from an acute care hospital each year… and between 6% and 45%… are likely to experience at least one untoward event while hospitalized”.

Jacelon, 1999, p.27
Nursing is in a pivotal position to prevent or mitigate these risks for older adults.

Through specific initiatives designed to safeguard the health and wellness of older adults, nurses will help them...
To age successfully. To live a life of:

- Highest quality
- Maximal longevity
- Minimal disease and disability

Hazzard 2001
Two Examples of Nursing Theories of Aging

- **Functional Consequences Theory for Promoting Wellness in Older Adults**
  by Carol Miller 1990

- **Nursing Theory of Successful Aging**
  by Meredith Flood, PhD, APRN, BC 2005/2006
“Functional Consequence Theory asserts that aging adults experience environmental, sociocultural, and psycho-biological consequences that impact their functioning…”

The theory's focus is assessment of age-related changes as well as risk factors such as physical impairment and disability, and design of interventions directed toward reduction of risk and disability”. Sheila Grossman, PhD, APRN, BC; Jean Lange, PhD, RN
Nursing Theory of Successful Aging
by Meredith Flood, PhD, APRN, BC

“Successful aging is defined as an individual’s perceived favorable outcome in adapting to the cumulative physiologic and functional changes associated with the passage of time, while experiencing spiritual, connectedness and a sense of meaning or purpose in life”. Flood, 2005
This course is based on the Functional Consequences Theory.
The Functional Consequences Theory

Attempts to address the question of all nurses

What is there about being older that requires a difference in nursing care?
“The Functional Consequence Theory is a mid-range theory that attempts to bridge the span between the Grand Theories and practice... To operationalize the concepts in grand theories and put them into practice.
CAROL MILLER: MID-RANGE THEORIST: THE FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES THEORY

Which has evolved AND changed over time to:

Attempt to solve problems in a humanistic socio-cultural context.

It is based on existing knowledge & theory and synthesizes models that direct practice and...

Includes the day-to-day experiences of nurses that changes as knowledge and problems change.

Miller’s theory has continued to evolve since 1990.
“The Functional Consequence Theory postulates that older adults experience functional consequences because of age related changes and additional risk factors...”  Miller 2004
“Frailty is one of the most substantial indicators of functional deterioration and often results in a steady progressive process ending in death” Chesney, 2005

A Medicare study identified frailty as an antecedent to death 47% of the time.
Without interventions, many functional consequences are negative: with them, however, functional consequences can be positive...”  

Miller, 2004
Nursing Assessment
- Risk factors
- Negative functional consequences

Age-Related Changes
- ↓ physiologic function
- ↑ potential for psychosocial and spiritual growth

Risk Factors
- Pathologic conditions
- Physiologic and psychological stressors
- Environmental barriers
- Adverse medication effects
- Ageist attitudes
- Lack of information

Negative Functional Consequences
- ↑ vulnerability to risk factors
- ↓ health and functioning
- ↓ quality of life

Nursing Interventions
- Addressing risk factors
- Teaching about health promotion
- Referring for additional care

Wellness Outcomes (Positive Functional Consequences)
- ↑ safety and functioning
- ↑ quality of life and well-being

C. Miller, 2012
The Functional Consequences Theory

Key concepts

- Functional Consequences (positive & negative)
- Age-related changes
- Risk factors
- Domains of Nursing (Person, Nursing, Health & Environment)
FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES ARE:

Observable effects of actions of risk factors, & age-related changes that influence the quality of life or day-to-day activities of older adults.
They can result in: **POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES**

- **HIGHEST LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE**
- **LEAST AMOUNT OF DEPENDENCY**

OR...
NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

That INTERFERE WITH:

- LEVELS OF FUNCTIONING
- QUALITY OF LIFE
AGE-RELATED CHANGES

Changes that are:
- Inevitable
- Progressive
- Irreversible
- Independent of extrinsic or pathologic conditions
RISK FACTORS

Changes that increase vulnerability to negative functional consequences such as:

- Disease
- Ethnicity/Poverty
- Lifestyle/Education
- Adverse medication effects…
DOMAINS OF NURSING:
PERSON
OLDER ADULTS &
THE PEOPLE WHO CARE FOR THEM
DOMAINS OF NURSING:

NURSING

Utilizes the nursing process to:

- Interact with older adults and their caregivers
- Minimize age-related changes
- Minimize risk factors
- Promote positive functional consequences
DOMAINS OF NURSING:
HEALTH

The state of:
- High physiological functional capacity
- Quality of life
- Psychosocial wellbeing
DOMAINS OF NURSING: ENVIRONMENT

External conditions, including caregivers that influence the function of the older adult:
Termed “risk factors” if they interfere with function.
Termed “interventions” when they enhance function.
The role of the gerontological nurse is to identify the factors that cause negative functional consequences and to initiate interventions that will result in positive ones...
The ultimate goal of these interventions is to enable older people to function at their highest level despite the presence of age-related changes and risk factors”.

Miller, 2004
Maintain a BALANCE between resources/reserves and life’s challenges
Nursing is in a prime position to positively affect this process
THIS INITIATIVE ON THE PART OF NURSING HAS EVOLVED OVER THE LAST 40+ YEARS:
Figure 4-1 Development of gerontological nursing as a specialty.
I. Quality of Care. The gerontological nurse systematically evaluates the quality of care and effectiveness of nursing practice.

II. Performance Appraisal. The gerontological nurse evaluates his or her own nursing practice in relation to professional practice standards and relevant statutes and regulations.

III. Education. The gerontological nurse acquires and maintains current knowledge applicable to nursing practice.

IV. Collegiality. The gerontological nurse contributes to the professional development of peers, colleagues, and others.

V. Ethics. The gerontological nurse’s decisions and actions on behalf of older adults are determined in an ethical manner.

VI. Collaboration. The gerontological nurse collaborates with the older adult, the older adult’s caregivers, and all members of the multidisciplinary team to provide comprehensive care.

VII. Research. The gerontological nurse interprets, applies, and evaluates research findings to inform and improve gerontological nursing practice.

VIII. Resource Utilization. The gerontological nurse considers factors related to safety, effectiveness, and cost in planning and delivering patient care.
There will be an ever increasing emphasis on balancing the *quality* of life with *quantity* of life.
NURSING MUST CONTINUE TO BE THERE!

AND BE PART OF THE PROCESS
Some Gerontological Nursing Resources

ALL OF THE ABOVE CAN BE REACHED THROUGH

http://hartfordign.org/

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Some Gerontological Nursing Resources

http://www.geronurseonline.org/

http://www.ngna.org/

https://www.gapna.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/GAPNA

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